



They Shall See God

H. Allen Hanson

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To my daughter Rebecca and her husband Darryl Thurman
To my son Dane Hanson and his wife Mirjam
To my grandchildren and great grandchildren
To my fellow believers at Zion Christian Assembly

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*And he said, “**Please, show me Your glory.**” Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” But He said, “**You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.**” And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. “So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. “**Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen**” (Exodus 33:18-23, emphasis added).*

Preface

The purpose of this book is to magnify the glory of God, particularly the visual glory of God as it has been progressively revealed throughout the Holy Scriptures, from Genesis to the book of Revelation. Visual manifestations of God were seen by His servants beginning with appearances to Abraham, continuing with various visions and revelations to others, and finally to the apostle John.

Christians are encouraged to search the Scriptures which manifest God’s visual glory, and the responses of those who saw them, in anticipation of that day when we too will see both the wonderful glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and of God the Father when He takes us to Heaven. May we as believers yearn to see God as Abraham, Job, Moses, and David yearned to see Him. This book is also written for unbelievers so that they too might

search the Scriptures and find the true way, through Jesus Christ, to the one and only true and living God.

Jesus said, very simply, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8), but the Bible makes it very clear that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23). How then can we be pure in heart? The answer is that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15). He suffered for our sins that He might bring us to God (I Peter 3:18).

The first chapters of this book had to be devoted to apologetics because many Bible scholars, teachers, and theologians have maintained that since God is Spirit, invisible, and omnipresent, He has no form and cannot be seen. The Bible, on the other hand, states clearly, in many places that “they saw God” and refers to the “form” of God. Who is this God that can be seen? Can He be identified? Does He have a name? There are many false gods in this world. Strangely, His name has been obscured by Hebrew scribes in their reading and copying the Scriptures. In fear of taking His name in vain they substituted the Hebrew word אדוני (Adonai) in place of יהוה (Jehovah) when pronouncing His name. Consequently, most English versions of the Bible translate the name of God as the LORD, rather than Jehovah. Other languages have followed suit. In essence the Hebrew scribes and translators have made God nameless, and theologians have made Him formless.

The remaining chapters seek to give a progressive revelation of the visual glory of God through His appearances, manifestations, visions, and revelations beginning with God’s appearance to Abraham and culminating with the revelation of God to John on the Isle of Patmos.

What will we see when we see God? Man manifests Him as the image and glory of God. Angels have appeared manifesting God. Jesus Christ is the complete visual manifestation of God. These manifestations reveal what we can expect to see when we see God.

Throughout this book an effort has been made to adhere to the Holy Scripture and to avoid theological and philosophical presumptions and speculation.

1

They Shall See God

Matthew 5:8

In the beginning of His public ministry Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). What a glorious promise! What a wondrous blessing to anticipate! They shall see God! Who had ever seen God before? What do the Scriptures teach about seeing God? Seeing may be defined as perceiving with the eye, to experience, to understand, or to know. These different concepts are all found in the

Bible. However, the word see, as used in this study, deals with those Biblical passages referring to perceiving with the eye.

Jesus had called His twelve apostles, and was going about Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing many with diseases. Soon His fame spread and great multitudes began to follow Him. One day, as a multitude gathered, Jesus went up on a mountain and taught them. He began His teaching by saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). He also said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). Jesus promised nine blessings, called the “Beatitudes” in His message. The message, which covers chapters five, six and seven in Matthew’s Gospel account, is often referred to as the “Sermon on the Mount.” One of the most astonishing and the most glorious truths taught that day was the promised blessing of Jesus, that the pure in heart shall see God!

The Pure in Heart Shall See God

The beginning of a teaching or doctrine in Scripture is very significant. One of the patterns in the Bible is to introduce a teaching, sometimes called the First Mention principle, and then expand on the teaching progressively throughout the Scriptures. It is equally important to realize the significance of the words of Jesus when He first began to teach. Jesus made references to “heaven” and “your heavenly Father” over and over throughout His teaching that day. It is clear from the context of His message that it is possible to become children of God, and as children that they will also see God. He also taught a great deal about what the attitude of the heart should be. Jesus said, “...be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). In the middle of His message He said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). Finally, Jesus talked about the “... way which leads to life ...” (Matthew 7:14).

