

Parallel Dimensions

Your Walk in the Word and World

July 17, 2022

Today we're taking our experience with God *in His Word* and *harmonizing it* with our experience of God *in the world*. So answer *this*: **Is the God you see *in the Word* the God you see *in the world*? Hope so!** Cuz I'm here to tell you – His truth is *plainly* painted all over our planet **because He carefully crafted *this world* with *infinite evidence* of His nature.**



And if He's *that* expressive and engaging with the *world* He created, I **expect to see the same display in the *Word* He authored.** Because *both* are needed, because *both* declare Him – because *that's* how He made them, because He wants *us* to *know* Him! Ever notice how we feel *closer* to God on top of a mountain or staring at a sunset? Well, it's because He created nature to reveal Himself, *and it works.* **Whether we gaze through a *telescope*, peer through a *microscope*, or peek through a *periscope*; we'll always see a *consistent, coherent, and complete* demonstration of His truth. If we're *paying attention.* Same goes for His Word. We can read a devotional every day and do church each Sunday, but *still miss* what He's trying to say – when we're *not* paying attention. And *each half* says so *much* about the other, for example – **if we didn't have His *Word*, just look what we could *still* learn about Him from His *World* alone,** He's:**



For since the creation of *the world* God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature – have been *clearly* seen, being understood from what has been made so that people are without excuse. For although they *knew* God, they neither *glorified* Him as God nor *gave thanks* to Him but their *thinking* became futile and their foolish hearts were *darkened*.

– Romans 1:20-21 NIV

They didn't apply their experience with God in His Word to God in their world and only got half of a picture. Or worse, we split Him into two – y'know the God we worship at church and the One we keep *somewhere* around our workplace or school. And so, As James says:

Do not merely *listen to the Word*, and so *deceive* yourselves. Do what it says **[in the world]**. Anyone who *listens to the Word* but does *not do* what it says **[in the world]** is like someone who looks at his face in a *mirror* and, after looking at himself, goes away **[into the world]** and immediately forgets *what* he looks like **[in the Word]**. – James 1:22-24 NIV

Well I sure don't want to forget what I saw in *myself, in the Word* last week. Because I was blown away by just how *blind* I can be and how *important it is* to never trust *my* perspective over *God's*, ever. Because I've struggled like everyone else with explaining Jesus's resurrection timeline:



Y'know, getting raised *...on the third day* but spending *...three days and three nights in the heart of the earth* even though *The Son of Man must ... be killed, and after three days rise again. Talk about a brick wall!* Anyone who's stayed in hotel knows: a *three day* stay means *two nights!* And I absolutely *couldn't* see a way around God's Word getting it wrong... until we just considered Jesus went *back* into the heart of the earth... like it says He did (*get a copy if you weren't here*). But seeing that a *simple* solution was *always* staring me in the face, really *affected* me. Cuz it *reminded* and *reinforced* two crucial things: **1) I'm occasionally real dense** and **2) God's always real truth**. And seemingly *miraculous*, totally *unseeable* solutions just fall into our lap when we refuse to settle for a God of imperfect answers and just *trust* in the Lord.

And there's a bonus! Do you realize that **the very same principle solves life's impossible brick walls?** It's true, the principle is transferrable to *any* situation where you've come to the end of your understanding. Whether the wall is in your *career* or your *marriage* – or *whatever*; you gotta:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean *not* on your own understanding; *in all your ways* submit to Him and *He will* make your paths straight. – Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

And here's the embarrassing part, I should've *already* known. Because I've learned *this* lesson in *this world* countless times. Like *once*, the power went out at my house and so a buddy and I drove into town to find a coffee shop and wait it out. And after turning onto a street with another car, I noticed their headlights were on and said, "*Oh good! The power's back on!*" And as my friend just *stared* in disbelief, I was like, "*What?! You saw it too!*" Why was he being such a *jerk?! I didn't* say anything *bad*, I was just pointing out that... headlights... oh... *whoops. Stupid Noah!*

And if I could just *remember* that lesson when I make my *next* nearsighted, boneheaded mistake, whether in this world or God's Word, I know I'd get the solve much faster!



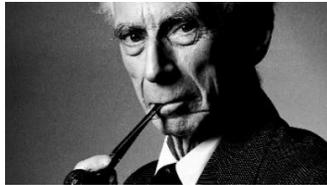
So here's the real moral of the story: **stop seeing your world and His Word as separate journeys and start treating them as parallel dimensions of a single journey.** If we do, we might *not need* to repeat *every blind mistake* we make – both in *His Word* and in *this world*.

Because, let's face it, there's a big hurdle that trips us up in **both: we'd rather change the truth than ourselves** – even though we can *hang ourselves* with *partial* pictures – like the ones we paint when we *ignore* Scriptures that look a little *crooked* to our untrusting eyes. So if you're having a *problem* understanding *anything*, don't forget:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness. – Romans 1:18 NIV

And he's got us there! **Humans do restrain the truth.** We ignore it, deny it, and/or bury it in our subconscious if it is in any way discomfoting to our current way of life. **Because having a problem with God's Word reveals the real problem is with ourselves.**

And **the more unattractive the truth, the harder we'll work to look past it.** And He designed it that way to give us a *real-world* test of *our trust* in His Word. Which begins when we just *consider* it's *us* and *our* worldly perspective that might be crooked. Cuz **all the universe is, is evidence of who our Creator is.** So how does an *infinite* pile of evidence *not* get solved. Well, it seems *obvious* to me – it's gotta be a *lack of detective work*.



