

Virtual Reality

Virtual Reality: Creating a Global Kingdom

Studio Session 79

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There is nothing that has stirred more controversy in American television than the recently developed genre of the “reality show.” People either hate it or they love it—even addicted to it—and very few people are actually understanding why the reality show has come to be of such attraction to the American viewing public. The answer is really very simple: unlike standard television fare when you view a television program comprised of actors in set pieces, the normal person sees the actors as performing “roles,” and you do not normally identify with the actor. But in the reality show the performers are ordinary people who are not actors—they are chosen precisely because they are not actors. The set piece that they have been given—whether it is a deserted island, a mansion or whatever—those sets are not what’s considered the reality. What is attractive to people—to the viewing audience that is attracted to these genres—is that the players, because they are not actors, are living out certain emotional responses as they interact with each other on these sets. And the audience is drawn, not to the set itself or the adventure, they are drawn to the emotional machinations of the people playing these roles—and the roles they are playing are themselves.

Because the viewer can identify with these particular emotions that they are observing being displayed by the players and in that sense, this television genre has the effect of taking the hand of the viewing audience and lifting them up onto the stage with the players. So it is like representational television that the viewers look to the players as people who represent familiar emotional states with which the viewing audience identifies. So the sets and the adventures are just in a sense the setting, but the real attraction is to the emotions of the people playing themselves. And of course the sets and the adventures and the storyline are designed to bring out of the people these emotions that they routinely have but which are typically hidden from people on a daily basis. And the viewing audience recognizes these emotions as their own when they see them being displayed by the players. So in that sense the audience vicariously participates in the adventure and it is called a “reality show.”

Now why is it called a “reality show”? It is not the set that is the reality, it is the emotions—that’s the point of connectedness between the audience and the players. Why would the viewing audience—to coin a phrase from Coleridge, an English poet—engage en masse in “a willing suspension of disbelief”? Because the emotional adventure lures them and the emotional adventure is what the realism is about. People anymore, in the viewing audience, are familiar with being transported to exotic locations. You simply need to access some website of a vacation place or a website of one kind or another that has streaming video or video on demand and what you will see is practically anything that the imagination can conceive.

More than that, in the creation of new content, companies and artists are arising who are used to creating before the “green screen.” A “green screen” being the background against which actors perform certain roles and all that is happening in front of the green screen is the actors going through motions.

But upon the “green screen” may be superimposed any set of imagery that you would want, and the imagery and the dimensions of it look so real that you are actually creating a reality that’s even more real than if you costumed the actors and had the plays or the drama performed in front of a constructed set. Needless to say that this idea gives great latitude for creative environments to be established and for drama, for adventure series, and for all kinds of picture and sound combinations to take place. With digital capabilities the voice of a human being, your own voice may be coded digitally, scrambled digitally and put through your own imagery. And your image might also be scrambled digitally and reconfigured so that, with the “green screen” effect, you could be placed anywhere in the world in any situation in the world imaginable, saying things with your own voice that you never said and would not say, doing things that you would not do with people you’ve never met.

That’s the “magic” if you like of digital, and because of a concept of virtual reality where all realities are subject to being manipulated in this way people now no longer care what is real. They simply want the entertainment of being lifted out of their places of anonymity and given their fifteen minutes on stage. And people are willing to live vicariously through the performances of people they’ve never met, sharing only an emotional state that’s familiar to both the actor and the audience. In this way, virtual reality is changing even how we think of reality. It’s not a mystery, beyond that point, to see that if you can so freely manipulate reality—and there’s an audience that is so eager to participate. What exactly then is reality?

Let’s say that you were the subject of some misinformation—that your image were captured on digital, your voice also—and with your voice and image you were put, through a “green screen” process in which you were placed in settings you never went to, with people you never have met, saying things that you never have spoken to people

you would never have such conversations. But now it is routine fare and an audience that cannot be shocked anymore because it has seen everything, views it as purely entertainment value and considers it as real. How would you remedy such falsity? Once imagery of that kind and language to match has been burned into the brain of a viewing audience, you may destroy anyone as readily as you may create Frankenstein's monster dressed in a Brooks Brother's suit.

If you are trying to hold onto reality, as we have known it, you are fighting a losing game. The enemy has entered the stage. One of the things that the book of **Daniel** says about the end of the age is that the evil one will try **“to change the set times and the laws.”** That's from the book of **Daniel**, the **7th chapter**. (Inserted – actual verse—**“He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.” – Daniel 7:25**) When Daniel asked those who were giving him counsel—angelic counsel—**“When would the signs that portend the coming of the Lord in the end of the age occur?”** He said, in reference to that, that the coming of the antichrist, who is the man of lawlessness, will be a time in which he will try to change the set times and the laws and it will also coincide with the time when the power of the holy people has been finally broken. (Inserted – actual verse—**“The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, ‘it will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.’” – Daniel 12:7**)

In the earth, for almost 2000 years, the holy people have been extremely powerful but there is coming a time when their power will be broken. How will the power of the holy people—the saints, the people of God—how will their power be broken? One of the ways in which their power will be broken is through a distortion of reality when what is perceived as reality is as much fabricated as it is real and the audience doesn't care—when you may be held up to ridicule simply because there is a kind of lawlessness that is generally subscribed to. This virtual reality, like any other technological development, is by itself benign. It is neither good nor bad. What's good or bad about it is who has control of it. If the character and motive of the person who has control is evil, then the process will aid in an evil enterprise. If, on the other hand, the person is righteousness then this process—these tools—will be useful for good. But we've read the story and we know how it comes out and we are watching the evolution of the process even as we speak. But if the church keeps insisting upon maintaining its view of reality and does not take into account the environment in which it is presently operating, it is easy enough to predict how powerless the church is about to become and in fulfillment of the Scripture that says, “These things will occur

when the power of the holy people has been finally broken.”

