

The Progressive Nature of Divine Truth

by Bill and Karen Bishop

Ecclesiastes 1:9

(9) The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Solomon's words reinforce the concept that the New Testament is congruent with the Old. "There is no new thing under the sun" indicates that God's design is to repeat things over and over again. What seems to be new is actually a re-emergence of something from the past. Each week spirals over the previous week as time advances. The eighth day becomes the first as the new week spirals into being. To stretch out God's intended spirals into a linear fashion disregards the integrity of their designated repetition. By its very nature, God uses His spiraling pattern of repetition as a mechanism of instruction.

The spiraling cyclical patterning is not just relative to calendar cycles, but the same repetitive thought pattern relates to the Biblical text as well. From the Hebraic perspective, there are four basic levels of understanding in Scripture:

Pashat is the basic, superficial or contextual level.

Remez is the level that hints of deeper meaning, allegorical/philosophical, symbolism, and allusion.

Drash is the metaphorical or sermon level of stronger spiritual meaning, implying moral lessons.

Sod is the more hidden spiritual level that requires great spiritual aptitude to discern.

These four levels are known as *pardes*. PaRDeS is the acronym of these four levels, and *pardes* is also a Hebrew word that means: *paradise or garden*. A metaphor is easily seen here to be Eden where the Tree of Life was located.

The compilation of these four levels actually seems to suggest the fulness of God's perfect Heavenly impartation to man – His Tree of Life Truth.

A brief example of *pardes* might be evident as we look at the story of Joseph in Genesis. Many pastors relate this story of Joseph to Y'shua. Joseph was sold by his brothers. Y'shua was sold by Judas Iscariot. Joseph was treated unjustly by Potiphar. Y'shua was treated unjustly by Pilate. Joseph was put in prison. Y'shua was put to death. Joseph was raised up from prison. Y'shua was raised up from the dead. Joseph saved his brethren. Y'shua saved His brethren. The superficial reading of the literal story of Joseph as it is written would be the *pashat* level of the text. The teaching of its relativity to the life of Y'shua is a *remez* application. Further in-depth considerations could also reveal *drash* and *sod* layerings.

The *pardes* layering of the Biblical text is not limited to the interpretation of the wording within certain passages, but is also employed in the ordering of the Biblical text itself as we progress from Genesis to Revelation. This layering is as follows:

Father's Torah – *Pashat*

Analogies of Torah by the Prophets - *Remez*

Y'shua's Gospel instructions – *Drash*

Holy Spirit's influence - *Sod*

Again, we cannot stretch the theology of the Biblical text out in linear fashion and sever it wherever we'd like. We must build from the foundation up in God's Hebraic spiral patterning. Each layer underneath is necessary for the upward progression to transpire. In what we might call the "rule of advancement", each progressive level of theological interpretation MUST be congruent with the essence of ALL preceding levels.

Father provided the written Torah to Moses (*pashat*) to record for our consumption. The prophets distilled Torah into (*remez*) symbolic applications. Then many years later, Father's Torah Truth was amplified by Y'shua (*drash*) to provide stronger spiritual meaning to the Father's Law as the Living Torah. After Y'shua's resurrection, the Holy Spirit provided an indwelling Torah, written upon our hearts as (*sod*) a means to discern the hidden spiritual elements of God's voice. It is this voice that provided inspiration for Paul's writings. Because the *sod* level is more subjective, and difficult to convey, we must be very careful about the beliefs we form

relative to his words. His words can never invalidate any previous levels of Torah instruction.

More information and understanding is released as the layers advance. Paul claims that his words are inspired by the Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 3:5

*(5) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now **revealed** unto his holy apostles and prophets **by the Spirit**;*

Consequently, the words of Paul can no more be separated from the words of Torah, the prophets, and Y'shua than the roof can be separated from the foundation, walls, and ceiling. The prophets will be in agreement with Torah. Y'shua's instruction will be in agreement with Torah and the prophets. The instruction of the Holy Spirit's ministry through Paul will be in agreement with the principles of Torah, the prophets, and Y'shua. It is this *pardes* understanding that enables us to verify the interpretation of the Biblical text. If our understanding of Paul's words is in sync with Torah, then the interpretation is likely correct. If it is in opposition to Torah, the prophets, and Y'shua, there is a problem with our understanding that needs to be resolved.

A study of God's Truth reveals this layering process. In the next few verses we will show how 1) the **Father's Law**, 2) His Word (which would also include the teachings of the **Prophets**), 3) the teachings and example of the **Son** (Y'shua), and 4) the influence of the **Holy Spirit** are **ALL Divine Truth**.

Psalms 119:142

*(142) Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and **thy law is the truth**.*

John 17:17

*(17) Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth**.*

John 14:6

*(6) Jesus saith unto him, **I am** the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

John 14:17

(17) Even **the Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

This paragraph is key, so read it slowly, and let it sink in. An honest approach to the Word reveals that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all manifestations that are reckoned as God because of the consistent and singular inner Divine Essence. Each of these manifestations brings forth a message of Truth. How many Truths are there? One - the message of Truth brought forth by each manifestation must be singular in its Divine Essence as well. This singularity of Divine Essence is the patent character of the Tree of Life from which all divinity comes forth.

Indeed, God's revelation of Truth can be built upon the same four layers we just saw. Pardes, Remez, Drash, and Sod. Truth can build upon itself to reveal fuller Truth, but the message beneath it must always be in unity with the Truth that rises from it. An onion doesn't turn into an apple part way through its layering!

As shown above, the Spirit's level of revealed Truth is typically characterized by the sod level. Being highly spiritual in nature, the Truth that the Spirit points to is more elusive and we must be very careful to pin it to the layers that precede it, or we can easily fall into errant interpretation. This especially applies to Paul's writings which are so easily misunderstood by those of our Western culture today.

IF Paul teaches from the Sod level as revealed by the Spirit, then his messages to us must also be consistent with the Truth of Torah, the Prophets, and Y'shua. We'll see how this is so in the next segment on this topic called: "*Disintegration of the Old Because of the New?*".