Famed British philosopher, mathematician, and logician **Bertrand Russel** was once asked what *he* would say if God appeared to him after his death and demanded to know *why* he had *failed* to believe. And he *proudly* replied that he'd say, '*Not enough evidence, God! Not enough evidence.*' *Are you kidding?! That's your best 'super smart guy' excuse?*

All the universe is, *is evidence!* Thanks for all your *brilliant* insight, Bert, but:

His eternal power and divine nature have been *clearly* seen [it's *unmistakable*, if we're *paying attention*], being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. - Romans 1:19-20 NIV

On judgment day "*I didn't know!*" *isn't* gonna cut it. The only honest response will be, "*I didn't want it.*" So, **we should never excuse our lack of effort by calling it God's lack of communication.**

In our *physical universe* we see **a purposeful and powerful Creator.**

In our *intellectual pursuits* we see **a meaningful and moral Creator.**

In our *emotional relationships* we see **a loyal and loving Creator.**

If we're paying attention in His Word AND in this world.

It's just as 'logical' to believe in a creation with a Creator as it is to believe in one without. In fact, believing that an *infinite, ordered, life-sustaining* creation has *no* God behind it requires a lot *more* faith to tackle *each* unanswered question than simply accepting the obvious *single* solution. We're just *hesitant* to give credit to God because it means letting go of our *manmade* answers and *subsequently*, releasing our *authority* to God.

And that's why we not only *restrain* the truth, but **humans reject the truth.** Like Paul said earlier "*they neither glorify Him... nor give Him thanks.*" And there it is. For the most part, *in this world*, **we don't acknowledge or appreciate Him.**



And doesn't it *hurt* when you go out of your way to do something *kind* for someone, and they don't express any *gratitude*? That's because **love is meant to move in both directions.** And **every act of true love ought to be followed by a loving reaction.** Just ask your *grandma*; no *thank-you* call after Christmas really sends the message that you *don't* want her handmade *sweaters* anymore.

Well *likewise*, we push *God's gifts* aside whenever we enter *God's Word*, and *in any way* reject what we *need* – to search for what we *want*.

You ever do that? You want something *really bad* and there's an *easy* way to get it – if you just *overlook* what's right? Yeah, *well it's called stealing!* And we've *all* done it. Whether an extra *cookie* from the jar or a *stereo* from a car! And we've *all* learned the *same* life lesson, covered in cookie crumbs, as an interrogation makes us *burn* with guilt: **Truth traumatizes sinners until they come clean.** *Even though* we work to *train* ourselves to believe that it's *easier* to live with a 'little' lie than to deal with the truth – it doesn't matter – because **we've all got that nagging, God-given conscience that can't let go of our natural sense of integrity, justice, and morality.**

But do we ever do that with *God's Word*? Do we restrain or reject *its* truth? *I sure think so!* **Whenever we overlook obvious answers that paint pictures we don't like** – even though that means we're calling *God* as a liar rather than considering *ourselves* one. ...*can you feel the burn?*

So whether *in His Word* or *our world*, the first step to getting back on track has *always* been the same: *put God first.* **Acknowledge, appreciate, and invite God to guide your understanding.** Otherwise, not only will we *restrain* the truth and *reject* the truth but we'll **replace the truth.** Which is the *most* self-deceiving and self-destructive behavior of *all*.

We live in a world of *avatars* and *snapchat filters* to try and pass off a more *pleasant* personal reality because **if we change what we know to be true into what we want to be true – we're deceiving ourselves into seeing ourselves as being as powerful as God Himself!** And *that's* some stinking thinking! Paul warned us about that:

Their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. - Romans 1:21-23 NIV



And *don't* think we don't do that. **The worldly have always favored creation over the Creator,** and though *this* world makes idols of material *wealth*, selfish *pleasure*, or prideful *power*, it's *always* been the same principle that drives us to try and *replace* the truth: *fulfilling fleshly desires.* **But when we change truth and try to live it, wherever you are – in the world or His Word, that's a recipe for disaster.** And yet, we'll *keep* doing it until our heart isn't threatened by *real* truth.

Creation displayed God's nature; nailing Him to a cross displayed ours. He gave us *this* world to build a vocabulary of *experience* and *emotion* that is then *unpacked* and *understood* by His *Word*. But it has to go *both* ways. Because our time with the *Bible* builds *more* experience and emotion that *creation* then helps us *comprehend* and *confirm*.

His Word and this world were both created to compliment and complete each other to paint one whole picture for us! And the bottom line is *this*: *either* way, *every* time, **half of a picture ain't ever the whole truth.** Nor is it the *holy* truth.