The promise of Jesus that we will see God depends on having a pure heart. One of the questions asked in the Psalms was, “Who shall ascend into the mount of Jehovah? and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath blameless hands and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:3-4 DBY). God is holy and He cannot look on sin, and only those with pureness of heart are enabled to see Him. The Bible makes this very clear when it states of God, “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness” (Habakkuk 1:13).

When Jesus had finished speaking that day, it is written that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught with authority (Matthew 7:28-29). What were some of the teachings that astonished them? They had never heard such an emphasis on God as our Father, they had never heard teaching on seeing God, and they had never

heard teaching with such authority as that of Jesus. What had they been taught about seeing God? Jesus promised a blessing to the pure in heart, that they shall see God. He was teaching about seeing God in Heaven. No doubt the hope of seeing God was astonishing. What about the pure in heart? Can anyone be really pure in heart since we are all sinners? (Romans 3:23). How can a person become pure in heart? Thankfully, the Bible reveals answers to these questions.

Jesus Came into the World to Bring Us to God

The purpose of Jesus Christ coming into the world was to save us as sinners and to bring us to God (I Timothy 1:15). The Bible also teaches that "... Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God ..." (I Peter 3:18). One day, shortly before He was crucified, Jesus told His disciples that He was going away. The Gospel of John records the following conversation that Jesus had with His disciples:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know. Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:1-6).

Some of the disciples were puzzled by the things Jesus said. He spoke of preparing a place for them in His Father's house and that they knew the way. Thomas responded by saying that they did not know where Jesus was going, nor did they know the way. Clearly, Jesus was going to His Father in heaven and that He was the way.

Show Us the Father

After hearing that Jesus was the way to the Father, Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us" (John 14:8). Jesus answered Philip by saying,

...Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father (John 14:9-12).

When Philip asked Jesus to “show us the Father” he was expressing a desire to see God. Jesus did not respond by saying that it was impossible to see the Father. Instead, He taught that they could now see the Father in Him. Jesus then began to teach His disciples about His oneness with His Father, and that He manifests the Father. Jesus said that he who has seen Him has seen the Father. Jesus, in saying that no one comes to the Father except through Himself, taught that it is impossible to see God apart from Him. Jesus is the only way to God the Father, and it is only through Him that anyone can have acceptance before God (Ephesians 1:5-7).

Can God be Seen? A Paradox

The Bible teaches several truths about seeing God which seem contradictory or paradoxical. The Gospel according to John for example, states,

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:18).

The first epistle of John also says that “No one has seen God at any time” (I John 4:12). The King James version, however, states in both verses, that “no **man** hath seen God...” (emphasis added). Paul, in writing to Timothy, stated:

*I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, **dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen** (I Timothy 6:13-16, emphasis added).*

The fact that no man has seen God does not imply that He cannot be seen. Actually, many Scriptures indicate that God can be seen and has been seen. Since the Bible does not contradict itself, these seeming contradictions or paradoxes in the Scriptures will be considered in more depth in later chapters.

Interestingly, the Old Testament never mentions that God has not or cannot be seen. In fact, God was seen to some extent in His appearances, visions, and revelations to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the children of Israel, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and others.

Jesus said that He had seen God and that angels see the face of His Father in heaven. As some of these Scripture references are carefully studied, it seems clear that seeing God was a series of progressive appearances, revelations, and visions. It seems clear that

no man fully saw God. Some definitely saw His form and others saw a vision of His form, but no man saw God's face, for no man can see His face and live (Exodus 33: 20).

Jesus has Seen the Father

Jesus said on another occasion that He had seen the Father. The Jews were complaining about Jesus when He said He had come down from heaven. In the Gospel of John the Jews began by asking,

*... Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, "I have come down from heaven"? Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; **He has seen the Father**" (John 6:42-46, emphasis added).*

Jesus clearly stated that He has seen the Father. He was not questioned as to whether or not the Father could be seen. He was only doubted as to whom He claimed to be and where He had come from.

