

Beholding the Glory of God!

The Wonder of the Birth of Jesus

Church December
25, 2022

Luke 1:26-38

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you."

29 But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason ^cthe holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

36 "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit. Amen

Now this is probably the most detailed Account of the virgin Conception of Jesus found anywhere in the Bible. And a mere nine months after the Event that is recorded here took place- the greatest Wonder and Miracle the world has ever known took place- as the Owner and Creator of the Universe took on Flesh; became Man; and was born to a virgin!

And this amazing and strange Event is called, the *Incarnation*- the “fleshing of God”. And it is what we are *supposedly* celebrating today. But this really had to be an *amazing* Experience for those who were there! What those people *heard*; what they *felt*; what they *saw* and *beheld*- filled their minds; and their hearts; and their mouths for the rest of their lives.

And God moved so some of them would write it down for us. And so, history tells us that Dr. Luke *personally* interviewed those people in order to investigate, “**everything carefully from the beginning**” and to “**write it out**” for a Roman Gentile man named, Theophilus- “**in consecutive order**” (Luke 1:3)- so that we would have an *exact* Account of this amazing Miracle- when, for the first time, Almighty God became *part* of His Own Creation! It really had to be a *glorious* thing to witness.

Of course, EVERYTHING God does is glorious- because God is *Himself* glorious! And because that is true- we must try to grasp the Reality that the eyes of all Mankind were *ultimately* created to behold God- in His Glory! And as we gaze into the Glory of God- we are *transformed* so radically- so thoroughly- that this Glory *causes* us to rejoice and be glad.

So, even though most don’t realize it- the soul of Man *hungers* for something *worthy* of beholding; something *worthy* of seeing; and of understanding. God made us to be like that- because we were made to find the fullness of our own Joy- in God being glorified. And Sin stops that from happening. And so, sadly, most will never behold anything other than what is utterly mundane; simplistic; and crass. Yet the human Soul was made to behold great Wonder. And that means that the people of this fallen world are engaged in a kind of “*War of Spectacles*” that compete against each other for our Attention.

A few years longer than 2 millennia ago, God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Paul to write a very curious Passage found in **2Corinthians 3:18- 4:6.**¹

3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

¹ The Chapter and Verse divisions are NOT inspired and were added many centuries after the original Autographs were received. So, sometimes, a Chapter ends when it shouldn’t. That is the case here with the end of Chapter 3 and the beginning of Chapter 4.

4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,

2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

This Passage talks about what we see; and what we are being kept from seeing. Here, the Apostle *infallibly* wrote about the one thing that satan desires to keep the people of the world from “seeing”; or “beholding”; or “understanding”- and it was written two different ways. In verse 4- he said,

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

... and then in verse 6, he said,

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

So, because satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving- to prevent us from seeing (verse 4)- God has to sovereignly shine into our hearts (verse 6)- what verses 4&6 talk about. In verse 4- the Apostle said it was the,

... light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

... that satan works overtime to stop us from seeing. And then in verse 6- he wrote it like this:

... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

... which is the same thing- only written in reverse.

So, the Glory of God *in* Jesus Christ is what satan doesn't want people to see; or behold; or understand; or have revealed to us. And that means that *everything* the fallen arch-Angel does- is to *prevent* people from seeing that. But why is he so afraid of us seeing the Glory of God- in the Person of Jesus Christ?

Because he knows that we were created to be a “*watching Creature*”; a “*born Admirer*”; and a “*natural Worshiper*”. You see, before Adam sinned- the *normal* and *natural* thing for God's Creature to do- was to worship God. But after Sin entered the Universe- all we have left are the faint traces of this amazing Characteristic in the Lost. And so, fallen Man worships Idols that can't see or hear or speak.

But this is why we gaze at the stars. It is why we climb to the top of mountains; explore underwater worlds; and travel to new and untamed lands. We crave what are called, “*Panoramas*” and “*Spectacles*”. It is *in* us to desire to be “*wowed*” by something *greater; higher; larger; more beautiful; and more important* than ourselves.

