

God Breathed Himself into Man



From Time to Eternity (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with out theme for this week: "From Time to Eternity", a theme which will help you extract joy out of tragedy and purpose out of that which seems purposeless.

In my introductory talk yesterday, I explained briefly the difference between eternity and time. Eternity, by definition, denotes that which is out of time, or above time or beyond time, something which has no beginning and no end. It is not merely an endless period of time, it is a different mode of being, one in which the categories we use to describe time no longer apply.

One fact that makes eternity of tremendous importance in the life of each one of us is that eternity is an essential part of the nature of God. God is an eternal being. He does not indwell time, He indwells eternity, and out of eternity He operates in time. When we come face to face with God, we are also confronted by eternity.

Man desires to escape from time, yet he fears eternity. However, Jesus has shown us the true way of escape. In John 17:3, this is what He says:

> "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

So, we can have eternal life only through knowing God revealed in Christ. Apart from Christ we may know God in various aspects. As Creator, as Judge, as King of the universe, but only in Christ can we know God as Father and through that knowledge of Him escape from time and partake of eternal life.

Today I'm going to explain why man has in him this deep longing for eternity. To understand this, we have to go back to the biblical account of the creation of man. This is the only such account which truly explains man to himself. Purely materialistic or mechanistic accounts of man's origin leave whole areas of man's personality and experience unexplained. You see, the Bible reveals that man was created in a different way from all other beings. The universe as a whole, and the beings that people it, were created by the

spoken Word of God. This is stated very clearly in Psalm 33:6:

> "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath [or the Spirit] of His mouth all their host."

So the spoken word of God brought the universe into being. We can turn for confirmation to the opening verses of Genesis 1:1-3:

> "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light."

So when God spoke, then light came into being. But, you see, the Spirit of God was also moving. So, it's by the word of the Lord and by the breath (or spirit) of His mouth, the combination of God's word and God's Spirit is the power behind all created existence. But the creation of man was unique. And this is described in Genesis 2:7, one very brief verse and yet is says so much:

> "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

For me that's a very vivid scene. I see the Almighty Creator, the Eternal Word, the Son of God, the Eternal Son, there in the garden molding out of clay a perfect figure. And when it was finished it was the most perfect piece of sculpture or statuary that had ever existed, but it was totally lifeless, it was just clay. And then the Great Creator stooped down and with one tremendous giving of Himself, breathed into those nostrils and those lips of clay the breath of life, and that inbreathed breath of God brought forth a living human personality, with all the marvels of the human body, and all the marvels of the inner personality of man, they were all brought into being by the inbreathed breath of Almighty God.

So we can say very simply and very correctly that God actually breathed Himself into man. There is in man something that comes direct from God. Thus man's personality has two opposite sources, one is from below, one is from above. From below he's made of dust, made of the earth. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, "The first man was of the earth [earthy]." The very name, "Adam," which was given to him is directly derived from the Hebrew word for earth which is Adama and that's one source of man's origin, but it's not the only one.

From above he received the inbreathed breath or Spirit of God. And when we see this fact of our creation, it explains things we cannot understand otherwise. It explains the continuing tension that we all experience, there's something in us drawing us upward. There's something in us pulling us downward. I question whether there's ever been a man or a woman that didn't somehow experience that. It was illustrated by the philosopher Plato in a picture that he used of the soul of man. He pictured the soul of man as a chariot being drawn through the universe by two horses, one was black and one was white. The black horse was always pulling downwards. The white horse was always pulling upwards. Of course, that's just an allegory, but it indicates, I think, the reality of this tension that there is in man, there's something in us that's very earthy, very, very earthy. It's right downward in its inclinations. But we can never fully gratify that because there is something in us that says, "That's not all. There's something more. There's something in me that belongs above." And so many men go through their lives tormented by this continual inner conflict. Thank God there is a way to resolve the conflict.