Angels See the Face of the Father

Jesus also stated that angels see the face of God the Father. One day Jesus was talking to His disciples about little children and the kingdom of heaven. He said that unless they were converted and become as little children, they would by no means enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:2-4). Jesus then warned them in regard to their attitude toward little children.

*Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in **heaven their angels always see the face of My Father** who is in heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost (Matthew 18:10-11, emphasis added).*

Angels see the face of God the Father continually. The host of heaven worship before His throne. Will not the millions redeemed in Christ Jesus, the pure in heart, join in the worship of the Father and the Son as we see them in the glory of heaven?

Seeing God in the Old Testament Times

The Old Testament relates many incidents about people seeing God. To what extent did they see God? Did God actually reveal Himself visually? The Bible does not say

whether or not God appeared to Adam and Eve when He came to them in the Garden of Eden. The Bible does say that God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Job spoke about seeing God. What did Moses and the children of Israel see of the glory of God at Sinai? God revealed Himself several times during the times of the Judges. David hoped to see God. There are also a significant number of visions of God recorded in the prophets which will be considered later.

God appeared four times to Abraham (Genesis 12:7, 17:1, 18:1 and Acts 7:2). He appeared at least twice to Isaac (Genesis 26:2, 26:24), and at least three times to Jacob (Genesis 28:12-13, 32:24-30, 35:9). On the way back to Canaan Jacob wrestled with a man one night and was told that he had wrestled with God. Jacob called the name of the place Peniel because, he said, "... I have seen God face to face ..." (Genesis 32:24-30). Job, during his trials, said that he expected to see God. The arguments of his friends, accusing him of wickedness because of what was happening to him, led Job to say,

... in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:26-27).

Job anticipated seeing God and he yearned in his heart to see Him. David, thousands of years later, spoke of some day seeing the face of God. He said, "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Psalm 17:15). David also said that he desired to "behold the beauty of the LORD" (Psalm 27:4). David anticipated a day when he would see God, and believed that he would see God in righteousness, and that he would awake in the visual likeness of God. His desire was to see the beauty of God.

The Children of Israel Saw God

The children of Israel saw God. How can this be since John 1:18 and I John 4:12 state, "No one has seen God at any time?" The Bible does not contradict itself, but there does appear to be a paradox. When Israel came to Sinai, the mountain of God, they were told,

... let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people (Exodus 19:11).

The Bible goes on to describe the scene on Mount Sinai on the third day, in the morning, as God descended upon it in the presence of the people. It states,

Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the

people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up (Exodus 19:16-20).

The children of Israel were so terrified by what they saw and heard that they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:18-19). Later Moses, Aaron, his sons and seventy elders went up on Sinai and saw God. It is written,

*Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So **they saw God**, and they ate and drank (Exodus 24:9-11, emphasis added).*

On the way to Sinai God had appeared in a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21). At Sinai God descended on the mount in fire and thunder and great glory. The children of Israel saw only a measure of His glory because other Scriptures indicate that they did not fully see God. In Deuteronomy, for example, Moses said,

*And Jehovah commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances, that ye might do them in the land whither ye are passing over to possess it. And take great heed to your souls (**for ye saw no form on the day that Jehovah spoke to you in Horeb from the midst of the fire**), lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the form of any figure, the pattern of male or female, the pattern of any beast that is on the earth, the pattern of any winged fowl that flieth in the heaven, the pattern of anything that creepeth on the ground, the pattern of any fish that is in the waters under the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes to the heavens, and see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, the whole host of heaven, and be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, which Jehovah thy God hath assigned unto all peoples under the whole heaven (Deuteronomy 4:14-19 DBY, emphasis added).*

This passage indicates that while God has a form which can be seen, He did not let the Israelites see His form because He knew that they would make a graven image of Him.

