

Eternal Realities

Part 1 of 2

#1001

Study given by W.D. Frazee – September 11, 1981

Once again, it is our privilege to study God's message from His wonderful book. As I was thinking of this meeting tonight and our study of realities, something came to my mind that happened a number of years ago when I was just a teenager. We were driving a Model-T Ford across the Mojave Desert. It was long before the days of super highways. Many of the roads weren't paved. As we were travelling across the desert, we came to a dry lakebed, and as we looked at where the cars had been going, some here, some there, some there, we wondered how we'd be sure to get to the other side. And presently our wonder increased as we saw a lake in the distance and we wondered where the bridge would be. We kept driving across that dry lake, all the time looking at the water and trees in the distance, and presently we noticed that the water and the trees weren't visible anymore, and we looked back and there they were in back of us. We had seen a mirage. It was an interesting experience to see something and later find that it wasn't there at all. That is not *reality*, is it?

And my dear friends, there are many people whose religion is a mirage, whose hope is without foundation. I want to study with you tonight the *realities* of the Word of God. We're not following cunningly devised fables. There's nothing in the way of *illusion* or *delusion* about it. We know God's message and truth for this hour. It's true that there is much still beyond and all through eternity, thank God, we're going to be studying and learning more. But bless the Lord, we'll never *unlearn* a single truth. May I repeat that? We'll never unlearn a single truth. And so it is written:

“...If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” John 8:31-32.

Our good song leader handed me a little card just as he concluded the song service. It's from *Steps to Christ*, page 99:

“We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities” *Steps to Christ*, page 99.

Now this fits in nicely with my text, which is found in 2 Corinthians, the 4th chapter and the 18th verse. This is one of those wonderful paradoxes that we come to from time to time in the book of God:

“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” 2 Corinthians 4:18.

Temporal – that is, they’re transient; they don’t last. You see what a paradox this is, that our certainty is in what we *don’t* see instead of what we *do* see. Why? Paul tells us in Hebrews, the 11th chapter and the 1st verse:

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” Hebrews 11:1.

But notice in both of these texts it’s *things* – not ephemeral (nothingness), not mystical (imaginings). It’s *things*, which we discern by faith and *things*, which we look at, even though they’re invisible. In other words, we’re dealing not with *imaginary* things but with *real* things, even though they’re invisible.

Air is a *real* substance even though we can’t see it, isn’t it? Radio waves, even pulses, travel with the speed of light or lightning, 186,000 miles a second. It’s reality even though we can’t see it. And so it is in the things of God, dear friends. We’re dealing not with imaginary things; we’re dealing with blessed realities.

Just as the telescope enables us to see the moons around Jupiter, so the prophetic telescope of the Bible enables us to see things in the invisible world that otherwise we would be utterly ignorant of.

Is God a *real* person? Are angels *real* beings? Is heaven a *real* place? Thank God, the answer is ‘yes’ to every one of these questions. I want you to notice some of the proofs tonight that we’re dealing with *reality* when we deal with God, when we present the angels. When we think of heaven, we’re dealing with not something mystical or imaginary; we’re dealing with the *real*.

Let’s go to the first page of the Bible, Genesis, the 1st chapter. This is the *only* accurate and authentic account of how this world began. The people that speculate about it weren’t there. *God* was, and He inspired Moses to write down how it happened:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”
Genesis 1:1.

This first chapter of Genesis is filled with the wonderful account of creation, day after day. Finally, we come to the sixth day, and after the animals had been created, then in the 26th verse God said:

“...Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and

over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” Genesis 1:26-27.

This is a wonderful statement that man was made in *whose* image? [Audience responds: God’s.] The image of God. In the book *Medical Ministry*, page 221, I read this inspired comment:

“We may behold and admire the work of God in the natural world, but the human habitation is the most wonderful. From the first dawn of reason the human mind should become intelligent in regard to the physical structure. Here Jehovah has given a specimen of Himself, for man was made in the image of God” *Medical Ministry*, page 221.

Most of the animals walk or run around on all fours, but man was made *erect*, upright. Why? Because *God* is upright, erect. All the lower orders of life have wonderful, wonderful arrangements in their anatomy and physiology, but not one of them has the ability to *reason*. Not one of them has the *conscience* that man has. Man was made in the image of God.

The language here is interesting. “Here Jehovah has given a *specimen* of Himself, for man was made in the image of God.” My point is, man is real; God, in whose image he was made, is real. Thank God for the reality of the personality of God.