Modern Psychologists teach that for Mankind to be happy and contented and satisfied- we must look *inward*- deeply *within* ourselves to “*tap into*” what they have termed, “*basic, internal, human Goodness*” that *supposedly* lies inside of every human- whether they are a housewife or a murderer. And so, they herald the “*gospel of Self*” in all of its various forms that include:

- Self-esteem
- Self-worth
- Self-improvement
- Self-help

And these humanistic Evangelists teach that it is the building up of “*Self*” that brings about “*Joy*”; and “*Peace*”; and “*Happiness*”; and “*Fulfillment*”. They teach that what is “*Right*” about us is all *internal*- in what they call, our, “*basic, human Goodness*”. And they teach what is “*Wrong*” about us- is all *external*- in things like, a “*bad Environment*”; along with the three great “*Lacks*”:

- The lack of Education
- The lack of Money
- The lack of Opportunity

And so, if we could only look to the “*god*” of Government to fix those

external things- and provide Education; Money; along with Opportunity- then “Bad” people would *automatically* cease to be “Bad” and become “Good” and we would all have a wonderful Society. And this is the “salvation” that attracts millions of followers today- who have bought into the “theology of Self”- which is all about the *glorification* of Man and the *abandonment* of God.

But the inspired; infallible; and inerrant Word of the living God teaches something entirely different. God’s Word says that what is “*Wrong*” with Mankind is all *internal*- in our fallen Nature that loves Darkness rather than Light; and in a Sin-sick Heart that is “**more deceitful than all else**” (Jeremiah 17:9). In Matthew 15:18-20, the Lord Christ said,

18 ... the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

20 "These are the things which defile the man...

And the Bible also teaches that what is “*Right*” about us- is all *external*- in the Bible; in Heaven; on the Cross; and in a Manger. And the Salvation that the Bible speaks about is the complete *abandonment* of “Self” and looking *away* from ourselves- finding the fullness of our own Joy- in God alone being glorified.

So, you can see that the two Theologies are contrary to one another and *cannot* co-exist. It is truly one or the other.

But the inner Craving to behold great Beauty is still there. And that explains why people pay good money to pack into sports arenas; why they stare for hours at television screens; why they pay homage to the flaming horizon; and why they sing with Adam at the naked frame of Eve. We were made to behold Wonders.

Human eyes have had an Appetite for the Spectacular from the very Beginning. Consider what Moses infallibly wrote about Eve’s Fall:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate... (Genesis 3:6a)

... when her eyes beheld; and her heart and mind *delighted* in what she saw- Sin was committed; and all of Humanity fell.

So, it is all about what you are looking at; On what your gaze is fixed; and on what you admire. Satan desires that your eyes gaze upon what he wants to show you- rather than the Glory of God in Jesus. Why? Because the devil knows that when you see what he desires to show you- you will then *love*

what you see; and you will be *changed* into what you see; and you will not merely *commit* Sin- but you will *love* your Sin.

As we ponder the Fall of Mankind in the Garden in **Genesis 3**- we have to answer the obvious Question:

How could Eve be attracted to the very thing she said was so wrong that she shouldn't even touch?

Five minutes ago, she wouldn't even touch it. Yet now- after listening to a fallen arch- Angel and beholding the false Image he showed her- that which God had forbidden didn't look merely *acceptable*- it became *desirable*! The fruit that will damn a thousand Generations to an eternity in Hell filled her eyes with Delight! How does that happen?

Of course, that is the very nature of Deception. Deception *causes* us to not merely *engage* in Sin- but we will engage in what is forbidden- *energetically; gleefully; happily*- falsely believing that Sin will *benefit* us- that we will *gain* what we need; and that we will be *better off* by partaking of it.

Here is how Sin works: It is first presented to us a shiny, helpful, and beautiful Object. And when we gaze at the false Image- our eyes are filled with its fake Beauty. And once that mirage fills our eyes- we become overwhelmed by its false Brilliance and supposed Benefit- which causes us to *want* it; which compels us to pursue after it- with great energy. But once we obtain what satan has dangled before our eyes- we are ALWAYS let down. It is NEVER as shiny as it looked. It NEVER satisfies. And it ALWAYS dishonors God. But once we are captured by how pretty and beneficial Sin looks- it no longer matters if God has condemned it or not. Such is the Power of beholding something.

