

Physical versus Spiritual

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There is a particular issue that has arisen from certain interpretations of Abraham's bosom and Hell. By their interpretation certain individuals believe that hell and Abraham's Bosom cannot be far apart as the rich man is able to see Abraham and Lazarus from Hell. They reason that one cannot see that far, so they must be close together. This is much the same as those who claim that the "sea of glass, like unto crystal" described in Revelation, chapter 4, is defined by physical limitations – hence it is clear, so that God can 'see' through it.

The problem with this view, is that both of these situations in the Scripture described expressly spiritual places, not physical places. Yet, those holding to the above described views are obviously placing physical limitations on spiritual things.

In the Scripture we are told that we are to not mix judgments. In fact, we are told to judge by the spiritual, and not the natural, or physical. In I Corinthians, it is put this way in comparing the natural man to the spiritual man:

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. (*I Corinthians 2:12-16*)

In short, we should understand things in a new way after we are saved. We should understand things by the spiritual, and not by the physical. This is reinforced by the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning judging things.

Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (*John 7:21-24*)

To judge righteously, one must judge spiritually, not physically, or by appearance. Quite plainly, the Jews could not understand that the circumcision was indeed a work, and no less a work than healing a man on the Sabbath. If it was the fulfilling of righteousness to circumcise a man on the Sabbath, then it certainly is righteous to heal a man on the Sabbath. After all, one of the reasons for the Sabbath was so that man could rest and recover.

What better recovery than that of healing? However, since the Jews were only looking at the entire event in light of the physical, they could not discern the spiritual, and hence the spiritual truth of the Lord healing a man on the Sabbath.

Thus, we are supposed to have a spiritual understanding of things – particularly Scriptural things. We should not have a physical, or natural, understanding of the events of the Scripture. This is not to say that we are to spiritualize the Scripture and eliminate the literal interpretation of Scripture, rather, it is to state that we ought to understand

the spiritual literalities of the Scripture as well. This was one of the desires of the apostle Paul for the church at Colossae, and should be for us as well.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; . . . (*Colossians 1:9*)

Thus, we are to have a spiritual understanding of how it is that hell can see heaven, and not be at all physical, nor at all close to each other. We should also have the spiritual understanding that God does not need a clear 'floor' to see through to observe all that happens on this earth.

We must understand that the physical parallels to the spiritual are simply that – parallels. All physical parallels to spiritual things and events break down at some point, and usually pretty rapidly. The reason for this is that the physical is merely a shadow of the spiritual, and has limitations that do not apply to the spiritual. After all, it is the spiritual that was first, and then the physical.

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