You remember in that genealogy, Luke gives it in his 3rd chapter, where Christ was baptized in Jordan, and then he traces the genealogy back through the earthly line, back through David, back through Abraham, back through Noah. Finally, he comes to Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God. A son by creation, Adam was, but he was made in the heavenly Father's image.

The 2nd chapter of Genesis tells us the wonderful story of the home that was given to Adam and Eve, the Garden of *what?* [Audience responds: Eden.] Eden. Do you suppose that was a *real* place? A *real* man had a *real* job in a *real* garden. He had trees to eat from and vines to train and partake of their luscious fruit. He had flowers to enjoy, birds and animals for companions – a wonderful garden home. Thank God for that picture of our first parents’ garden. Do you know what happened to that garden? Is it still here on this planet? [Audience responds: No.] Where is it? Did it get washed away in the flood? Would you like to, those of you who haven’t heard this story, you might like to have me read just a few lines from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 62.

The 3rd chapter of Genesis, of course, tells about the entrance of sin, and Adam and Eve having to leave their garden home and go out in the world outside.

“The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths. The fallen race were long permitted to gaze upon the home of innocence, their entrance barred only by the watching angels” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 62.

Think of it: anybody who wished could come up there to the garden gate, and what was guarding the entrance? Angels. You’d think they would have been awed and all continued righteous. There is no exhibition of glory that can, in itself, keep a person, my dear friends. My point is the garden was here on the earth for a long time.

“...When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. But in the final restitution, when there shall be ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ (Revelation 12:1), it is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning” *Ibid.*

So where is the Garden of Eden? It’s up in heaven. Was it a real garden here? Is it a real garden up there? Yes. Now, that’s in the first part of the *Conflict* series. Now I want to pick up the *Conflict of the Ages* series, *Great Controversy*, and here is the wonderful story on page 648 of Adam and the Garden of Eden getting together again, a *real* Adam, resurrected from the dead, coming into the *real* Garden of Eden, the same one that he was in back there, which has been reserved, kept in heaven for him all these 6,000 years. I love this because it makes it all so *real*, dear friends. Listen:

“Transported with joy, he beholds the trees that were once his delight – the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy” *Great Controversy*, page 648.

Think of it! Why, there’s Adam and there’s the apple tree that he used to pick apples off of, the same tree. How glad he is!

“He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for” *Ibid.*

Perhaps roses, no thorns, sweet peas, chrysanthemums, you name them, but Adam sees that they’re the same flowers he used to look after in the Garden of Eden. Now the next sentence is glorious:

“His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat” *Ibid.*

Then Adam looks and he sees all the rest of us around him there, in the garden, and his heart is so happy that so many of his family are there to enjoy it with him. Friends, doesn't that make it real? And this isn't some *imaginary thing*. This is what God showed His prophet to the remnant in a vision. It's not visionary, it's a vision. There's a lot of difference, friends, a *world* of difference. There's nothing imaginary about it. Our imagination can properly picture it, and *should* picture it, but it's not imaginary – it's real. Did you know that's what God gave us the gift of imagination for – not to make up fiction but to visualize what we read in His Word?

Let me illustrate it. As we've been reading from the Book of God tonight and reading from these inspired Spirit of Prophecy statements, haven't you *seen* some pictures? Did you see the Garden of Eden back there? The trees, the flowers? Well, where'd you see them? They weren't on the screen here. No picture that an artist could paint can do justice to it, friend. That's why we need to cultivate an appreciation of God's gift of imagination. The human imagination, don't miss what I'm about to say, the human imagination, properly trained by the Spirit of God, is a better agency for visualizing what we read in the inspired descriptions of heaven and Eden and all that than any artist can paint.

Sister White was once given a request. An artist wrote her and said, "Sister White, I wish you would describe for me the New Jerusalem so that I could paint a picture of it." She wanted Sister White to give her *all* the features, and Sister White said, "No, I can't do that. The best answer I can give you is, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him' (1 Corinthians 2:9)." She said, "If you try to paint a picture of it, it wouldn't be a good representation." [Laughter.]

I'm glad. I'm glad that it's beyond any brush of artist. But now that doesn't mean, as I say, that we are to think of it as something that's mystical and unreal. We are to take these facts and some more that I'm going to read presently, and we're to use our imagination. *Steps to Christ*, page 86:

"As your senses delight in the attractive loveliness of the earth, think of the world that is to come...where the face of nature will no more wear the shadow of the curse. Let your imagination picture the home of the saved..." *Steps to Christ*, page 86.