But the same is true with God. When you are gifted; when you are graced to behold the Glory of God in Jesus- you will then love the One you see. And once that happens- your heart is smitten; and you will then *gleefully* and *passionately* follow after Him. And this is what King Solomon was talking about when he wrote this in **Song of Solomon 3:1-4**:

1 "On my bed night after night I sought him Whom my soul loves; I sought him but did not find him.

2 'I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves.' I sought him but did not find him.

3 "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, And I said, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?'

4 "Scarcely had I left them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go...

So, *beholding* God in Christ leads to *loving* Him. And *loving* God leads to *following* after Him. And following after God leads to a joyful Obedience. And that humble and joyful Obedience leads to Righteousness. And Righteousness leads to pleasing God- which allows us to *possess* the One your soul craves for. The Apostle Paul put it this way in **Philippians 3:10-12**:

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

But sadly, the same Pattern that deceived Eve and Adam- now deceives all their Children. The Bible teaches that when people “exchange” the Glory of God- we do so for things we can see; and behold; and understand- like “*Images*” (**Romans 1:23**). So, that which intrigues the eye- something that we behold and understand- *causes* us to exchange God’s Glory for an Idol that can’t forgive a single Sin or save a single soul.

So, our eyes are ravenous. Like the Belly- our eyes *hunger*. Like the throat- they *thirst*. And like the feet- they *wander*, searching after something- *anything*- that is *worthy* of beholding. But in a world of Man-made Images and thousands of manufactured Idols- people haven’t found what they are looking for. So, once we behold one Wonder- we will soon tire of it and move on to another. And this is what the wisest man on earth at that time was talking about when he said this in **Proverbs 27:20**:

Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, Nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied.

You see, unsaved people have “fallen eyes”- that conceive of its’ own Happiness completely backward. And so, they *wrongly* think that the applause of other people is what fills their chalice with lasting Delight. And because they have never beheld the Glory of God in Christ- they don’t realize that Man is not a dog that lives for pats on the head. No, God created us to look out of the window- past the hurricane of disappointments that surround us- searching for something to *enthrall* us!

So, true and lasting Delight- comes *first*- by us looking and seeing;

and beholding- NOT by *being* seen; we were made to chiefly admire- NOT to *be* admired; we were created on purpose to fix our gaze- upward- *away* from ourselves- and *beyond* earth's horizons- to find real Happiness that few ever find.

And all through the Scriptures we read about how famished eyes looked outward and above and found the true Object of their Desire. Some climbed mountains to desperately cry out, **“I pray You, show me Your Glory!” (Exodus 33:18)**. When surrounded by Danger and Violence others exclaimed, **“One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek... To behold the beauty of the Lord...” (Psalm 27:4)**. And the beloved King David said, **“As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.” (Psalm 17:15)**

Listen to what they said,

- Show me your Glory!
- Satisfy me with Your Beauty!
- Show me Your Face- *even beyond the Grave*- and it will be Well with me!

All of these are cries of Desperation. All of them uttered from the lips of sinners made Righteous by the sovereign Work of God. And all of these involve seeing and beholding and understanding the Glory and the Majesty and the Worth and the Value and the Beauty and the Importance of God- which is the very thing that satan works so hard to prevent.

And all of these Cries involve Old Testament saints, who, at best, viewed only the **“back”** of Divine Glory. In **Exodus 33:20**- God told Moses,

You cannot see My Face, for no man can see Me and live!

... so, under the first Covenant- the **ONLY** Glory that could satisfy Man's insatiable Craving was the Glory that would kill him to behold!

So, Moses hid himself in the cleft of the rock- seeing the **“back”** of Almighty God (like watching the trail of a comet as it zooms by)- and hearing Him call out His Own Name- but God's Face he *did* NOT and *could* NOT see. This is one of the main things that makes the Old Covenant to be an *inferior* Covenant:

Under the Old Covenant- Man could NOT behold God in His Glory!

