Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Will we see God's face?
Scripture: John 1:14; Matthew 5:8; John 14:8;
Code: QA105

Will we see God's face?

Yes!In heaven we will actually see the Lord face to face. This is impossible in the earthly realm. After all, God said, "No man can see Me and live!" (Ex. 33:20, NASB). John 1:18 and 1 John 4:12 both say, "No one has seen God at any time." First Timothy 6:16 declares that God "alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see." Indeed, God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness" (Hab. 1:13). As long as we are tainted by sin, we cannot see God. The view of such perfect righteousness would destroy us.

God is therefore inaccessible to mortal man on a face-to-face basis. This is what made Christ's incarnation so wonderful: although no man has ever seen God at any time, "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18). Christ "tabernacled among us" (John 1:14)-"and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." He came to our world to dwell among us, and He did it in order to redeem us and take us to heaven, where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will dwell in our midst in perfect fellowship. What a breathtaking reality!

In heaven, since we will be free from sin, we will see God's glory unveiled in its fullness. That will be a more pleasing, spectacular sight than anything we have known or could ever imagine on earth. No mere earthly pleasure can even begin to measure up to the privilege and the ecstasy of an unhindered view of the divine glory.

Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The Greek verb translated "see" (horao) is in a tense that denotes a future, continuous reality. In heaven we will continually be seeing God. Kings generally seclude themselves from direct contact with their people. It is a rare privilege to have an audience with a king. But believers in heaven will forever have perfect, unbroken fellowship with the King of Kings!

This has always been the deepest longing of the redeemed soul. The psalmist said, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:1-2). And Philip, speaking for all the disciples, said to Christ, "Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us" (John 14:8).

Revelation 22:3-4 seals the promise: "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve him. They shall see his face" (emphasis added).

David wrote, "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Ps. 17:15). What really satisfies you? New clothes? A new job? Promotion? A new house or car? A great meal? A fun time? A vacation? Don't set your heart on such paltry earthly pleasures. The redeemed will be able to see God.

David knew every station in life, from that of a lowly shepherd to the honor of being a great warrior to the status of being king. He tasted every earthly pleasure. And he knew ultimate satisfaction would come only when he could see the face of God and be like Him in holiness.

As Christians, our highest satisfaction will come when we see our God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and when we stand before Them in perfect uprightness. Heaven will provide us with that privilege-an undiminished, unwearied sight of His infinite glory and beauty, bringing us infinite and eternal delight. We can begin to understand why Peter, after seeing only a faint glimpse of that glory, wanted to make a camp on the Mount of Transfiguration and stay there permanently! (Matt. 17:4).

In "My Savior First of All," eighteenth-century hymn writer Fanny Crosby wrote:

When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, When the bright and glorious morning I shall see, I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

Thru the gates of the city in a robe of spotless white, He will lead me where no tears will ever fall; In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight But I long to meet my Savior first of all.
Those words have special significance--Fanny Crosby was blind. She knew the first person she would ever see would be Jesus Christ.

In a way, the same thing is true of us all. Our sight here on earth is virtually like blindness compared to the clearer vision we will have in heaven (1 Cor. 13:12). We ought to be eagerly looking for that day when our vision will be enlightened by the glory of His presence. I sincerely hope that's your deepest desire.

Adapted from John F. MacArthur, *The Glory of Heaven* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1996), 143-46.

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