The green trees, the beautiful flowers, the lovely messengers of God's love... Where is the Garden of Eden now? [Audience responds: Heaven.] It's in heaven. Can you see it up there? Yes, you can see it in your mind's eye. But it says,

"...and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray" *Ibid*.

Now notice the two uses of the word 'imagination' there. "Let your imagination picture the home of the saved..." and "...remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray." So there's no danger of exaggerating it. You know what happens, friends? The more you do that, the better it gets. That's another reason why no artist can do justice to it. If you keep looking in your mind's eye, if you keep reading the inspired descriptions in Genesis, of the *original* garden and Revelation, of the *restored* paradise, more and more and more the Spirit of God will reveal to you glorious things concerning what's ahead. Not fictitious, I don't mean that; not made up. God has ways of making it more and more real to us as we behold.

We're studying reality tonight. I want to ask you another question: was Christ a *real* man when He was here in this world? [Audience responds: Amen.] Was He? Was He still the Son of God? And yet He was a real man. Do you understand that? No, you don't. If you *think* you do, then I know you don't [laughter] because the Bible calls it a mystery, 'the mystery of Godliness', God was manifest in the flesh. But God wants us to *study* this mystery and never lose sight of these two *great* facts: Jesus is the Son of man; He's also the Son of God. He's just as much the Son of God as He walks this earth as when He received the adoration of the angels in the heavenly courts before He came. The Son of Man; the Son of God – a *real* man. Oh, I'm thankful for the reality of that, aren't you? [Audience responds: Amen.]

And the sacrifice that He made upon the cross was a real sacrifice. There was no staged act in the matter. He actually *bore* the sins of men, the guilt of man. His heart was broken by the sin of the world. Nothing imaginary about it, but our imagination is to *picture* it. We're to gather about the cross, contemplate the *great* sacrifice that was made for our redemption. And remember, it's *real*, *all real*.

The resurrection was real. Christ actually left an empty tomb and He came forth triumphant over death and the grave and revealed Himself to His disciples. We should turn to Luke, the 24th chapter. Here's a very interesting picture on reality. Luke, the 24th chapter. As they were gathered in the upper room the evening of the resurrection day, hearing the story of those two men from Emmaus about the One who had joined them on the way and His telling them the meaning of the events, *suddenly* Jesus stood among them. He had been *invisible* up to that moment that He chose to reveal Himself.

Now this is something that you and I do not understand, but it's just as *real* as can be. We must not let the fact that it's *invisible* make us think that it's *ghostly*. That was their problem, the disciples' problem. "...They were terrified," it says in the 37th verse, "and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit," a ghost, whatever they conceived *that* to be.

"And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had

thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet” Luke 24:38-40.

Was He real? [Audience responds: Yes.] Did they find it out? How did He prove it to them? He let them see Him; He let them *feel* Him. And then He said, “Have you anything to eat around here?” And they said, “Yes” and they gave Him some things to eat, and He stood there and ate. Were they convinced? Yes.

And you remember that there was one of the eleven that wasn’t there. What was his name? [Audience responds: Thomas.] Thomas. What did he say when he heard the report? “I can’t believe it. And unless I can put my finger in His hands and feel those scars and put my hand and feel the scar in His side, I’m not going to believe.” You remember that a week went by and Jesus met with them again. He said, “Thomas, come here. Put your finger in and feel the scars in My hands. Put your hand in and feel the scar in My side.” Thomas bowed in adoration, surrendering his doubts. “My Lord and my God.”

Was Jesus *real*? Was there any question in the minds of those disciples? Not a bit of it, friends. You know, those same scars are going to be seen by you and me very soon, very soon. In the book of Habakkuk, the 3rd chapter and the 4th verse, reading the margin, we’re told that He had bright beams out of His side and “...there was the hiding of His power”. I want to read you the inspired comment on this in the book *Great Controversy*, page 674; speaking of the eternal reward of the faithful after sin and sinners have been entirely consumed:

“One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: ‘He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power.’ (Habakkuk 3:4, margin). That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God – there is the Saviour’s glory, there the ‘hiding of His power.’” *Great Controversy*, page 674.

So the scars of Calvary remind us of the *reality* of this divine Son of God. He took humanity, never to lose it. He became one with us, not as a loan but as a gift. Nonetheless, the Son of God *is* the Son of Man and He’s *real*. He’s *real*. The scars are there. He’s there. What’s He doing? Ah friends, there’s good news about that, what He’s doing. We’ll come to it a little later. But now I want to notice where Jesus went, according to the Bible. John, the 14th chapter, verses 1-3. These are His words to the disciples as they were gathered there at the last supper. He had given them the emblems of His sacrifice, the bread and the wine. As they lingered there in contemplation and communion, He said:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” John 14:1-3.