But thanks be to God that this Story is not all there is. Because the Glory that Moses could NOT see the face of; the Beauty that was too fatal for fallen eyes- was born at Christmas! Wonder of wonders!

To an insignificant town named, “*Bethlehem*” arrived the God no one had ever seen before. The only God, Who was always at the Father’s Side- “**He (Jesus) has explained Him**” (**John 1:18**). Christ — the Image of the invisible God; the very radiance of God’s Glory; the exact representation of His (God’s) Nature; the very Face of God’s Beauty — became Flesh and dwelt among us (**Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3; 2Corinthians 4:4-6**) And in **John 1:14**- the astonished Apostle wrote,

... we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

While Jesus was here- this all-Glorious One came down to us- veiled- as Moses came down from the mountain to Israel. And so, His Glory, during His Incarnation and His earthly Humiliation- was beheld not as much “by Sight” as “by Faith”. It stood as the Marvel of Angels that the thrice-Holy One on the Throne, the Possessor of all Riches and Glory, should grow up in the world of men “**like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.**” (**Isaiah 53:2**).

The King of Glory veiled His Majesty in human Flesh; disguised His Splendor; hid His Name; and dwelled among the Poor; the Diseased; and the Condemned.

But the “eyes of Faith” came to see more than just a Jewish man. And Peter gave us the Divine Revelation or the “Rock” on which the Church is built, when he exclaimed, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**”. And Jesus replied,

Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 16:17)

So, what made Peter to be “Blessed” was NOT some internal Goodness inside of him; (or some Man-made Office he supposedly would hold)- but in the fact that God the Father had chosen to “reveal”; or “show”; or “display” WHO Jesus is! So, Peter saw; he beheld the Glory of God in Jesus- and *that* is what *caused* him to be blessed!

Yet, in many ways, Jesus’ Disciples were very slow to really see Him. And so, after all of the fantastic Miracles; and after all of the amazing Teachings that Jesus had done and said during His three- year Ministry- Philip asked Jesus,

... **show us the Father, and it is enough for us.** (John 14:8)

... which caused this Reply from Jesus in **John 14:9b-11:**

9 ... "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

... and those amazing Words, "**He who has seen Me has seen the Father**" have both thrilled and offended countless millions of people ever since they were uttered. Yet they carry enough Weight; enough Power; enough Truth- to break the Staff of human Pride for over 2,000 years for all who are blessed to believe! Seeing Jesus in His Glory- IS seeing the Father! So, when Philip heard those Words; and saw the Works; and beheld the Person born in Bethlehem, he was actually looking at the Face of the One Who "**alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see.**"

(1Timothy 6:16a)

Others had to "see" differently. So, when Thomas "saw" the "**imprint of the nails**" in His Hands; and the Wound in His Side- he cried out,

... My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28b)

... and that is why I tell you, dear friends, that the Sight of Jesus; the *beholding* of the risen Christ- in all His Glory- that alone will satisfy the inner Craving that you have to look at something truly Marvelous.

And so, I would suggest to you that this is *why* Jesus was born. This is *why* God took on Flesh and became Man. So, that we could see what *nobody* in the Old Covenant was able to see. So, that we would behold the very Glory of God- in Jesus! And if God would be Good to grant that you could see Jesus like that- you will be able to find the Fullness of your *own* Joy- in God being glorified! Because once you behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ- nothing else will matter to you. And you will join in with all of those who came before you- in living your Life with complete abandon- so that God alone will be magnified! And that is why satan is terrified about you seeing Jesus like that.

Now I have spent a great deal of time this morning trying as best as I know how to convince you that Jesus IS the *epitome* of the Glory of God. And so, seeing Jesus like that- will *transform* you into a humble Lover and a joyful Follower of Jesus Christ. But the manner in which you can be transformed from someone, who is amazed at the latest Technology; or someone who is wowed by the latest app on a smartphone- into somebody who craves the Presence of God and who *enjoys* obeying the Words of Scripture- is to be blessed to be able to behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ is this: Once you see Jesus like this- if you ever really do- you will *love* what you see. You can't help it. It isn't your Fault- it is the Miracle of Redemption. And once you begin to *love* what you see- you will *pursue* what you see; and you will be *changed* into what you see.

