

God's Time Machine

by Richard Plache

Can you imagine a time before there was any time, or a time when time shall no longer be?

This is inconceivable to us, who never seem to have enough of this priceless commodity. Our whole lives revolve around time. The rising and setting of the sun, the change of seasons, the incessant ticking of our clocks are all reminders that we are indeed prisoners of time, inescapably locked into a time-space world. Time and life seem virtually synonymous. Our life is time, and time is our life.

How strange to be confronted in the pages of the Bible by One who is not limited by the boundaries of time and space, who reveals Himself as "*I am that I am.*" He is the "*same yesterday, today, and forever*" - the One who "*changes not.*" He is spirit and lives in a constant state of *being*.

God is the great All from which all has come. He is the creator of everything. "*The worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" Visible things are temporal, but "*things which are not seen [spirit-reality] are eternal.*"

God did not create the universe and then walk off and leave it to operate as a gigantic perpetual motion machine. He didn't merely wind it up and leave it to function on its own. He did not create something apart from Himself. He made a universe which is still very much a part of Himself. He manifested *Himself* in what He made - form and substance.

God permeates all matter. The vast variety of wonders in our universe are expressions of He who fills all things. "*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.*" He is the all-pervasive Spirit. "*Where shall I go from your spirit? or where shall I flee from your presence?*"

The atomic and sub-atomic building blocks of the universe pulsate with the energy of God. Electrons pursue their endless flight around the nuclei of atoms and the awesome energy of the atom is locked into the nucleus through the cohesive power of God. "*For by Him all things consist [hold together].*" God is the "cosmic glue," the "perpetual motion machine." He is the heartbeat of the universe - and our heartbeat as well. "*For in him we live, and move, and have our being.*" All of matter and all of life are infused with His very presence.

Yet God is more than this visible expression of Himself. He is greater than the sum total of all He created. He transcends the material universe. Matter, time, and space are all God manifest, but He is limited to none of them.

The boundaries of matter, locked into a time-space continuum, do not exist in the realm of spirit. God towers above time and space. He views the material universe from a perspective that is infinite, not finite. He sees everything in the arena of time and space as an *ever present reality* - a timeless here and now. This is why He is able to "*declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.*" God's time machine is, therefore, timeless.

We are now ready to see key events in God's plan from His limitless perspective. In the final analysis, His viewpoint is the only one that counts.

We will be entering a new and strangely different dimension. We will no longer be relying on the familiar and seemingly reliable evidences of our five senses, for we are going to see that there is more to reality than “meets the eye.” What seems real to us isn’t ultimate reality.

To do this, we are going to activate what the Bible calls the “eyes” of our understanding (Eph.1:18). These are not the eyes of physical sight, but the eyes of faith. “*We walk by faith, not by sight.*” The eyes of faith look at everything the way God Himself does.

The Bible speaks of events separated by hundreds, even thousands of years, as if they were taking place at the same time. Events are also spoken of as having taken place, when in reality they haven’t yet occurred.

The confusion is removed when we understand how God looks at time. Since He transcends the limitations of time, “*a thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday when it is past.*” In the realm of spirit, there is no time-lag between thought and reality. Unlike human thought, which requires time and effort for it to be translated into substance, once God purposes to do something it is not only as good as done, it is *done*. His thoughts are in themselves creative. To think is to be. To purpose is to perform. And it’s just a “matter of time” until what is true spiritually becomes true physically.

What takes even thousands of years to be manifested on the stage of history has already occurred where it really counts, in the mind of God. The entire plan of God is simply the unfolding or unveiling in our physical realm of what is already true in spirit-reality.

The flow of reality is from heaven (spirit) to earth (matter). This can be seen in Jesus’ statement regarding the use of authority in the church, that whatever we bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven. (The passage is correctly translated as perfect tense in such versions as the New American Standard, the Williams, and the Amplified.)

Isn’t this what Jesus meant when He instructed His disciples to pray, “*Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*”? The kingdom of heaven is the realm of reality, where God’s will finds perfect expression. God is in process of translating what is spirit-reality into material manifestation.

In viewing God’s plan, it would seem only logical we should begin at the beginning. But this isn’t soon enough! We must begin even before the “beginning” of Genesis. Something took place before the curtain of creation rose and time began.

At a “time” before there was any time, a blueprint of cosmic proportions was formulated in God’s mind. This unalterably, indelibly set the mold of His master plan for man. The die was cast. The entire flow of history and the supreme climax of God’s creative handiwork became eternal, timeless facts. Decisions were made that crystallized the will of God. The end became known from the beginning, and the outcome was determined in advance. Nothing was left to chance. God purposed to work “all things after the counsel of His own will.”

Before we ever made our appearance on the scene, God determined that we would be in need of a Savior. He made provision for this even before man’s first sin stained the books of history. Though it was not until the First Century A.D. that the manifestation burst upon the scene in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, long ago Christ was “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*”

Not only was Jesus’ crucifixion a spirit-reality before time began, our individual salvation in Him was already a fact! We are told:

"Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ."(2 Tim. 1:9.10a).