Will there be a place for us? Oh, yes. So He went to a *place*. He went to heaven, and He went there to prepare places for you and me: *real* places, nothing imaginary, nothing mystical about it, just as *real* as this building in which we worship tonight. And in order that we might sense that, in the book of Revelation, He devoted the last two chapters of this book to a description of that glorious city where He is now, in the New Jerusalem. Revelation, the 21st chapter and the 22nd chapter. This is where He is and this is going to be our eternal home. It's coming down to this world at the end of the thousand years.

You remember, speaking of Abraham in Hebrews 11, Paul says although he was a pilgrim and a stranger, Abraham looked for what? [Audience responds: A city...] A city which hath what? [Audience responds: Foundations.] Foundations. I was looking at that word this week and I thought, That sounds like something real substantial, doesn't it; a city which hath *foundations*, not just some cloudy image, not just some idea, some state of mind. Abraham looked for something *substantial*, more substantial than the tents that he lived in.

“...He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” Hebrews 11:10.

Well, here in Revelation 21:12, we're given a picture of that city. Revelation 21:14:

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” Revelation 21:14.

Is John's name there? [Audience responds: Yes.] It must have thrilled him to see his name there in the foundation. Peter's name? Yes. Peter lost his life in the cause of God, but he's going to be there, and his name is in one of those foundations, twelve foundations.

The 12th verse says it has 12 gates, each one made of a pearl. And then the 16th verse, another 12 – the measure of the city is 12,000 furlongs. A furlong is an eighth of a mile so that figures out to 1500 miles. That's the circumference, the way the cities were measured. Fifteen hundred miles, and since it's foursquare, so it's 375 miles this way and 375 miles that way, and back again on the far side, 375 miles, and then back to the starting point, 375 miles. Why did God give us those facts and figures concerning these things? He wanted us to sense the *reality* of it all, my friend, the *reality* of it.

Popular theology has made so many things mystical and imaginary and hazy and ghostly that unless we're careful, some of that is a hangover in our experience. We want to look at the literality of it all. Now back to *Great Controversy*, page 674. Notice how we're warned *not* to do this, not to miss the blessing of the literality:

“A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home” *Great Controversy*, page 674.

Notice this is a danger. What's the danger? To just *spiritualize* it away, make it all a symbol of this, that, and the other thing. By the way, friends, can something be a symbol and still be very real? When Jesus took the bread and said, “This is my body,” He was using the bread as a symbol. Was it still bread? When He pointed to the grapevine and said, “I am the true vine,” He used the vine as a symbol. Did the vine cease to be a real, literal vine? No. So, dear friends, everything in heaven and earth, rightly understood, has some spiritual lesson to teach us, but it does not thereby *lose* its literality. It does not lose its being a *real* object just because it uses a symbol.

“A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father's house” *Ibid.*

Oh, I want to see my mansion! You'll enjoy looking at my mansion, but you'll like yours better. [Laughter.] God's got one that He's preparing for me that's different from *any* that the rest of you have. It takes something special to suit me, you understand. [Laughter.] It does *you* too!

Oh, let's get the reality of it, what do you say? [Audience responds: Amen.] We can picture it in our imagination, and remember, it's going to be better, no danger of getting disappointed because He doesn't live up to your expectations. It'll be greater than that.

Now do you know what's in that New Jerusalem right now? There's a temple. That's where Jesus is. That's where Jesus is, in that temple. Hebrews, the 8th chapter. The Bible uses three names for it – the temple, the tabernacle, and the sanctuary. They're all different names for the dwelling place of God. And in Hebrews 8:1-6, we're given a picture of Jesus in His *present* work, so don't miss this. The same Saviour Who made Adam in His image at creation; that same Saviour who took our human flesh and died for us on the cross and rose from the dead; that same Saviour Who is coming in glory and take us to our eternal reward; that same Saviour is *now* doing something very *real* for us in a very *real* place – the center of this New Jerusalem city, which is 375 miles square. How big the sanctuary is, I don't know. It's no meager edifice, I can tell

you that! It's a *grand, grand* temple so large, so vast that *all* the heavenly hosts can gather there for worship, and share with Jesus in His mediatorial ministry.