But if you still doubt what I'm saying- please consider this: How did Jesus Himself pray mere hours before He would scream in Agony on the Cross? His Prayer (as recorded by John) was that ALL of His Disciples be given the "Crown Jewel" of Heaven. And what was that? The Apostle John recorded that Prayer for us in **John 17:24** that says,

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

What was the one thing that was paramount to Jesus? What was the one thing that Jesus cried out to His Father to do for us? ... **that they may see My glory which You have given Me** ... which is the *very* thing satan wants to blind your mind to (**2Corinthians 4:4**).

Now please allow me to say something here. There is a reason why six out of ten men today, who are members of Churches; and who say they are saved- regularly fill their eyes with Pornography. It is the single biggest Blight in the modern Church. But why? There have *always* been pretty girls; and men have *always* been attracted to them. "Roving eyes" are a common problem and that is why having them *disqualifies* a man to lead in the Church. God the Holy Spirit moved on the Apostle Paul to write an inspired Letter or an Epistle to his "son in the Faith" Timothy to teach him how to lead the Christian Church. And in that Letter; in **1Timothy 3:2**- he wrote,
An overseer [Elder], then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,

Now the phrase that was translated into English as "**husband of one wife**" comes from the Greek- (μῑὰς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα), which is *best* understood as "*a one-Woman Man*". Now many people have interpreted this to mean a Man, who has never had a Divorce. Others say it has to do with Polygamy- a Man who leads

in the Church must only have one Wife. And where those interpretations hold some weight- the *best* understanding of this is to say it is a Man, who not only devotes himself to one Wife- but a Man who is *morally* and *consistently* faithful to that one Wife. So, this involves things like “roving eyes” or lusting after other Women. Again, we see the importance that the Bible puts on what we are looking at; what we see; and what we behold.

So, one of the Qualifications to lead in the Christian Church is that the Man who leads- MUST be a man who does NOT have “roving eyes”- but a Man who, by God’s Grace and to God’s Glory- *controls* what he looks at. So, in one case- He is told to go ahead and behold the Glory of God in the Face of Christ. And in another place he is told to NEVER look at another Woman- *lustfully*.²

So, what does a Man do in a Culture that *purposefully* sexualizes children at a young age; a Culture that *promotes* and *glamorizes* sexual Sins in movies and television programs- even billboards as well as through clothing fashions? This illustrates the Importance of what I am trying to say this morning:

“The sight of Jesus in all His Glory alone can satisfy the eyes of Men.”

Jesus wants His people to *enjoy* the Sight- their Soul was *created* to see: the Glory of God- shining forth in *His Glory*, forever! And Jesus was so *radically* focused on this one single Desire- that He was willing for nails to pierce His Hands and Feet so we could obtain it! Why? Because He knows that this is the ultimate *Something* worth seeing. And the great Puritan, Thomas Watson (1620-1686)- said seeing Jesus in His Glory was:

“Glory beyond Hyperbole”

So, now we understand *why* God created our eyes: NOT to look at Filth and Sin and the many ravages of the Fall; or even become satisfied with the inane Vanity of modern living. But so that we could see and savor Jesus Christ in the fullness of His uncloaked Glory! And this is *why* God gave us our mouths: NOT so we could spew out Curses and Bile- or even mindless Foolishness- but so, we could sing praises back to Him- throughout all Eternity!

In the words of some unknown Author- “*In God’s Presence, Faith will flee at that Face whose Intensity makes the Sun look black.*” And in the inspired words of the Apostle John,

the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. (The Revelation 21:23)

² For further Information about this Subject please read Sermon #31, 32, &33 of our “*Journey through Matthew Series*”.

