Sunday, 12th July 2026

We Shall See Christ Face to Face

The Beatific Vision: The Heaven of Heaven

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.”
— 1 Corinthians 13:12

“Beloved, we are God’s children now… but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”
— 1 John 3:2

“They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.”
— Revelation 22:4

My Dearest Christian Family,
In the last two Sundays, we reflected that we are pilgrims, strangers, and sojourners in this world. We also remembered that we are also called to be the light of the world because our beloved Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the true Light, the Light of life, and the final destiny of every redeemed soul.

Today we look forward to the greatest hope of all believers: the Beatific Vision — to see God face to face, to behold our

beloved Lord Jesus Christ in our glorified bodies, and to enjoy Him forever.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins with this glorious truth: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

And what is the highest enjoyment of God?
It is this: to see Him, to behold Him, to love Him without sin, to worship Him without distraction, and to gaze forever upon the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Apostle Paul says: "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has

shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
— 2 Corinthians 4:6

So, the great hope of heaven is not first the streets of gold. It is not first the gates of pearl. It is not even reunion with loved ones, blessed as that will be. The Heaven of Heaven is Christ Himself.

We shall see His face.
Now in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for "face" is **PANIM.**
It appears more than two thousand times!
And this word does not merely mean the physical face.

In Scripture, the face represents attention, favor, relationship, nearness, presence.
To be before the face of God is to be in the presence of God.
To be hidden from the face of God is to be outside His favor.
That is why this theme runs like a golden thread from Genesis to Revelation.

Adam Hid from God's Face

In Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve sinned, what did they do?
"They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid

themselves from the presence of the LORD God.”
— Genesis 3:8

They hid from His presence — from His face.

Sin made man afraid of the very face he was created to behold. Adam did not merely break a rule. He turned his face away from God. He hid from the One who had made him, loved him, and walked with him.
This is the tragedy of sin. It is not merely lawbreaking. It is relational rebellion. It is the turning away of the human face from the face of God.

Cain kills Abel

Then in Genesis 4, Cain murdered his brother Abel. And when God pronounced judgment, Cain cried: "Behold, You have driven me today away from the ground, and from Your face I shall be hidden.”
— Genesis 4:14

Cain understood something terrible. The worst consequence was not merely wandering. It was not merely danger. It was not merely punishment. It was being hidden from the face of God.
He went east of Eden into the land of Nod — the land of wandering.

And that is what man becomes when he turns away from God: a wanderer without true home, without true peace, without true direction.

Isaiah later explains the same truth:
"Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."
— Isaiah 59:2
This is the grief of sin: the face of God hidden.

This is why David, though surrounded by enemies, armies, and trouble, prayed not first for victory, not first for wealth, not first for revenge, but for God

Himself: "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."
— Psalm 27:4

And then David says: "You have said, 'Seek My face.' My heart says to You, 'Your face, LORD, do I seek.'"
— Psalm 27:8
God says, "Seek My face."
David answers, "Your face, Lord, do I seek."
This is true Christianity.
Not merely seeking gifts from God, but seeking God Himself.

Not merely seeking His hand, but His face!

John Calvin wrote that the human heart is restless and blind until it finds God as its true end. And the Reformed faith has always taught that the greatest blessing is not merely pardon from God, but communion with God.

Moses at Mt Sinai

Then we come to Moses.
Exodus 33 says: "The LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend."
— Exodus 33:11

What intimacy! What nearness! Moses spoke with God as a man speaks with his friend.

And yet, in the same chapter, Moses cried: "Please show me Your glory.”

— Exodus 33:18

And God answered: "You cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live.”

— Exodus 33:20

There is a holy tension here. Moses truly communed with God. Moses truly knew God.

Moses truly spoke with God face to face.

And yet the full, unveiled, unmediated glory of God was too much for mortal man.

So, God placed Moses in the cleft of the rock, covered him with His hand, and allowed him to see only the passing glory.

My Dearest Family, that rock points us to Christ.
For sinful man cannot behold God except through the Mediator.
We cannot come to the Father except through the Son.

Lord Jesus said: "No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
— John 14:6

And Paul tells us that the glory of God is now revealed to us “in the face of Jesus Christ.”
— 2 Corinthians 4:6

John Owen, the great Puritan, taught that the glory of Christ is the great sight of Heaven.
Believers begin beholding Him now by faith, but in glory we shall behold Him by sight.
Before Moses, there was Jacob.

Jacob at Jabbok

In Genesis 32, Jacob was alone at the river Jabbok. He had sent his family ahead. He had sent his possessions

ahead. He was alone in the dark. And there a Man wrestled with him until daybreak.
Jacob clung to Him and said: "I will not let You go unless You bless me.”
— Genesis 32:26

Jacob was not a man with a clean record. He had deceived. He had manipulated. He had fled from consequences he himself had created.
Yet in the night, he clung to God.
And God blessed him.
God gave him a new name: Israel.
Then Jacob named the place **Peniel** (again from the word Panim) saying: "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

— Genesis 32:30
Peniel means “the face of God.”

What mercy! The face of God is not reserved for the proud and self-righteous.
It is given to the desperate, the broken, the clinging, the repentant, the needy.

Richard Sibbes said: "There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.”
That is Jacob at Peniel.
That is every sinner who clings to Christ.

Priestly Blessings

Then we return to the priestly blessing in Numbers 6.

God Himself commanded Aaron and his sons to bless Israel with these words: "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."
— Numbers 6:24–26

Notice the heart of the blessing. It is about **GOD'S FACE.**
Not first God's gifts.
Not first God's power.
Not first God's provision.
But God's face.
"The LORD make His face shine upon you."
That is grace.