According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:4,5).

These statements aren't to be taken in some vague sense, referring only to an undefined body of believers in general. God makes it very clear that He had specific, literal identifiable persons in mind. In fact, their very *names* were *"written in the book of life from the foundation of the world"* (Rev. 17:8).

Wonders of wonders! God looked down the corridors of time and knew each of us as individuals. His plan isn't a production line, but is intensely personalized and individualized. We are handcrafted vessels, uniquely the product of the touch of the Master Potter. When it is His time, He finally lets us in on what is happening. Thank God the success of His plan isn't left up to us to make it work!

In God's timeless overview, the whole human race is identified with two men - the First Adam, and the Last Adam. What both of these men did has affected the entirety of mankind throughout history!

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18,19).

What we have here is an exact parallel: what one man did and how it affects us all; and what another man did and how it affects us all. God pronounced sentence on all mankind because of these two individuals. But the two sentences were totally different. In the case of Adam, it was the sentence of death and condemnation. In the case of Jesus Christ, it was the sentence of justification and life.

Some might protest that it isn't fair for God to condemn us for Adam's sin. It's a "bum rap." We weren't even near the scene of the crime! We were removed by thousands of years from the infamous eating of the forbidden fruit. Surely this alibi should stand up in the court of heaven? It must be a case of mistaken identity.

The fact is, we are no different from Adam. And if given the same test we would also have failed. But God's verdict was not based simply on a theoretical projection. From His timeless vantage point, our sins and Adam's sin are not separated in time. To Him, all the facts were in - the chronicle of human sin was already recorded from the very beginning. All of us are identified together.

So too in the *"fulness of time"* — at that very moment in history which God had pin-pointed before the beginning of time — Christ clothed Himself in human flesh and penetrated the affairs of men. And precisely on schedule, as predicted centuries earlier, Jesus' human experience came to an agonizing halt on a rugged cross outside the gates of Jerusalem. The Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world in the realm of spirit-reality, became a historical sacrifice, and the sin problem was solved once and for all. The collective sins of all mankind were dealt with in full as Jesus tasted death for all.

While we were still enemies of God, unable to do anything to rescue ourselves, through His grace we were reconciled to Him by Christ's sacrifice (Rom. 5:10). "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and He committed unto us the word of reconciliation*" (2 Cor. 5:18). Sin was completely atoned for, forever blotted out, covered by His precious blood.

The ministry of reconciliation is therefore proclaiming what has already happened - what is already reality with God, that all mankind have been reconciled. We simply announce and invite men to accept what is already theirs in Christ. We give them the opportunity to acknowledge and confess what God has already done for them.

The events of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and ascension are the basis of our salvation not merely because they are historical events which we look back to and acknowledge as having occurred, but because we are inseparably united with Him in them. We are *identified* with Him. In the realm of spirit-reality we experienced what He experienced.

When Christ was crucified, all of us were crucified. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him." "I am crucified with Christ." When He died, we died. "Now if we be dead with Christ." "If One died for all, then were *all dead*." "For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death." It is at baptism that what has already transpired in God's eyes becomes real to us. We come into the manifestation of that which already has spirit substance. Christ's achievements and our acceptance of them have become one.

The story doesn't stop with Christ's death and burial. We are also inseparably united with Him in His glorious resurrection and ascension. "If you then be risen with Christ." "You are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead." "As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." These are spoken of as accomplished facts, events which have already occurred.

Through the death of our "old" man and the emergence of the "new" man, Christ has become our life - "Christ, who is our life." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." We "have put off the old man with his deeds."

Herein we encounter a problem. We see what the Bible plainly reveals as fact - the death of the "old man" with his deeds and our resurrection life in Christ as a "new man." But we question the reality of this in our own lives because we see too much of what looks like the "old man" still around. How do we handle this enigma?

It takes time for the death of the old man to be realized in experience. That is why we are told to "put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" and "mortify the deeds of the body." The victory has already been won, though not immediately manifest at our new birth.

It requires time "until Christ be formed" in us, and until "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Though the new man is already "created in righteousness and true holiness," the putting on of the new man in this material world of appearances does not happen overnight.

Yet through the eyes of faith - accepting and confessing what God reveals as already true - we are to see ourselves as God sees us.

It is not left up to us to bring the manifestation into being. Jesus Christ, as head of the church, has been given the responsibility of bringing everything to pass in the physical realm that is already reality in spirit. He is the Author *and Finisher* of our faith. What He has begun will be realized, for He must rule until He has put all enemies under His feet.

Once we understand who we really are, we stop identifying ourselves with the old vestiges of the "old man" of sin. That is no longer who we are. The real you is the new you - Christ in you, living as you. This is an eternal fact, unmistakably, unalterably, and indelibly imprinted in the heavenlies.

All things have already in God's timeless perspective been "put under Christ's feet." The kingdom of this world has already become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. This we accept and confess in faith. And this faith absolutely guarantees the manifestation.