The Longing of men's eyes sends them to many places. The eyes of man rove the Beauties of this world- always looking for something else; something *better*; something *more* satisfying. We went to the Moon. But now we need to go to Mars. And after that- we will need to do something else; we will need to see something else. Man is truly restless- always pushing the boundaries; always trying to see more- revealing that in the Core of our Being- we know we haven't obtained what we were made to possess.

But it is here- ONLY here- beholding Jesus in His Glory- now by Faith- and then- by Sight- do we find the final, glorious Vision; the Sight that makes *eternally* Happy! So, where are *you* looking, this Christmas, to satisfy your soul? To Presents?; to Family?; to some mythical childhood Memories that have been embellished over time?

2,000 years ago, Jesus sat down on the side of a Mountain and gave the world's only perfect Sermon. And there He said,

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *SEE God*” (Matthew 5:8)

... is there anything better? Anything?

In the last Chapter of the ONLY Book on earth that contains inspired; infallible; and inerrant Words- it speaks about the Bond-slaves of Jesus. And it says,

They will see his face (The Revelation 22:4)

... and it says this as though THAT is the FINAL and BEST Reward that Eternity can give. So, in your very fertile mind- can you even conceive of a *better* Ending?

But this tells us that Heaven itself is NOT the BEST thing we can look forward to. Of course, Heaven is *infinitely* better than Hell. Absolutely! But with all of its Wonders and all of its Beauties- Heaven would simply be a fantastic vacation spot if it weren't for the fact that Jesus- in all His pristine Glory- will be there. The Bible does NOT say that we were reconciled so we could go to Heaven. No, **Romans 5:10** and **2Corinthians 5:20** says we were...

... reconciled to God...

... to God! To Him! Personally!

And *wherever* God is- there we will be- forever! And we will be in unspeakable Joy and Pleasures that cannot even be fathomed down here! Why? Because we are Good people? No! ONLY because He *graced* us with the greatest Gift of all- that we could see His Glory- in the Person of Jesus!

And that means that the Glory of God in Jesus Christ is NOT the *only* Joy Heaven holds- but it IS the *Best*! His kingly Countenance, concealed no longer, is Heaven's Consummation for both unfallen Angel and redeemed Man. Six Centuries before Jesus was born, the "golden tongued Prophet" said this in **Isaiah 33:17**:

Your eyes will see the King in His beauty...

... but, other than in our mind's eye- we will NEVER see Jesus as He was in the manger in Bethlehem; or as He walked down the streets of Jerusalem; or as He hung in such Pain on the Cross. That is NOT what we have been called to behold. We are blessed to be able to see Jesus *as He is* in His *royal* Beauty. This is what the Apostle meant when He said this in **1John 3:2**:

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

The Puritan, Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646) commented on the difference of seeing Jesus in His Humility while on earth and seeing Him now in His Glory- when he talked about...

"... the great difference between seeing the King at an ordinary time, and seeing of him when he is in his Robes, with his Crown upon his head, and his Scepter in his hand, and set upon his Throne, with all his Nobles about him in all his glory"³

... and *this* Sight of Jesus transfigured will not merely *satisfy* us but will actually *transform* us into His Image.

Burroughs continued,

"A deformed man may see a beautiful object, and that sight shall not make him like that beautiful object; but the sight of God shall make the soul glorious, as God is glorious"⁴

³ *Moses His Choice, with His Eye Fixed upon Heaven*, p. 537.

⁴ *Ibid* p. 581-82

Seeing Jesus as He truly is- will cause us to join in with the Seraphim in Wonder and we too will shout, “Holy! Holy! Holy! until we explode with Happiness!

Dear friends, because Jesus was born; because He lived a perfectly sinless Life; because He died a vicarious Death; and because He literally and physically rose from the Dead- what is now available to all who believe- is the Face of Glory- not the Back. We have an eternal Gaze at His Beauty- not a passing Glimpse. The Apostle Paul said this in **1Corinthians 13:12a**:

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face...

This is the Glory that was first shown at Christmas; that was further revealed at Easter; and is now being shouted throughout all Eternity- the Glory that is profound enough to satisfy our wandering souls and make us happy forever!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone

