

To See the Face of Jesus

Text: Revelation 21.15–22.15

Theme: Our treasure in heaven is Jesus Christ

Introduction — What do you want to see the most in heaven?

- many answers have been given to this question
- some want to see spouses long gone before them
- others wish to see family and friends they watched die and go ahead of them
- a few even want to see the saints of old, of Scripture, and talk with them
- I have heard many descriptions of people's desire for heaven to be some eternal reunion picnic

Don't get me wrong, I think we'll see those we've loved or honored who are in Christ

- but Scripture gives us the answer that should consume our hearts
- **Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.**

(Psalm 73:25 ESV)

- I hope you've learned this as we've walked through Revelation
- that has been the goal of my preaching: to help you see God's glory and Christ's salvation
- that indeed is our goal: Jesus Christ, seen face to face
- our treasure in heaven is Jesus Christ, nothing more, nothing less

Last week, we looked at ch. 21, at least the first portion of it

- we saw the marriage we were meant to share
- the inheritance we were meant to receive
- the community we were meant to be part of
- let's continue this look of the way it's supposed to be

As we continue in this tour of heaven, we see...

I. THE GLORY WE WERE MEANT TO PARTAKE IN

- John still sees the city in this vision
- but he has let us know that this city is also a temple
- and that this temple is not literal, but is the picture of all God's people whom He dwells with
- **And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.**

(Revelation 21:15–16 ESV)

1. The first temple...in the beginning

- God had already created one glorious, beautiful, perfect place where He would dwell with His people—Eden
- yet their sin and disobedience made it so they could no longer dwell in God's holy presence
- however, the Lord already had a plan by which they would enter His presence once again
- at first, this took the form of a tent
- then, at last, a building was constructed for this worship
- in that tent and temple was the Most Holy Place
- this room was 15'x15'x15'—a perfect cube
- God came to dwell, to meet with His people there

- as marvelous as this was, it could only happen one time each year, and only one person could enter
- God's people had to be made holy in order to know His holy presence—and they weren't

2. One greater than the Temple

- God began working out His redemptive plan to bring us into His presence
- Jesus, who entered this world to dwell with man, gave Himself for this very purpose
- **God For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

(2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV)

- even now, God is at work, in each of us, and in us all as His temple
- He is making us holy so we'll be able to enter in to the Most Holy Place
- it won't be some 15x15x15 cubicle, but the vast expanse of the new heavens and new earth

3. What a beautiful place

- **He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.**

(Revelation 21:17–21 ESV)

- this is the beauty we long for, not just to see it, but to actually be a part of it
- one day we will, and these images make us long for it

4. The City that is a Temple

- **And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

(Revelation 21:22–27 ESV)

- this temple that is not a temple is this way because the city is full of people
- these are people who have been made clean by the blood of the Lamb
- these are people whose name is written in the book of life
- these are people who have been made holy by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit
- we are the temple, the city and God dwells with us now forever
- the nations have people representing all of them, in this place
- those who ruled during Christ's reign, especially the martyrs, bring glory to this place
- none have been left out; none are there that are not supposed to be there
- it is the glory that we, who are in Christ, were meant to partake in
- He who began that good work in us has been faithful to complete it
- He who said, "Be holy for I am holy" has made us holy to dwell with Him

Next we gaze upon...

II. THE GARDEN WE WERE MEANT TO LIVE IN

- There is yet one more image John sees, as they nearly pile up here in the end
- **Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.**

(Revelation 22:1–3 ESV)

1. In the beginning

- God planted this marvelous garden called Eden—meaning “paradise”
- the tree of life was in the middle of that garden
- so, too, was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- Adam was to judge good as good and evil as evil according to what God had said
- if Adam would simply have done this, he would have crushed the head of the serpent
- when the serpent whispered to his wife, “Did God really say...” Adam should have shouted, “Yes! He did”
- but he didn’t, so the tree of life was now forfeit to them
- the glory given to them was marred, stained
- life gave way to death

2. Banished and separated

- God set up a guard so the man and woman could never return to that place
- but God also sent His Son, who faced another temptation regarding a tree, tree of Calvary
- this death, on a tree, was so God’s people could enter into the presence of God
- the flaming sword of judgment pierced our Lord
- He entered into death so that one day we might be welcomed into the greater garden

3. A river of flowing water

- this is the water of life that only Jesus can offer and give to one who asks of it
- **but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

(John 4:14 ESV)

- fascinatingly enough, this proves this is not the earthly Jerusalem
- there was no river flowing through Jerusalem
- so what were the sons of Korah singing about in Psalm 46.4?
- **There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.**