We've looked briefly at the Bible's account of the creation of man, its uniqueness. The Bible reveals two consequences of this unique method by which man was created. The first consequence is stated in Ecclesiastes 3:11. Speaking about God it says:

> "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

So God has surrounded man with a world in which there's so many things that are beautiful in their time, but only in their time. Sooner or later all of them wither and die, some quickly, some slowly. But everything is beautiful in its time, yet it's impermanent and man looks at this beauty and desires it and falls in love with it, and yet he's frustrated because it doesn't last. And there's an inner frustration because God through His inbreathed breath has set eternity in the hearts of men. So there's something in him that longs for that which is more than temporary. The longing for eternity without the ability to comprehend it, that's the enigma of human experience. The beauty of created things stirs this longing and then their decay frustrates it. This is the theme of endless writers, poets, philosophers and others, but only the Bible reveals the basis of it, the real purpose and meaning of it.

Then I want to go on to the second consequence of the specific way in which man was created. This is stated in

James 4:5:

> "Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: 'He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us'?"

He is God. God jealously desires that of Himself which He has inbreathed into man. God will not part with that willingly. It's part of Himself, it belongs to Him. It's there buried somewhere in man's fleshly nature. But God desires it with jealousy. He has a jealous love. He does not want to see that part of man turned away to false gods or to empty things that cannot satisfy. God longs after that part of Himself which He breathed into man. And that part of Himself responds to the longing of God.

And so it was, in a sense, for this purpose that Jesus came to recover that part of man which really belongs to God but which had been alienated by man's ignorance and rebellion. Luke 19:10 says this:

> "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

There's something in man that got lost, but God didn't give up on Him. He sent His Son to draw Him back to Himself. And then again in John 12:32, Jesus said:

> "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

So the eternal being of God reaches out to that which is eternal in man and the eternal God sent His Son to die on the cross to atone for man's sin and rebellion, and thus to draw to man back to Himself. And the conflict in man is this: that this eternal thing in Him cannot be satisfied with anything less then the eternal God.

How well I know this from my own experience as a student, as a professor of philosophy. I pursued satisfaction in so many forms, carnal, aesthetic, intellectual, travel, but I was continually frustrated, more and more frustrated. You see, there was something in me that could only be satisfied with God. And until I met God revealed in Jesus Christ, I never found that satisfaction. That's what every man, somehow, is longing for.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this theme: "From Time to Eternity." I'll be speaking about what happens when man responds to the drawing of Jesus.

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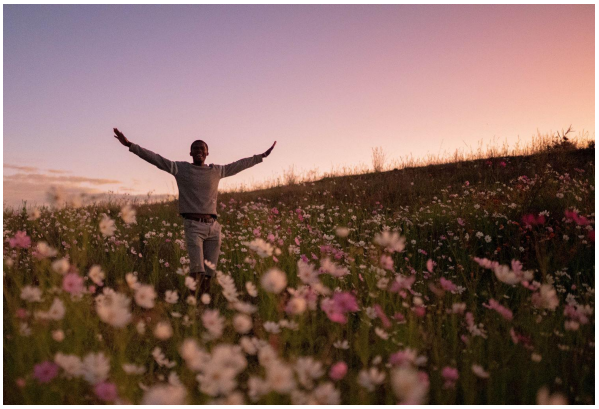

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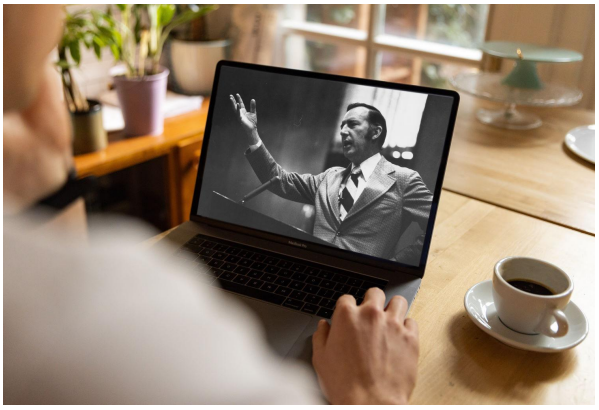

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