

## Ultimate Realities

A wake up call for the sleeping church

By Jim Sayles

Any honest examination of the world economic systems, governmental systems, educational systems, environmental systems, agricultural systems, and communication systems, to name a few, will reveal that man's "wisdom" is inadequate for delivering us from disaster. Yet, many in the church today are totally dependent on those systems for their future well-being, their fulfillment in life, and their security.

All of us want the economy, local and world politics, education, science and technology, medicine, and the environment to continually improve so that we and our children can live quality lives in peace and prosperity.

We acknowledge, in varying degrees, what the kindness of our covenant Father has provided for us in an eternal sense, and we are grateful for the eternal security He has given us in Jesus Christ. But we are confused about the physical, social, and emotional problems we are facing in the world today, and all of us, without exception, are struggling for security and fulfillment primarily on the basis of our own efforts while being basically unaware of the ultimate realities influencing our lives today.

What is presented here, at a time in which the boat is being rocked, are the three ultimate realities, of which we can be sure of, and upon which we urgently need to base our decisions and expectations.

**Ultimate Reality #1 - The world is not going to get better in our lifetimes or the lifetimes of our children. It is going to deteriorate at an escalating rate:**

Although the Lord said no one would know the exact time of His return, He did explain to His disciples (and through them to us) what the "signs" of His second advent (His return for the church and then, seven years later, His return to reign over the world for 1000 years) would be. He named the "signs" (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) as being:

- 1) the gospel preached to the whole world;
- 2) false prophets (and false religions);
- 3) wars and rumors of wars;
- 4) pestilence and disease;
- 5) famines;
- 6) earthquakes and other natural disasters;
- 7) signs in the heavens (unusual solar system events).

Now, these things (other than the gospel being preached to the whole world) have occurred since the beginning of creation, but He used a peculiar phraseology as He listed the “signs” of the times for them. He said these things would be like “birth pains”, meaning that they would increase in frequency and intensity as the birth event itself (His return) approached. The fact that they are increasing in both intensity and frequency should be obvious, even to those of you who have lived a much shorter lifespan than me.

Two historical events in my lifetime, the granting of a national homeland to the Jewish people in 1947, after almost 2000 years of exile, and the occupation of all of the “promised land” after the Six Day War in 1967, nailed the time we live in as being “the last days” (of God’s prophetic dealings with the nation of Israel).

To view this prophetic event in its appropriate importance, keep in mind that nothing even remotely similar to this has ever happened in the past. Only God could exile His covenant nation into all the nations of the world, preserve their national identity for 2000 years, and then return them to the land from which they were exiled just as prophesied by numerous prophets in the Old Testament (old covenant).

Still to come is the Great Tribulation (during which believers will not be present) and the Millennial Reign (see my chart at the end of this letter). And we should keep it in mind that the prophet, Daniel, and the apostle, John, talked about the fact that the Antichrist (empowered by Satan himself) will bring about a one world government and a one world economy.

Both a true one world confederacy and a one world economy are being seriously discussed right now by world leaders for the first time in history. That is not an insignificant event.

No one can deny that Israel and the Middle East are on center stage of this present time in history, and that fact alone should convince all of us that we are being drawn into the whirlpool of prophetic history even as it is being played out (albeit kicking and screaming and clinging to our worldly hopes as we resist the inevitable).

I don’t know what this will look like specifically in America’s future, but, as a nation, we have rejected God. Therefore, I do not expect America to be spared from the “birth pains”.

Keep this unpleasant reality firmly in mind, and begin to refer to it in all your decisions. To ignore it in blissful ignorance means that all your decisions will be inaccurate and inadequate, ultimately resulting in very unpleasant consequences for you, your children, and those who have been given to your care.

**Ultimate Reality #2 - Both Christians and non-Christians alike have a real enemy whether we are aware of it or not, and this enemy is actively**

engaged in a relentless campaign to destroy us, our children, our extended families, and our friends through deception and to separate us from the life and covenant promises of God.

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul, who was instructed by Lord Himself after His crucifixion, and not by the apostles who were with the Lord in His earthly ministry, explained the Satanic heirarchy set against us:

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might... (how?)... Put on the full armor of God... (why?)... so that you may stand firm against the schemes... (deceptions)... against flesh and blood... (mere natural circumstances and enemies)... but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6: 10-12 NASB (inserts and emphasis are mine)*

Nothing that you (or we), our children, our extended families, and our friends are experiencing is free from the fact that an invisible, and mostly unrecognized spiritual force is hell bent on destroying our lives, the lives of our children, the lives of our extended families, and the lives of our friends **as the world is being drawn into the escalating “birth pains” of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.**

*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*  
1 Peter 5:8 NASB

Remember that our enemy’s primary weapon is deception, not some other spiritual force, and he uses this weapon in various ways to deceive us individually through the world systems of mis-guided, God-denying governments, corrupt, deceived media and entertainment, corrupt, deceived pseudo sciences, corrupt educational systems, corrupt, deceived financial systems, and corrupt religions, including corrupt, deceived Christian religious systems (all of which we have been totally or partially dependent upon in the past).

To whatever extent we are reliant on these world systems (apart from the direct, supernatural wisdom and counsel of the Lord) to provide our security, peace, and personal fulfillment, we are subject to deception that will ultimately lead to our individual destruction as well as the destruction of those we love.

The examples are so numerous here that I dare not begin to list them, but, as you request it, I will provide those examples in other commentaries I have written.

What I am going to tell you now is going to shock some of you, but do not dismiss it summarily without personal meditation in the presence of the Lord. To dismiss it without “hearing” with spiritual ears what the Lord wants you to know is proof that you are already a deceived prisoner of war in the enemy’s camp.