(Psalm 46:4 ESV)

- and there is the tree of life next to this river
- its fruit is for all who are God’s people, always and forever producing
- fruit that provides ultimate, complete, eternal satisfaction; we’ll never want for anything else

4. Healing in this garden

- I don’t think any of us can imagine: no more disease, no more illness, no more viruses
- no more cancer, no more tumors, no more strokes

- nothing accursed in anyone or between anyone—the curse is gone

5. The very best part at last

- **They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.**

(Revelation 22:4 ESV)

- **Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.**

(1 John 3:2 ESV)

- **One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.**

(Psalm 27:4 ESV)

- Aaron’s blessing will at last be fulfilled forever and always

- **the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;**

(Numbers 6:25 ESV)

- perfect acceptance and belonging
- perfect beauty and glory
- no more seeing in a mirror dimly, no more seeing in part

6. That will be glory

- Scripture begins with man & woman made in the image of God
- that failed, allowing creation to have dominion over the man rather than the other way around
- Hebrews 2.8 is absolutely correct for us right now in time:

- **At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.**

(Hebrews 2:8 ESV)

- the world is still in rebellion against Christ
- Satan, the beast and his prophet still hate God and seek to destroy as much as possible
- but John’s words of this vision give us hope, life-sustaining hope
- His kingdom will have come and His will is done perfectly at last
- Praise the Lord! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!
- the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of His Christ

Finally, let’s hear...

III. THE WORDS WE WERE MEANT TO KEEP

- do you remember what we read, 49 sermons ago, back in September of 2022?

- **Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.**

(Revelation 1:3 ESV)

- we have seen so much, have we not?
- we have seen the world and what is happening in it from the perspective of heaven
- we have heard what Jesus has to say to His church that they might overcome this world
- we were invited into the heavenly throne room to catch a glimpse of God’s glory & the Lamb
- history has unfolded before our eyes and ears as we’ve walked through this book
- God’s judgments are being poured out upon sinful man
- Christ’s people suffer, but they are kept by Him, secure in His powerful hand
- in these last and final chapters, we have seen His kingdom, the kingdom of Lord Jesus Christ
- and we’re almost done; Lord willing, we’ll bring it all to a close in the 50th sermon next Sunday

1. Jesus speaks

- we hear Him speak three times in these closing verses
- and what does He say when He addresses us through John?
- v. 7—“I am coming soon”
- v. 12—“Behold, I am coming soon”
- v. 20—“Surely I am coming soon”
- His voice draws our attention away from all the day-to-day distractions and concerns
- Jesus wants our eyes fixed upon Him and our gaze heavenward

2. How can this happen?

- v. 6—**And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”**
- then, v. 7—**“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”**
- it is what we were told at the very beginning of this book: “keep these words of this book”
- keep them means to obey them, just like the rest of Scripture
- but keep them as a treasure within your heart
- **I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.**
(Psalm 119:11 ESV)
- treasure them so they build that fire of hope within you
- when the cold, harsh world blows hard in your face
- when temptations galore stare you in the face, trying to convince you that you need it all right now
- and when that ancient serpent who is the devil whispers in your ear, “Did God really say...?”
- you do exactly what Jesus did: trust in the very Word of God

3. Blessings all mine and 10,000 beside

- this book gives tangible and profound blessing to be experienced now and then
- they are yours as you...
- have your vision of Jesus Christ shaped by Revelation’s vision of who Jesus is, what He has accomplished, and what He will accomplish in His second coming
- are willing to evaluate our church and yourself in light of what Jesus says to us
- allow the heavenly worship of God given in ch. 4 & 5 to guide our worship here on earth
- persevere in your bold allegiance to Christ and witness for Him no matter the cost to you
- these blessings are yours as you...
- see through the false veneer into the true ugliness and evil of this world’s systems, philosophies, priorities, and false beliefs
- rest in God’s providence, believing that God has the power to bring about everything pictured and promised in this book
- orient your lives toward the new creation, refusing to expect that life under this world order will ever truly satisfy or secure you
- these blessings are yours as you keep the words of this book as you...

- anticipate seeing your Savior face to face and enjoy communion with Him into eternity

Conclusion – Revelation is more than just trying to nail down timing

- the goal is to live it, to keep it, to obey it
- the goal is patient endurance
- the goal is to overcome this world's pull toward compromise and apathy and idolatry
- the goal is to one day be clothed in the white robes of Christ's righteousness
- the goal is to hear your name read from the book of life, to be sealed, sanctified & saved
- the goal is to worship our great and mighty God, His Son Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain