

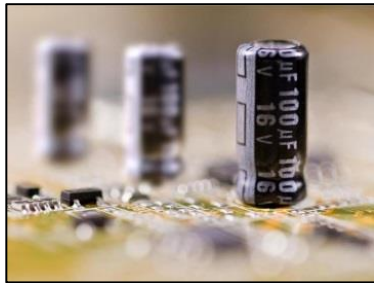
Shuteye

Envisioning an Invisible God

March 31, 2013



How do you relate to an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God? How'd He create the world? Where'd He put it? Where's heaven? Where's Hell? How will He wipe away every tear? How can He be *everywhere*? How could time *begin*? How'd He come to earth *and* stay in Heaven? Why did Jesus pray if *He's* God? How'd He perform miracles? Why is *Jesus* the *only way*? And how can God be three, yet One? Ever wish He'd reveal Himself like with the prophets: opening your eyes to another realm, showing you, through a vision, His invisible qualities and deepest mysteries?



But, what if He has? Know what a circuit board capacitor does?

"It's a passive, two-terminal, electrical component, used to store energy in an electrostatic field, so when there's an electrical potential difference across the conductors of a circuit, a static electric field develops across the capacitor's dielectric, causing positive and negative charges to collect on separate plates."



Now you know, *the worst way to learn*: relating the unknown to the unfamiliar. Maybe that's why you *struggled* with certain subjects. The best way to learn? *Parables*: relating the unknown to the familiar. Saying what it's *like*.

Capacitors are *like* water towers. A steady stream flows in, but flows out *as needed*. If demand is low, surplus fills the tank. If demand is high, it helps meet the need.

Parables aren't complete explanations (capacitors *don't* store water); **they're sufficient, immediate, and lasting illustrations**. Jesus constantly linked the inconceivable to the everyday, like lost coins, mustard seeds, and friends at midnight. **Only parables can sufficiently illustrate what cannot be explained or imagined**. God did this with creation itself. There are too many built-in, living analogies in nature to list, like children and parents and marriage (i.e. two become one, in love, to beget a third). This is why, even though God's ways are beyond us¹, Paul can say ...

... what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. — Romans 1:19-20 NIV

How can everyone clearly see everything?! If God designed a definitive analogy, allowing **everyone**, ever **born**, **everywhere**, every **day**, to sufficiently perceive **everything**,² what would *that* be *like*?!

¹ God's 'paths' and ways are "unfathomable" (Romans 11:33). Isaiah said: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9)

² "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done ..." (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

How would God reveal the *invisible*? *Clearly*, not with our eyes.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. [How?] For what is seen is temporary, [this is an incredibly important clue] but what is unseen is eternal. – 2 Corinthians 4:18 NIV



There's only one thing we can *only see* by *closing* our eyes. And the *only reason* we're blind to it, is because of our *pride*. We view the "temporary" as a greater reality than the "eternal".

We depict Heaven with misty clouds, and use the term: Holy *Ghost*. Jesus' disciples made this mistake when they were hiding after His death, and Jesus came to them through shut and locked doors.³



They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "... Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." – Luke 24:37-39 NIV

They assumed, *because* He could pass through solid doors, He must be a ghost (less solid). But, Jesus could walk through walls the way we can walk through water: He was *more solid*. They *did see* a 'ghost', but it *wasn't Jesus*; it was the *door! Ours is the lesser reality*; we're a mist, a mere breath, a passing shadow, vanishing smoke,⁴ and we live in something made of *nothing*.

... the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. – Hebrews 11:3b NIV



Why do movies like "The Sixth Sense" and "The Matrix" strike such a resonant, universal chord? Deep down we know the fundamental, *monumental*, pride-blinded truth: "***I'm the ghost, briefly, obviously, sojourning in an unreal, lesser copy, of a greater, foreign land!***"

God purposely created "**a poor reflection**" (1 Cor 13:12) of our *inherent home*: "**a copy of the true**" (Heb 9:24) Then, He rested, (Gen 2:2) not *sleeping*, but satisfied.⁵ It was *finished!*

[Then sin entered] Then the eyes of [Adam and Eve] were opened, [and immediately, self-absorption set in] and they realized they were naked ... [and pride and shame came rushing in to steal their innocence] – Genesis 3:7a NIV

Mankind's eyes clouded with vanity, envy, and depravity. We couldn't behold God's glory, or relax and recharge in His comforting embrace. We were cursed with undying thorns, (Gen 3:17-18) but **the real burden was our self-centered inability to refocus, and find rest.** So, an image of God came, and claimed to be the only truly solid door.