There are demonic entities assigned to watch our lives, like spies. They know what we are doing and saying, and, knowing that, they set traps and snares for us, so, at the appropriate time, they can cause the most damage possible.

I am going to give you an external example that we are all aware of, and then let you make your own personal application (which all of us have).

The Christian world was rocked when Jimmy Swaggart was exposed for hiring prostitutes to pose for sexually explicit photographs. Non-Christians smugly declared that this was just another example of typical Christian hypocrisy, and used it as an excuse for their total lack of interest in Jesus Christ or the church.

Was his behavior proof that Jimmy Swaggart was not a born again Christian?

No. Of course not. What I am certain of is that the Holy Spirit speaking through Jimmy Swaggart’s conscience, through the spiritual gifts of other believers, through circumstances, and even through spiritual dreams or visions had continually warned him against this subtle but powerful deception of Satan. And Satan, keenly aware of Jimmy Swaggart’s rejection of the supernatural counsel of God, closed the snare after years of letting him get by with it, and he closed it at the precise moment when it would cause the most damage.

Consider this. What does Satan know about your life that he can use to hurt you, your children, your extended family, and your friends? What lies and addictive behavior patterns, if continued without correction, will ultimately bring failure and destruction into our lives, the lives of our children, the lives of our extended families, and the lives of our friends? I guarantee that Satan knows something about all of us that exposes us to financial, emotional, social, and/or spiritual failure. And, to ignore or deny that fact, is dangerous in the extreme.

This, much more than casting out demons, is what “spiritual warfare” is all about, and the choice not to do anything is a loser’s choice.

***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path.***

Satan’s snares and deceptions are not on the path illuminated by the Holy Spirit. They are in the darkness on either side of the path. Picture an Indian guide leading you by torchlight through the dark swamp where quicksand and other dangers lurk just off the secret trail. If we stay close and pay attention to the guide we will get through safely. If we decide that we know more than the guide and go our own way, we are in deep trouble.

Spiritual warfare is about staying close to the guide.

***Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil...***(by staying close to the guide)...***and he will flee from you.*** James 4:7 NASB

**Ultimate Reality #3 – There is only one way out, only one way personally and corporately to ultimately overcome and prevail against the enemy in these last days.**

I find it interesting, but sobering, to realise how many born again believers are not involved in a small group where spiritual intimacy, accountability, ministry, evangelism, and support take place. Most are associated with a larger fellowship of some kind (i.e. they go to church), but in these days it is drastically important to be associated with a wide awake small group or intimate group of believers who are following Christ by grace through faith in all they think, say, and do.

One of the things any predator does before closing for the kill is to isolate his victim(s) from the herd, and many of us are isolated from other believers in the true (not merely external) communal sense, although a certain amount of covenant protection is ours through individual faith and the sovereign grace of God.

What is important here is not “going to church” in the traditional sense. What is important is our vital communion with a fellowship of faith talking, faith walking believers who are not hindered by religious obligations and traditions devoid of revelation, and who are eagerly pursuing the vital role they have been assigned in the body of Christ.

These are the believers who promote our individual, supernatural relationships with the Lord, so that we “hear” and “see” His truth, promises, and commands and then respond by faith to what He is revealing to us. Then we can individually and corporately overcome the enemy and protect each other, our children, our extended families, and our friends in the difficult days ahead.

A life of faith, too, will naturally cause us to be attracted to others who are engaged in a genuine life of faith (not as a religious organization but as a “fellowship” of believers). These believers are just like us. They have the same struggles and the same failures, but they are also seeking to be strengthened through the spiritual gifts, ministry, and genuine love of fellow believers.

He even told us that the world would know us by our genuine, selfless love for each other.

The primary reason any born again believer chooses not to pursue fellowship with other born again believers is not hypocrisy or a loathing of religious obligations devoid of observable life (His life being manifested through that same group of believers). Those are merely the excuses of a deceived believer. The real

reason is that we do not believe “Ultimate Reality #1” that the world will continue to deteriorate or “Ultimate Reality #2” that we have an unseen but very real spiritual enemy who wants to destroy us, and we want the covenant blessings of God without being accountable to Him. In other words, we don’t want to change what we’re doing. We just want Him to bless us in spite of what we’re doing.

Therefore, we have no appetite or desire to commune with other believers much less read, study, and meditate on the written Word, listen to inspired Christian music, or spend time in prayer.

Remember, though, our accountability to Him is not through religious obligation or the observance of religious rules and external behaviors. It is through the deliberate seeking of His voice, His truth, His wisdom, His promises, His commands, and His empowerment, supernaturally, by grace through faith.

Real change does not come from attempting to conform to religious rules and the expectations of men. Real change comes from a real, but supernatural relationship with Him. And it comes naturally. It is not a struggle the way attempting to conform to some set of religious rules would be.

On the night He was betrayed and crucified the Lord explained to His followers how they (and we) would continue to “hear” Him. He explained that He would return to them (and consequently to us the moment we believed) as the “Counselor” (the Holy Spirit) and would be with them (and us) continually. His presence, though, would either be diminished as we reject His voice, or enhanced as we respond to His voice by faith.

One of the most amazing promises found in the written Word was spoken to them (and subsequently to us) that night:

***He who has My commandments... (through “hearing”)... and keeps them... (by faith)... is the one who truly loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father... (experience for themselves the love of the Father)... and I will love him and disclose Myself to him... (Amplified Bible: “make myself real to him”) John 14:21 NASB***

Our future physical, financial, social, emotional, and spiritual survival and fulfillment, as well as that of our children, our families, and our friends, depends entirely on this living, supernatural, and very real relationship with the Lord.

If any of us believes otherwise, we are deceived, and there will be consequences for believing the lie and rejecting the truth.

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