“The LORD lift up His countenance upon you.”
That is favor.

“And give you peace.”
That is shalom — wholeness, reconciliation, completion, life as it was meant to be under the smile of God.

Every true blessing is the face of God turned toward us in grace.
But then the prophets speak of the horror of judgment: "I will hide My face from them.”
— Deuteronomy 31:17

“According to their uncleanness and their transgressions I dealt with them, and hid My face from them.”
— Ezekiel 39:24

The hiding of God’s face is the language of covenant judgment.

Isaiah’s Servant Song

And then Isaiah gives us the suffering Servant. "He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”
— Isaiah 53:3
Men hid their faces from Christ.

Why?

Because He came in humiliation.
Isaiah says: "His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance.”
— Isaiah 52:14
The face of glory became the face of suffering.
The eternal Son of God took on flesh.
The One who is the radiance of the Father’s glory became the Man of Sorrows.
The One before whom angels cover their faces became the One from whom men hid their faces.

Christ at The Cross

And then we come to the cross.
At Calvary, darkness covered the land.
And Lord Jesus cried: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”
— Matthew 27:46

He was quoting Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from saving Me?”
— Psalm 22:1
Here is the deepest mystery.

The beloved Son, who from all eternity enjoyed perfect fellowship with the Father, stood in the place of sinners. He

bore our curse. He endured the judgment we deserved.
Isaiah says: "The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."
— Isaiah 53:6

Paul says: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."
— Galatians 3:13

And again: "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

The face of God was turned away in judgment from Christ so that it might be turned toward us forever in grace.

The Father did not cease loving the Son. Never.
But the Son, as our Substitute, bore the judicial wrath, the covenant curse, the forsakenness that our sins deserved.
This is the gospel!

Again, Christ was forsaken so that we might be welcomed.
Christ was pierced so that we might be healed.
Christ wore the crown of thorns so that we might wear the crown of life.

Christ cried, “Why have You forsaken Me?” so that we might hear forever, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Charles Hodge expressed the heart of substitutionary atonement when he taught that Christ endured the penalty of sin in our place so that believers might receive the favor of God.
That favor is the shining face of God.

John at Patmos

And now we move to the final page of Scripture.
Apostle John, exiled on Patmos, sees the New Jerusalem, the renewed creation,

the end of all exile, the end of all hiding, the end of all darkness.
And he writes: "They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads."
— Revelation 22:4
They will see His face.
This is the sentence the whole Bible has been moving toward.

Conclusion

Adam hid from His face.
Cain was driven from His face.
Moses longed to see His face.
Jacob wrestled and named the place Peniel.
David cried, "Your face, Lord, do I seek."

The priests blessed Israel with the shining of His face.
The prophets warned of the hiding of His face.
The Suffering Servant was despised as men hid their faces from Him.

At the cross, Christ bore the forsakenness of His people.
And in Revelation, the redeemed finally see His face.
This is Heaven.
Psalm 17:15 says: "As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with Your likeness."
Matthew 5:8 says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

John 17:24 records the prayer of our Lord Jesus: "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory."

My Dearest Family, that prayer will be answered.
Every person given by the Father to the Son shall see His glory.
Every blood-bought child of God shall behold the King in His beauty.
Every pilgrim shall come home.
Every tear shall be wiped away.
Every shadow shall flee.
Every sin shall be gone.
And we shall see His face.

We have point out before that Jonathan Edwards wrote that the enjoyment of God is the only joy with which the soul can be satisfied. That is why Heaven satisfies. Not because of its beauty alone, but because God Himself is there.

Thomas Boston said: "The face of God is the Heaven of Heaven.
Yes. The face of God is the Heaven of Heaven.
So let us gather the three great truths.

First, sin is a turned face.

Adam turned.
Cain turned.
Israel turned.

And every time we sin, we turn our face from the God who made us for Himself. Sin is not merely a broken rule. It is a broken relationship. It is the creature turning away from the Creator.

Second, grace is God's face turned toward us.

The Aaronic blessing shows us what grace feels like: "The LORD make His face shine upon you."
Grace is the holy God looking upon guilty sinners through Christ and smiling upon them with covenant love.

Third, salvation is God bringing us home to see His face forever.

The gospel is this: In Christ, God turns His face toward sinners and says, “Come back.”

Come back from hiding.
Come back from wandering.
Come back from exile.
Come back from sin.
Come back through the blood of My Son.
Come back, because in Christ My face is turned toward you in grace.

This is what the priest was saying with raised hands.

This is what God was teaching Moses in the cleft of the rock.

This is what Jacob grasped in the dark.

This is what David sought on the battlefield.

This is what the cross purchased.

This is what Revelation promises.
“They will see His face.”

My beloved Christian family, one day faith will become sight.
Now we see in a mirror dimly.
Then face to face.
Now we know in part.
Then we shall know fully, even as we have been fully known.
Now we battle sin.

Then we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.
Now we seek His face through tears, prayer, Scripture, worship, and suffering.
Then we shall behold His face without veil, without fear, without sin, without interruption, without end.

How blessed we are that in our glorified bodies we shall see our beloved Christ face to face — the Beatific Vision, the sight of sights, the glory of glories, the joy of joys!

We shall behold our beloved King of kings.
We shall behold our heavenly Bridegroom.

We shall behold the Lamb who was slain.
We shall behold the face once marred
for our sins, now shining in eternal glory.
Amen, Amen, Amen.

Much love,
Francis