"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved ... I came that they may have *life*, and have it *abundantly*." – John 10:9-10 NAS

³ He did it again, a week later, "Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them ..." (John 20:26)

⁴ "You are a mist" (Jas 4:14), "a mere breath ... a passing shadow" (Ps 144:4), "my days vanish like smoke" (Ps 102:3)

⁵ "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." (Gen 1:31)



If we don't already *have* life, what *do* we have? Something much less! That's why He tells of the narrow road that *leads to life*, (Mat 7:14) and refers to *entering Heaven as entering life*. (Mark 9:43) There were *two* trees in the Garden. They ate from the tree of knowledge. God kept them from the tree of ... *what?* Life! (Gen 3:22-24) Christ died so we might ... *what?* *Live!* Abundantly! Forevermore! That's why He says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Mat 11:28) When He claims to be *Lord of the Sabbath*, (Mat 12:8) He's not saying, "I can *teach* you to rest," but, "I am rest itself!"



And, He died, as our thorn-crowned curse, and again it was *finished*; and *He* was laid to rest. **He rested, not sleeping, but satisfying our debt.** And then He *un-died* to confirm the *greater reality* and expose the *lesser*: **We are a fleeting mist, briefly occupying a passing shadow.** But, our pride will hide this humbling truth, because it exposes how hopelessly helpless, and desperately dependent, we really are. So, to open our sin-blinded eyes, and awaken our deepest desire, He designed the ultimate parable, to illustrate His eternal power and divine nature, and wired it directly into *every* human brain.

[DON'T READ BELOW – WAIT UNTIL SERMON – DON'T READ BELOW – WAIT UNTIL SERMON – DON'T READ BELOW]



Each night, as we seek that perfect rest that eludes us, we close our eyes, and see an even *lesser reality* that we emphatically believe to be *real*; only to learn the same insightful lesson, *every morning*: "It's a dream!" Every night, every healthy adult enters a REM sleep phase, for 90-120 minutes (curiously, the same as a typical movie), also known as paradoxical sleep. We're resting, but technically, not sleeping. Your mind is alert, creating a world more vivid and immersive than any modern, 3D, surround-sound theater. But, *before* the dream, what exists in its place? Nothing. Emptiness. Darkness.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. – Genesis 1:1-2 NIV

Deep in your subconscious, your separate-self hovers until, ***bang!*** It *fills* the void! "And there was light"! (Gen 1:3) And sky! Earth! Animals! Oceans! And self-willed beings, created in *your* image.

God said, "Let us **[Father/Son/Spirit]** make man in *our* image, in *our* likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air ..." – Gen. 1:26a NIV

In your dream, from the dust of the earth to the infinite expanse of space, *everything* is formed from nothing, at the command of a resting creator. But, here's the supreme question: Where *is* it?

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me ... – Psalm 139:7-10a NIV

Where are we right now? "For in him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28) "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ ..." (Eph 2:10) How foolish to try and run from God! Like a fish trying to swim from the sea, or a bird trying to fly from the sky!⁶ *But*, how comforting to know how closely He's guarding and keeping us.

⁶ Jesus "ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe." (Eph 4:10b) If Jesus fills our universe, beyond (i.e. outside) infinite space itself, then, we're not just "of Him", but literally, "inside of Him".

In your dreams, you are omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent! Nothing happens that you're not watching over. R.E.M. stands for *rapid eye movement*. It's unknown why they do it. A good theory is that they're trying to keep up with the onslaught of images.

For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. – 2 Chronicles 16:9a NAS (see also: Proverbs 15:3)

There's no satisfaction in dispassionate observation. So, the same subconscious energy that created and sustains your world, sends into it an image of *you, yourself*, begotten, not made.

He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God ... – Colossians 1:15a NIV

Your image communicates with your creation. It's *fully you*, as you recline in your bed, *your words, thoughts, memories* when you recall it; yet, it's *fully unique*, as it relates in your dream.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... Through him all things were made ... In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. [And, so] ... The Word became flesh [a much lesser reality for God] and made his dwelling among us. – John 1:1-5, 14a NIV

Each night we act as **three distinct selves**: our **tireless, reality sustaining, subconscious self**; our **journeying, interacting self-image**; and our **relaxed and untroubled, resting self**. And, although each operates independently from, and for, the rest, when we wake, we are *one*. We don't question it. We see no self-contradiction. It's quite simple to grasp: we are three in one.

Ever had a **lucid dream, where you become aware that you're the resting creator**? It's like what young-Jesus must've experienced as He became lucid of the fact, that He and the Father were one.⁷ **Lucid dreams don't seem less real**. Even though we *know* we're in a lesser reality, inside our mind, we're still oddly independent, though we know our resting self is expressing itself *through* us.

"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." – John 14:10-11 NIV

Oh, miracles! We break the laws of physics in our dreams. Jesus walked on water; I *flew*! We get to see how simple and natural it is to command the forces of a lesser reality if you created it.

"In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain ... and your years will never end." – Hebrews 1:10b-12 NIV

As creator, you existed before your dream world began, and will continue on after it ends, because you're outside the time/space confines of the lesser reality your brain contains and sustains.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church ... – Colossians 1:17-18a NIV

How would you explain *that* to those *inside* the confines? How could you make 'em understand that *they're* the mist, the passing shadow, vanishing smoke, living in something made of *nothing*?

