



I Introduction

There's something about Christianity that I personally find very unique! We don't have a second chance to improve our score! No one lives out their life, dies, goes to heaven, and then returns to do an improved version! We all get one shot and only one! No wonder God has left us His history book, the Bible, which by the way, has been preserved and brought down through the ages at great cost to some very faithful saints of God. Yes some have paid with their lives to see to it that another generation of God's people receive His written Word. I don't know about you but that moves me to tears! What do we do with it in our generation? We read it, believe it, and do it! That's what we do with it "Today".

Do you think, Jesus had a vision of what His death, burial and resurrection would be able to accomplish in our lives? Do you think He was God enough to know all things? I think there's a spiritual potential that He clearly sees we can attain to in the "here and now". I don't know about you but I don't want one drop of Jesus' blood to have been shed in vain on my behalf. Not one! I want that everything He envisioned for me would be realized and that through it He would be blessed and thrilled because of what He was able to accomplish! I would like this for all the redeemed of the Lord. He's worth to receive honor and glory!

It is my sincere desire that you be blessed and challenged as you consider the truths of this simple yet profound Bible Study. I'm fully convinced that if God's people, individually as well as corporately caught the vision of God for them we would experience much more enduring victory. We would see a spiritual awakening and revival in the land.

Thanks for your time!

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2 The God of Vision

What is it to have vision? One of the dictionary meaning is: "a mental image of what the future will or could be like". From the human perspective this is quite true, with God however there is nothing left for imagination! He is all knowing, all seeing! He has the unique, Divine, ability to see the beginning from the end. Maybe it has something to do with Him not being locked into time as we are.

The point is, He doesn't have to imagine anything, He can see it. That being the case; when God saying something will be; it's fact!

Because the LORD is all knowing (omniscient) He doesn't have to imagine anything! So In the strict sense of the word God does not have "vision" as we do! He does however know exactly what things should be like, are like and will be like! Our God has divine purpose for everything He initiates. When God made the world He saw what it could be! This was His purpose. He also saw what it would be and already had the blueprints for the new heaven and earth!

When the Almighty first created Adam and Eve there was divine purpose! He saw what they were, what they could be as well as what they would be. Understanding all this before He even breathed into their nostrils the breath of life He had prepared the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (Rev.13:8). God is never surprised and is always prepared! The cross was never plan "B" in God's scheme of things! He was never forced into taking drastic action by the powers of darkness. His has been in control all the time. Nothing is too difficult or impossible for Him.

With that in mind lets consider "God's vision" for humanity! Let's consider what He sees we are, can be, and will be if we in faith embrace His vision. The clear teaching of Scripture reveals, God looks for people who agree with His divine purposes for the "here and now". He is looking right now to see if you will chose to agree with His purposes for your life! Looking back through time we find this to be the case with God and the nation of Israel.

God had a plan, a purpose for the nation of Israel! They had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years. This was not by surprise. He told Abraham, this would happen (Gen.15:13). When the fullness of time was come God was there to deliver them. He had raised up Moses to give the human leadership to the divine purposes of God. After some persuasion Moses chose to embrace the purposes of God. God's purposes for Moses and the nation of Israel became Moses' vision!

The Exodus events are not with significance to us! They serve as examples and illustrations of New Covenant salvation. **Heb. 3:5 - Moses was certainly faithful in God's house, but only as a servant. His work was an illustration of the truths God would reveal later.** God will often use the natural to teach us the spiritual. There's a lot for us to glean from Israel's exodus experiences! For our purposes in this study we're going to focus on those issues that will affect us experiencing God's full purposes in this generation.

Every generation of God's people face their own unique challenges! However, every generation faces the similar challenge of embracing and experiencing fully God's divine purpose! If we miss it here we've missed. Were not coming back for a instant rerun. We're not given to opportunity come back and try it again! We must learn from the Word of God now! Apply the Word of God now! And experience God's full divine purposes for our lives now! Some things about God and His Kingdom can never be experienced this side of heaven! On the other hand some things about God and His Kingdom will only be experienced in the "here and now"! Some quick examples: You can only be "born again" while here on earth. There'll be no need for healing in heaven. There'll be no opportunity in the new heaven and earth to say no to sin. There'll be no sin. The point is, God has chosen "Time" for some very unique challenges and experiences. We'll never have another opportunity like we do right now to fully surrender to God and have His purposes be our "Vision"!

3 Today is The Day

What about today? How does this effect my "here and now"? Scripturally "Today" is an allotted period of time during which Gods purposes are be realized in Time . Heb 3:13 You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. "Today" will not always be here!

1) **Today is the day of Salvation.** 2 Cor. 6:2 - For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. **Today is the day of salvation.**

2) **Today is the day of Rest:** Heb.4:7 - So God set another time for entering his place of rest and **that time is today.** ... "Today you must listen to his voice. Don't harden your hearts against him."

3) **Today is the day to hear Gods voice:** Heb.3: 7 That is why the Holy Spirit says, **"Today you must listen to his voice.** 8 Don't harden your hearts against him as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested God's patience in the wilderness".

The first two items in the above list will never be realized without the personal application of point (3). Clearly God speaks today. That being the case then, God speaks everyday. If there's a break down in communications with God it's not the result of His failure to speak. It's reassuring to know that God is always willing and desirous to talk. The challenge is for us is not to just hear God speaking but to hear what He is saying. As unique as each of the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation were they all received this same instruction. The difference between the NIV translation and the NLT helps to bring out the point I want to focus on! It possible to hear someone speaking but not really listen to what they're saying.

(NIV) Rev. 2:7 - He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

(NLT) Rev. 2:7 - "Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Everyone who is victorious will eat from the tree of life in the paradise of God.

It's one thing to hear and another thing to listen. With the nation of Israel, for example, it's very clear that they hear the God but they just failed to really take it to heart. They could not have been given clearer instructions about Gods will for them to enter and possess the Promised Land. The first generation exodus Israelites have personally experienced multiple miracles during their deliverance from Egypt. The physical presence of God "in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night" was continually being manifest. When push came to shove, as it were, they balked in unbelief and as a result failed to personally experience Gods best for their lives.

1 Cor.10:4,5 - and all of them drank the same miraculous water. For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Yet after all this, God was not pleased with most of them, and he destroyed them in the wilderness.

Let's ask ourselves a few questions! Was it Gods will for the first generation of exodus Israelites to enter and possess the Promised Land? Could they have experienced Gods best for their lives in their generation? Did the second generation of exodus Israelites experience what God had promised the first generation? What should we be learning from this example?

4 What Unbelief Can Do

The Bible is much more than recorded ancient Middle East history! From it we learn not only about God but Kingdom principles as well. [Rom. 15:4 Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us.](#) All that happened to the physical nation of Israel in their journey with God from Egypt to Canaan has spiritual lessons we are to apply to our lives in this generation! We are to learn both from their success and their failures.

Israel had come through the Red Sea! They had been personal partakers in the miracle power of God. Right before their very eyes they saw the Red Sea open! They passed through on dry ground with walls of water on either side. Having passed through they now saw those same walls of water come crashing down on all their former enemies. Not one survived! They experienced the bitter waters of Marah being made sweet and drinkable! Miraculously they were being fed Manna in the morning and eat at night. Now they were peacefully camped on the banks of the Jordan River! The Promised land lay before them!

They made a corporate decision to send in a small advance party to check things over! Twelve men in all made this first venture into the Promised Land. On their return they brought back samples of the produce the Land was yielding. Exceptional! They'd never seen anything like it! The signs were more than promising. Its exactly how God had described it to them! But wait! There were enemies in the land! Big enemies! There were mountains and high walled cities! Ten out of the twelve spies chose to view things through humanistic understanding. Human logic said, "it was impossible for Israel to conquer this land." Let's hear it in their own words! [Num. 13:33 "We saw the Nephilim there \(the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim\). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."](#) Clearly these guys were not looking through eyes of faith. They were leaning on their human reasoning. The outcome of such an approach to the things of God is nothing short of tragic.

Except for those who were of the "faith camp" the entire "first generation exodus Israelites" died in the wilderness, never experiencing God's "full salvation" for them. [Heb 3:19 So we see that they were not allowed to enter his rest because of their unbelief.](#) What makes unbelief so dangerous and completely unacceptable to God is what it produces. Disobedience is always the result of unbelief. Disobedience is sin and sin can have no place in the presence of God or His eternal Kingdom.

5 "Out of" and "into"

God, from the deepest recesses of His heart authored salvation. To suggest or believe that God's redemptive work would be anything other than full and complete would indicate a lack of understanding. God has always intended that people be completely saved.

[1P.2:2 You must crave pure spiritual milk so that you can grow into the fullness of your salvation. Cry out for this nourishment as a baby cries for milk.](#) For the nation of Israel the fullness of their salvation was when they entered "INTO" Canaan and physically took possession of it. For New Covenant Believers full salvation is entering "INTO" Christ-likeness.

"Full salvation" is always in the heart of God. His original "vision" or purpose for Israel was to take them "OUT OF" Egypt and "INTO" Canaan. Even though Israel escaped Egypt and was peacefully camped at the Jordan River they were not experiencing God's "Full Salvation". They had experienced the "OUT OF" but not the "INTO".

The divinely inspired record of the Exodus to Canaan events has vital lessons, for New Covenant Believers, that should not be underestimated or minimized! It's my personal conviction that far too many of God's precious people live out their earthly lives in the "OUT OF" faze of redemption never really entering the "INTO" faze of their blood bought salvation.

It's a strange phenomena how the "first generation exodus Israelites" were able to believe God for the deliverance "out of" Egypt yet these same people would not believe Him to take them "into" the Promised Land. You'd think that after experiencing one miracle after another that by the time they reached the Jordan River they'd be, believing, "nothing is impossible with our God." Not so, however!

God fully intends that we take this Old Testament illustration of redemption and bring it into New Covenant and learn from it! What do we learn? We learn: it's possible to believe God to deliver us from sin (Egypt) and yet not believe Him to take us into Christ-likeness.

Was the Land of Promise real? Yes! Did God say the land was Israel's to possess? Yes! Was it possible for the "first generation exodus Israelites" to inherit the Land? Yes it was! How do we know that? Because the "second generation Israelites" did it! The only difference between the first and second generation was faith. The second generation chose to believe God rather than lean on their own understanding.
[Heb.11:6 - So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith.](#)

Human reasoning so often fails to factor in the promises and power of God. It has a determined tendency to lean on its own understanding resulting at best in results of human limitations. God has often chosen to lead his people into situations of human impossibility. As a result we need to learn to view things through the possibilities of God. This when we're called upon to trust in God's Word, to trust in the integrity of His heart.

Can we believe that God really does have our best interest at heart? Are we ready to believe that God has no hidden agenda. With God it's "WYSIWYG"! **What You See Is What You Get.** God always says what He means and means what He says. He's trustworthy.

6 Full Salvation

This is our Promised Land! This is our place of "Rest" and this is for now! This is our "Today"! Lets not make the mistake of thinking, Canaan Land represents heaven! It doesn't! There is no sin in heaven and no enemies to conquer! Israel's journey into Canaan represents our journey into Christ-likeness.

It's amazing how much resistance there can be to the concept of spiritual Christ-likeness for the "here and now". Today is the day of salvation. Today is when we are to enter God's Rest. There are definite spiritual purposes chosen by God to be experienced in the "here and now". Heaven is a wonderful place! It is our physical destiny, our citizenship is there (Ph.3:20). Some things we'll never experience until we get there. There is however much to be experienced now that will not be experienced there. To be "Born Again" must happen now because it doesn't happen in heaven. To be physically healed is an experience allotted for now. There'll be no healing in heaven because there's no sickness there. To have God provide a financial miracle is something that will never happen in heaven. The list can go on but the point I hope is made. Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day of full salvation! Today is the time to enter in and experience Christ-likeness in our lives.