In Revelation, the 4th chapter and the 5th chapter, we're given views of what's going on there. But here in Hebrews the 8th chapter, we're given a clue as to something very interesting. Hebrews 8:1-6 lets us in on this secret, that in order, don't miss it, in order that you and I might have an opportunity to know something of the structure and the work of the heavenly sanctuary, God had Moses make a copy down here in this world. That's what we're looking at. This is a copy of Moses' sanctuary. Moses' sanctuary is copied after what? The one in heaven. And so that's what he says in Hebrews, the 8th chapter and the 5th verse. But these priests that serve in the earthly sanctuary "...serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." In Hebrews, the 8th chapter and the 2nd verse, it says that our Lord is:

"A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle,
which the Lord pitched, and not man" Hebrews 8:2.

That word that's translated here 'true' is also translated 'real'. We're dealing with reality. Instead of the heavenly sanctuary being *less* real than the earthly, it's just as real, if possible *more* real. And if you and I will study the earthly sanctuary, and remember that it's a copy of the heavenly, we can learn some very precious things about it.

One very simple yet far-reaching fact we learn from it is that it has more than one room in it. How many? Two. Now, this thought that there's more than one room is proven by the word here in Hebrews that's translated 'sanctuary'. It's in the plural. It's the Holy *Places*, the Holy Places, the Holy Places... How many? We learn that by reference to the type, Moses' sanctuary. There were two there, two in the shadow, so two in the substance. Two in the copy, so two in the pattern. And why two? We'll take a look at that more clearly in another study.

But tonight, we're studying reality. We're studying the fact that man is *real*, and God, in whose image he was made, is *real*. We're studying the fact that Christ is *real* – a *real* Saviour, a *real* sacrifice, a *real* mediator, and that we have in heaven a *real* reward, literal. Why, do you know friends, it's a wonderful thing to think of it in this way: to carry out these promises that we've read tonight, we're going to have at least two homes because Jesus said that He went to the New Jerusalem to do what? Prepare a place for us. So I know I'm going to have a city home. But when I read in Isaiah 65:17-18, I find that I'm going to have the privilege of building a house myself and planting a vineyard myself and eating of it. Won't that be wonderful? You know, there're two things I love. One is to do something myself and the other is to have some friend do something *for* me. I'm going to have both up there. [Laughter.] I'm going to have both. Aren't you glad to share in that?

Ah, let nothing rob us of the joy of reality. And if somebody thinks you're childish, tell them you're not *childish*, you're *child-like*. [Laughter.] Jesus said that to enter the

kingdom of heaven we'd need to be converted and then become as what? [Audience responds: Little children.] Little children, not gullible but trustful. It's worthwhile listening to what God says in the Bible and believing it, just like a little child believes what its father and mother say, what do you say? [Audience responds: Amen.]

And friends, listen. As you've heard me say on other subjects in the past, the people who are so big and bold to tell us what isn't up there, they've never been there. They've never been there. Why not listen to the One who *has* been there, the One who made it all? Why not listen to the prophets of God who have seen it all in glorious visions? Why not share the reality of it as day by day we gather at Calvary and see Jesus dying for us; at the resurrection, and see Him rising; at the ascension and see Him going to heaven? And gather at the mercy seat and see Him there praying for us?

Blessed reality, blessed reality...

[Elder Frazee begins to sing "Blessed Assurance" and audience joins him.]

Thank God we're not looking at a mirage. We are looking at reality. Unseen? Ah, but the telescope of faith looks *through* and *on beyond* all, everything in this world and knows the man who looks through that telescope that he's looking at reality.

Now, I'm sure that a number of you would like to speak for Jesus tonight and at least to start with, let's give those that haven't had a chance for the last two weeks to speak. Either you weren't here before or somebody else spoke and you didn't get a chance. Press right up here and give your word of response and witness. It'll make Jesus happy and it'll make your soul blessed and bless somebody else.

[Testimony service follows.]

[Elder Frazee begins to sing "In the Sweet By and By" and audience joins him.]

Is there somebody here tonight that is longing for the reality to be made clear to you? I trust that God will answer your prayer and I want to pray for you as we close. Would somebody like that? All right, let's bow our heads:

Dear Lord, we want this blessed sense of reality to be the possession of each one. We thank Thee for the gift of faith, which in turn enables to receive Thy other gifts. And I pray that just now, Thou wilt help each one who is reaching out to extend a hand of faith, to reach Thy hand of love stretched out to save us. We thank Thee, in Christ's name, Amen.

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