⁷ "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God ..." (Luke 2:52) "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30) Imagine Jesus realizing He's the image of the Father, who has placed Himself inside His own creation as the Son!

How do you explain the futility of trying to get *themselves* into your bedroom, at sunrise, to live with you in your heavenly realm?

... [God] lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. [This is an illustration of God's perfect holiness] – 1 Timothy 6:16b NIV

How do you teach them that ...

The man who loves his [ghostly] life will lose it, while the man who hates his [fleeting mist of a] life in this [passing shadow of a] world will [enter through The Door and] keep it ... – John 12:25a NIV

How do you convince them of their utter dependence on *you*, and how nothing *here* has value *there* ... *except, you?* Well, for starters, you could try Isaiah's illustration.

... [it] will be as it is with a dream, with a vision in the night — as when a hungry man dreams that he is eating, but he awakens, and his hunger remains; as when a thirsty man dreams that he is drinking, but he awakens faint, with his thirst unquenched. – Isaiah 29:7b-8a NIV

The living analogy God has wired into us, will even *force* you to face the anguish and suffering of being rejected, persecuted, and tormented by the indebted beings *you've* created! Ever *realize* you're in a nightmare and cry out to *yourself* to wake up? You've removed your ability to rescue yourself, so you *pray* to your resting-self, who doesn't always grant your request.

... [Jesus] prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. – Matthew 26:39b NIV

There's one parallel glaringly absent in our dream world parable: we're *powerless* to bring the people we populate it with to life.

[We relate when Jesus said] "Where I am going, you cannot come". – John 13:33b NIV

How would you explain to your dream people, where you're going, and where the creator lives? You can't *point*. "He's ... out. Just *reach out*." But, *Jesus* could also say, "I'm not just someone who *has* power; I am power itself. Anyone, anything, with power, has it on loan from *Me*. I've not come to just *show you the way*, or *tell you the truth*, or even *lead you to life*. I am so much more than you could ever dream."

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." [Because, He's wired you to know] Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am *the way* and *the truth* and *the life*. No one comes to the Father except *through* me." – John 14:2-6 NIV

There's only one road that leads to life, and it's paved with *Jesus' life and death and resurrection*. We are *in* Him, and He is *in* the Father, so we must ask Him to *come into* us, to get us *out*.

"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." [Imagine the surprise when we realize where we've *been!*] – John 14:20 NIV

It's the foolish truth, to confound the wise, who think they see, through blinded eyes; but, try to picture their surprise, when Jesus grants them *visual-eyes!*

Has anyone ever shaken you out of a dream or a nightmare?

“Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken – that is, created things – so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.” – Hebrews 12:26b-29 NIV

Have you ever notice how often God is described as a Consuming Fire?⁸ And, do you know the ultimate destiny of Hades/Hell?

Then death and Hades [a.k.a. Hell] were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. – Revelation 20:14 NIV

What are the chances that those you create, who stay behind when *you* arise, are an *illustration* of the destiny of the wicked?

... I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. ... As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies. – Psalm 73:17b, 20 NIV

This *isn't teaching* that God is *actually sleeping* and dreaming. It's an illustration, *not an explanation*, of something beyond our comprehension. But, we know, from His Word, that Hell is eternal, a place of un-resting, undying, tormenting, separation from God. But, Jesus' emphasis is never on destruction (what fades), but on *restoration*, “the crown of life”, (Rev 2:10) found only in His presence.

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. [Unlike a dream, that quickly fades and flees when you arise] – 1 Peter 5:4 NIV

[John said, in his revelation] Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. – Revelation 20:11 NIV

[We will no longer need our nightly illustration of His invisible qualities: His eternal power and divine nature. Therefore] There will be no more night. – Revelation 22:5a NIV

No matter how tragic or tormenting your dreams, when the reality of sunrise dawns, it puts *everything* back into proper perspective.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of [lesser life] things has passed away. – Revelation 21:4 NIV

And, we get our greater-reality-body out of bed and get dressed.

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be *unclothed* [the quintessential nightmare] but to be *clothed* with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up *by life*. – 2 Corinthians 5:4 NIV

Did we miss any divine, eternal qualities? I *don't think* so! If God designed a definitive analogy, allowing *everyone*, ever *born*, *everywhere*, every *day*, to sufficiently perceive *everything*, what would *that* be *like*?! A dream. The only thing we can only see when we close our eyes to find our rest.

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye ... For the [alarm clock] trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, [solid as the Rock of our salvation!] and we will be changed. ... then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” [Leaving only, what? Life!] “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” – 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 NIV

⁸ “For the Lord your God is a consuming fire ...” (Deut 4:24). “... his tongue is a consuming fire.” (Is 30:27)