The first generation of exodus Israelites had their unique challenges and we have ours. They failed to believe God. They chose to look at things through humanistic perspectives. They looked at themselves and saw the impossibilities. They balked in unbelief and rebelled in disobedience. They refused to go forward in God and as a result wandered aimlessly through the desert of doubt fear and unbelief. It's absolutely tragic but this same thing can happen to New Covenant Believers. They know what it is to repent of sin and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior yet never really experience too much in the way personal Christ-likeness in their lives. They never seem to get free from the Adamic nature and are plagued with things like, bitterness, hatred, envy, pride, selfishness, their pursuit is or worldly fame and fortune. They seem in love with the things of this life more than the things of heaven! They never experience full salvation. Oh yes they've experienced God freeing them from Egypt, they've come through the Red Sea, as it were, but they have never cross through the Jordan River.

Now is the time for Christ-likeness, not when we get to heaven! Col. 3:5 ¶ So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. 6 Gods terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. 7 You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. 8 ¶ But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. 10 In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you. This is for "Today" These kind of things are not dealt with in heaven! The transformation into Christ-likeness is our "Today Salvation".

7 Following the Leader

We're wanting to learn from the Word of God! How did Israel finally possess the Promised Land? What was their method, their strategy, their power? How did it happen for them? The way it worked for them is how it works for us! Remember God is using the physical to teach us the spiritual.

Ps.44:3 They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strength that gave them victory. It was by your mighty power that they succeeded; it was because you favored them and smiled on them.

The second generation "exodus Israelites" succeeded where the first generation failed! Why? They chose to believe that their God would do for them what they could not do for themselves. This next statement is not an exaggeration! New Covenant Christianity is not difficult to live, it's impossible! The ten unbelieving spies had it partly right! It was impossible for them they forgot however to factor God into the equation. That was the fatal mistake. Christ-likeness, like salvation is humanly impossible! It was never meant to be anything less! This is where Jesus comes into the picture.

Let's just look at a couple of Scriptures concerning the spiritual leadership of Jesus!

Heb.2:10 ... Through the suffering of Jesus, God made him a perfect leader, one fit to bring them into their salvation.

Heb 7:25 - Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (NIV)

Clearly Jesus is the Perfect Leader with the capacity for brings His people into their full salvation. Because of Him "Full Salvation" is a very real possibility for every Born Again Believer. It's all about Him and not about us. It's not without significance that Moses, who in type represented the law was unable to bring Israel into the Promise Land. That job would require something more than legalism was capable of producing. This was a job for Joshua! Joshua is the Hebrew name meaning, Jehovah Saves! Jesus is the Greek name meaning Jehovah Saves.

As Israel was about to embark on a great adventure into the Land of Promise they were given a few preliminary instructions. The one we want to focus right now has to do with them being "followers".

Josh.3:2 - After three days the officers went throughout the camp, 3 giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, **you are to move out from your positions and follow it. 4 **Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before....****

The Israelites had never done anything like this before! They didn't know the way but God did! They were to follow the Ark. Bringing this into New Covenant we are to follow the Ark, Jesus. He has gone ahead of us! He is familiar with the way. He know what it takes to get the job done and as the Resurrected Christ He stands available to meet every need we have. He is the Perfect Leader.

Jesus is the Great Shepherd of the sheep! He knows exactly where He's leading us! The challenge we have is to follow in His footsteps. How do we do that when He's not here in person and were dealing more in the spirit realm than the physical? We follow Jesus by simply being doers of the Word of God.

8 The Faith Factor

As great as a "faith study" is, we're going to try and avoid that at this point! Without faith it's impossible to please God and it's also impossible to enter the New Covenant Promised Land of Christ-likeness without it! True "God faith" has one very distinct uniqueness, it requires the Word of God as its anchor. If there's no Word then there's no faith.

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How God Sees Things

Let's just stop here and take a look at a vital principle of God. It actually involves discovering how God has chosen to materialize His unseen promises. There's a Scripture in Romans that needs our attention!

Rom. 4:17 - As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed- the God who gives life to the dead and **calls things that are not as though they were.**

God calls things that are as though they already were! Examples:

1) When Abraham was childless and his reproduction abilities were past season God called him **"the father of many nations"** (Gen.17:5).

