

Beholding The Glory of Christ

Exodus 33:18 Then Moses said, “I pray You, show me Your glory!”

John (and the other apostles) beheld His glory while He was on earth

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw (beheld) His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (“behold” - gaze upon, view attentively, contemplate)

1 John 1:1-3 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— **2** and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— **3** what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ

2 Peter 1:16-18 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. **17** For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— **18** and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

The ‘glory’ they saw however was ‘veiled in flesh’. It was not the same as after his resurrection and ascension.

But now we may behold him in a different way

2 Corinthians 5:16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.

In our natural state we cannot see Christ in this way

2 Corinthians 4:4 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.

But God opens the eyes of those who hear and believe the gospel

2 Corinthians 4:6 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 now we can behold Him continually

2 Corinthians 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.

- The ‘mirror’ is Christ - **Colossians 1:5** He is the image of the invisible God. **Hebrews 1:3** He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature

It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to behold Christ

- **John 15:26** When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me
- **John 16:14** “He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

Scripture reveals to us the glory of Christ

- **John 5:39** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me

Requires singleness of heart

- **Psalm 27:4** One thing have I desired 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 behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple
- **Luke 10:42** but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."
- if our affections are set, to any degree, upon anything else other than Christ, it will hinder our ability to gaze upon him.

Requires obedience

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

This present beholding of Christ is only partial but ultimately it will be complete

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known

How little a portion is it that we know of him! How imperfect are our conceptions of him! How weak are our minds in their management! There is no part of his glory that we can fully comprehend. And what we do comprehend, we cannot abide in the steady contemplation of. Hence our sight of him here is as it were by glances, — liable to be clouded by many interpositions. "Behold, he standeth behind the wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing" (מַצִּיחַ, flourishing) "himself through the lattice," Cant. ii. 9. There is a great interposition between him and us, as a wall; and the means of the discovery of himself unto us, as through a window and lattice, include a great instability and imperfection in our view and apprehension of him. There is a wall between him and us, which yet he standeth behind. Our present mortal state is this wall, which must be demolished before we can see him as he is. In the meantime he looketh through the windows of the ordinances of the Gospel. He gives us sometimes, when he is pleased to stand in those windows, a view of himself; but it is imperfect, as is our sight of a man through a window. The appearances of him at these windows are full of refreshment unto the souls of them that do believe. But our view of them is imperfect, transient, and does not abide; — we are for the most part quickly left to bemoan what we have lost. And then our best is but to cry, "the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before thee?" When wilt thou again give me to see thee, though but as through the windows? Alas! what distress do we oftentimes sit down in, after these views of Christ and his glory! But he proceeds farther yet; and flourishes himself through the lattices. This displaying of the glory of Christ, called the flourishing of himself, is by the promises of the Gospel, as they are explained in the ministry of the Word. In them are represented unto us the desirable beauties and glories of Christ. How precious, how amiable is he, as represented in them! How are the souls of believers ravished with the views of them! Yet is this discovery of him also but as through a lattice. We see him but by parts, — unsteadily and unevenly.

Our beholding of Christ should be progressive

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior

The ultimate outcome of our salvation is being in Christ's presence beholding His glory

John 17:24 "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

This immediate sight of Christ is that which all the saints of God in this life do breathe and pant after. Hence are they willing to be dissolved, or "desire to depart, that they may be with Christ," which is best for them, Phil. i. 23. They choose "to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8; or that they may enjoy the inexpressibly longed-for sight of Christ in his glory. Those who do not so long for it, whose souls and minds are not frequently visited with earnest desires after it, unto whom the thoughts of it are not their relief in trouble, and their chiefest joy, are carnal, blind, and cannot see afar off. He that is truly spiritual entertains and refresheth himself with thoughts hereof continually.

No man shall ever behold the glory of Christ by sight in heaven who does not, in some measure, behold it by faith in this world. Grace is a necessary preparation for glory and faith for sight. The soul unprepared by grace and faith is not capable of seeing the glory of Christ in heaven. Many will say with confidence that they desire to be with Christ and to behold his glory. But when asked, they can give no reason for this desire, except that it would be better than going to hell. If a man claims to love and desire that which he never even saw, he is deceiving himself. ~ John Owen

Since mine eyes have looked on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside,
So enchained my spirit's vision,
Gazing on the Crucified