We were, in the last broadcast, talking about the rise of a global kingdom. Biblically we have observed the teaching from **Daniel—Daniel 7**—that there will arise a fourth kingdom on the earth. This fourth kingdom will oppress the whole earth. (Inserted – actual verse—“ **He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.’**” – **Daniel 7:23**) Now those who have commented on the rise of a global kingdom in previous times have looked to political happenings and the reconfiguration of the geography—human geography and physical geography—for the fulfillment of the Scripture. You do not need to control geography if you control the means by which people live and survive. So the rise of this virtual reality, aided by computers and the technology that supports the internet and the gadgetry surrounding this entire enterprise—which by the way, in case you think this is “off somewhere in left field”—look at the scope of the largest redistribution of wealth in our time. Who is the richest person today? How did he make his fortune? Simple enough isn’t it: in the creation of the tools that are so useful to virtual reality.

There was a time not so long ago when the average millionaire was a young twenty-something who had made his millions in the Internet. And the average billionaire was a forty-something who had also become phenomenally wealthy by the creation of tools to aid in cyber-reality and in the creation of virtual reality. There are yet fortunes to be made and these fortunes will be made in the creation of content. But the technology that allows for the creation of content will also alter the world in ways that we cannot now imagine. We’ve been talking about some of these ways, how the possession of your image and your voice—your voice print and your personal data may be used to reconfigure “you” into being something and someone you never were or would ever consent to being. With that sort of control it’s not difficult to see how people will be manipulated. Earlier on we had spoken about receiving the mark of the beast and we digressed to talk about what the beast itself would be: a global kingdom. Receiving the mark of the beast is your ability to play in a global system.

As we’ve said before, one of the most necessary things in relationship to virtual reality is to have an identity and your identity must be permanent and it must be portable. This permanent, portable identity is what allows you access into this game as it were. Now you can readily see how the control of your identity will include you or exclude you at will. It’s not so much that an effort will be made to force people into taking a global identity nearly as much as the way that commerce, trade, entertainment, shopping... all of the things that have to do with life itself—and by the way these are systems, systems of being: energy, finances, medicine, entertainment, education and religious to name a few of these systems which will all eventually fall into but a few systems—seven to be

exact. But that's the subject of future discussions.

As these systems evolve a certain interactive capability is going to be required. Humans need to be able to access these systems and an identity is necessary as sort of the key that unlocks this interactive response. The time is coming and soon will be when, if you are surfing the internet, ads for things that you are interested in will pop up as opposed to things that you have no interest in. Because as the information is being gathered on you and portfolios are being established as to your spending habits, your consuming habits and the like, advertisements will be targeted to you precisely and particularly so that more and more you are given back your individualism by your interaction with the internet and with internet commerce and all things "internet." To the point where it's not hard to see that if you didn't have access to the internet, if you didn't have access to cyber-reality, if you are not a player in this world of virtual reality you couldn't buy or sell.

Right now, as a prelude to some of this, for young people in particular who use the internet to buy and sell things, almost the worst thing imaginable is for you to be blacklisted on EBay as someone who doesn't play fair. If you are blacklisted on EBay that's a fate worse than death to some people. Imagine not having access or having an identity that's been tampered with: lost, stolen, and manipulated. How would you function in a world in which you were interactive with the systems around you, and access to these systems decided your well-being on a daily basis. You see if a person controlled access, he could control humanity... he could control the goings around of humanity. And if you were excluded from access so you couldn't buy or sell, life could well be intolerably miserable.

That's why there is an emphasis on *receiving*, rather than *being given*, the mark of the beast. I'm suggesting to you that no force will be required to coerce people into taking their identity within this system—the system that controls all of the systems. That, I believe, is how the future is being developed and the mark is an identity. Who has not had the experience of presenting the paper document to the clerk at the computer who looks at you and tells you, "Sir/Madam, I simply can't find you in the computer."—another way of saying, "Because you do not exist in our data bank, you do not exist. I may be looking at you, but I'm here to tell you that you do not exist because you do not exist in this cyber-reality." Therefore you have no reality.

I've said before that if someone else owns your identity then that person is "you," because these systems have no way of identifying you apart from your identity. So the control of identity is going to be one of the most significant things to happen in the near future because it will represent your access to everything. A "mark" suddenly becomes who you are, and when it takes on that kind of force, that degree of force and power, it is not

discretionary. It is going to require the full range of your faith to stand up to it. This global reality, this global kingdom, is not a future event; it already exists in cyber space. It already is virtual reality. Now what we need to do is look at the broader prophetic implications of it, put this whole concept of virtual reality into its prophetic Biblical context and then we will have some observations as to where the church is and what the church ought to do. I'm Sam Soleyn. God bless you. I'll look forward to further discussing this subject with you.

Scripture References:

Daniel 7:25

Daniel 12:7

Daniel 7:23