

Taking the vertical out of God in the absence of Christ

John the Revelator wrote that he did not see a Temple in Heaven, and that he heard a loud voice say, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.” (Revelation 21: 3, 22) Many are awaiting Jesus’ return for this to occur; for “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form...” (Col. 2: 9) According to this reality, when Christ is on Earth, God is on Earth with no religions, or when Christ is “not” on Earth, God will not be on Earth resulting in many Temples and Religious Teachers. However, does God want us to respond in the future only? Does he want us to wait for Jesus to return before humanity begins acting in a heavenly fashion without vertical forms of worship? Wouldn’t this waiting be constituted as a lack of faith and a demand for the miraculous, which in this particular case is the miraculous sign of Jesus’ reappearance? (Matt. 12: 38, 39) (St. John 4: 48)

Nevertheless, we believe God wants humanity to go deeper and beyond in its perception of his person. By this, we mean that humanity should not be so preoccupied with God, but with an aspect of him. God the father, the Supreme Being, is not just into himself, but into all created self-conscience beings, with the optimistic belief that they will become conscience of each other and him. (St. John 13: 34) Furthermore, he wants for us to see his placement in the status-quo; which is not vertical, but horizontal as is his character is. Consequently, if we earthlings treat each other equally, exempt of the status – quo, it will be the fulfillment of Rev. 21: 3, and it will prompt miracles similar to what the Apostles once performed in the absence of Jesus. Most importantly, it would cure the great social disease of the human heart which is the root of much sociological misconduct. Therefore, as the Apostles demonstrated (Acts 3: 7, 8), it is not necessary to have Jesus present on earth, for Jesus was once here already and he asked humanity to act in a certain way towards each other. When he returns, will he ask of us something different from what he asked of us in his first appearance? (Hew. 13: 8)

Moreover, what if after he returns, he decides to leave earth again? Will people revert to their selfish ways? Should it be because people see the human manifestation of God, in the physical presence of Jesus, that they should be influenced and motivated towards goodness, or should it be because of an inner mental and spiritual understanding that they should behave lovingly towards one another? (St. John 14: 15, 16, 26) – This reminds me of a day in elementary school when we all had to stretch out our hands so that the teacher could paddle them. The reason for this act was that everyone one was not behaving and performing the class assignment the teacher had prescribed, before she left the classroom. She gave us instructions and a warning of the consequence we could expect for non-compliance when she returned. However, as soon as she left the room, nothing went her way. Even though spanking is not permitted in the schools today, and we are not for this kind of punishment, I was guilty of disobedience along with the rest of the students. As a result, I learned from this harsh experience and I wanted to avoid any more future incidents of this kind. Another day, when the teacher left the room again and all we were required to do was act civilized, I remember telling myself there was no way I was going to get punished. So, while all the other students were out of control, I sat very still with hands clasped. Upon her return, the teacher noticed my behavior and praised me for it; excluding me from the classroom’s due punishment. The moral of the story is: ‘Be obedient in the absence of the teacher, just as you would be in their presence.’ (Matt. 25:14- 46)

However, in place of community centered deeds, religious people promulgate churchy works which express a vertical religious worldview. This worldview is rooted and structured by their vertical perception of God, which, since its inception, has been continually supported and shaped by the transitional commandment: Deut 6: 4, 5. But, Christ is the end and completion of that vertical perception. (Rom. 10: 4 & St. John 19: 28, 30) Jesus gave us new instructions on how to be and what to preach. We are to preach a horizontal God, that is reached through fruits of love (which when taken to their logical end will include aspects of economics; such as the lowering of the cost of living) towards our fellow man with no respect of persons. (Mark 12: 14) (Acts 10: 34)

In summary, what St. John saw was humanity’s final destiny and final perception of God which embraces a horizontal God on earth, whether Christ is present or absent. He did not see any church structures representing religions or a status – quo, particularly between the Clergy and the Laity, of all religions! Also, God in Christ strode to create Heaven on earth at his first arrival, and he will again bring it into being with those who will work with him. When Christ left, he did not take heaven with him, so at his return, he will expect to find it. (Luke.18: 8) All, will be asked what they had done to advance it. Therefore, taking the vertical out of ourselves through self denial is taking the vertical out of God in the absence of Christ. (Matt. 16: 24) (Mark 8: 34)