2) Another example is in the book of Judges. Gideon, who was the least of the least and at the time of his divine visitation, was hiding for fear of the enemy. It was then, at the most unlikely time that God called him a **"mighty warrior"** (Jud.6:12). One version of the Bible said he was called a **"hero"** another a **"mighty man of valor"**.

Was God lying when He said Abraham who was childless was the father of many nations? No! He sees the future and calls it how He sees it! Let's bring this into New Covenant perspective. What has God declared concerning us that "is but isn't"? A great example of this is found in Romans!

Rom. 6:6 - **Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ** so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.

From this Scripture we're told the "old sin nature", the "old self" was crucified with Christ. If you've been crucified then you're dead! Something dead can't trouble you! Or can it? Lets look at another Scripture relating to the "old self" and just how dead it is!

Eph.4:22 - **throw off your old evil nature** and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception.

Why should I have to "through off" the "old evil nature" if it has already been crucified with Christ! Isn't it dead? It was the great revivalist D. L. Moody who said, "I've never met a man that has given me so much trouble as myself". How truth it is! In the physical Canaan land there were many enemies to conquer. Before Israel ever set foot into that God called it done. He saw every enemy destroyed and His people living in peace. Now all it would take is for His people to follow Him into what He saw.

The enemy comes to us time and time again trying to convince us nothing will be any different! Well he's a liar and the father of lies. It can and will be different if we will rise up in Jesus name and go forward, trusting Jesus to bring down every enemy for us. Jesus will conquer our fears. He will root out any bitterness, any hatred, any jealousy, any pride, and all sin if we will only choose to believe Him.

"Today" is the day of our salvation not tomorrow! Its a big mistake to think, "I'll just run it out like it is and hope Ill be all fixed up when Jesus returns and changes everything". Some things are destined of God to change now! The ruling power in our lives is one of them! The "new self" which has been created by God to be just like Jesus must come to it's blood bought position in our lives in the "here and now".

10 Saying "Yes & Amen"

Amen means, "so let it be as it is"!

2 Cor. 1:20 - For no matter how many promises God has made, **they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.** (NIV)

Every time we say Amen to the promises of God He is glorified! Why? Because we are agreeing with Him? We're saying, "Yes Lord so let it be done unto us as you have spoken". We're saying, "Yes Lord you are the Perfect Leader and you will take us into the land of Christ-likeness. You will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves."

In completing this Study let's look at what I think is one of the greatest examples of how we can experience God's best in our lives "Today". The example is that of Mary the young virgin. Unbeknown to her she had a unique encounter with destiny. God had chosen her to mother the Christ child. Let's, for a few minutes, put her shoes on and walk in her footsteps with God and see what we can learn.

Lk. 1:26-38 - ¶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸ Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" ²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰ "Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you! ³¹ You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" ³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin." ³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she's already in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God." ³⁸ Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant, and **I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May everything you have said come true.**" And then the angel left.

It's the attitude of her heart that is so amazing! It's this attitude which made it possible for her to experience this miracle of God. Impossible yes! More impossible than you and I experiencing Christ-likeness in the here and now? NO!

At first she was too sure how a virgin would give birth! She was told that this whole thing would be of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would do what was humanly impossible! Christ-likeness is humanly impossible!

All the legalistic human striving and "trying harder" will never produce the life of Christ in anyone. It must be a Holy Spirit work. This is encouraging and brings great relief. God does not expect us to do what only He can. The power must originate with Him.

Mary had a servant's heart! "I am the Lord's servant". Having been told what would happen to her she could have rebelled! She could have said, NO, I have my own life to live, thank you! Instead she wanted to serve the Lord! She wanted to be involved with His destiny for her life! She said, "I am willing to accept whatever He wants". That's an extremely spiritual response!

She signs off by saying "Amen" to the promise of God! Yes at this point her becoming pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit was still in the arena of promise. It had not yet materialized! It just like so many areas of our own lives where we've seen no change! No Christ-likeness! Now what! The promise has not yet materialized! What is the attitude of heart? Let's learn to blend our voices with that of the young virgin, Mary and say with her, **"May everything you have said come true."**