Moses Saw the Back of God

The children of Israel only saw a measure of the glory of God, but Moses actually saw a part of the form or shape of God. He is the only man recorded in the Scriptures to

have seen such a sight. One day Moses asked God, "Please, show me Your Glory" (Exodus 33:18). God answered him by saying,

You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live. And the LORD (Jehovah) said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:20-23, emphasis added, *Jehovah* added).

God, as noted in the above verse, equated His glory with His face, a face that God told Moses he could not see and live. Consequently, Moses saw only the back of God that day. Other Bible references speak of Moses as seeing the form of God. These will be considered in chapters that follow.

To What Extent Has Man Seen God?

When the Scriptures state that God appeared, manifested, or revealed Himself in various visions in which He is described in a visual form, how can this be reconciled with the text saying "No man has seen God?" It may be concluded that men saw only a visual representation of God or that God allowed only a partial manifestation of Himself. When Moses asked to see His glory, God replied that no man could see His face and live, but then God showed Moses His back. God implied that He had a face but that Moses could not see it and live. Moses did not see the face of God but he did see the form of God (Numbers 12:4-8 DBY). One truth is certain, it has pleased God to reveal throughout the Scriptures, in expanding visions, that He has a glorious visual form.

Why has God hidden Himself or only partially revealed Himself to man? Perhaps it has pleased God to reveal the beauty and glory of His visual form progressively. Throughout the Scriptures more and more is revealed until finally, in the book of Revelation, God is described to John as One upon a throne in heaven with the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, and a vast host of worshippers. Several other reasons are given in the Bible relative to why God cannot be seen by man. These will be considered in later chapters.

This continuing revelation may give rise to questions about the appearances of God in Old Testament times. Were they appearances or representations of God or of Christ? Were they Theophanies or Christophanies?

Theophany or Christophany?

The Scriptures tell of God appearing to various men. In some instances a visual form is described. Were these manifestations of God the Father or of the Lord Jesus Christ? A Theophany is a visual manifestation of God, and a Christophany is a visual manifestation of Christ. Some theologians assume that all appearances of God in the Old Testament were Christophanies. That, of course, is based on their view that God the Father has no visual form. Do they assume that Christ, the Son of God, has always had visual form? There is a lack of Biblical support for speculating that all of the visual appearances of God in the Old Testament are of Jesus Christ. Some may possibly have been of Christ, but there is no indication in the various accounts that the appearances of God were other than that of God the Father.

Throughout the Bible, in the Old Testament and particularly in the New Testament, a clear distinction is made when referring to God and the Son of God. God, in the vast majority of instances refers to God the Father. Wherever there is a reference to the Son of God in the Old Testament there are a variety of ways in which this is clearly indicated. One Scripture does refer to the Lord Jesus Christ as God in the Old Testament and it is repeated in the New Testament where it is stated, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Psalm 45:6 and Hebrews 1:8). John refers to Christ as God (John 1:1) and Thomas also called Jesus “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). In the few instances where the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as God, it is clear from the context that it is indeed referring to Him.

In many of God’s appearances to men He came as the Angel of Jehovah. While the Scriptures referred to Him as the Angel of Jehovah, those who saw him believed that they were seeing God.

The Angel of Jehovah

In the Old Testament the Angel of Jehovah or the Angel of the LORD appeared to Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, and David. The context of each of these appearances, however, indicates that they believed that they saw God and talked with Him. Could it be that the Angel of Jehovah is somehow a representation of God? An interesting revelation in the Bible is that when angels are described they are always described as being in the form of a man, just as God is also described in various appearances as in the form of a man.

The Hebrew word for “angel” is *malek*, which means “messenger” or “to send.” These created beings that we recognize as angels are described in the Bible as “ministering Spirits” (Hebrews 1:14). They are servants of God and as such they never accept worship. However, these angels always behold the face of God the Father

(Matthew 18:10) so would they not reflect His glory? Gabriel, who came to Zacharias, announced his authority by saying that he stood in the presence of God (Luke 1:13-19). These angels, however, seem to fall short of the Angel of Jehovah.

Some theologians have concluded that the Angel of Jehovah is Jesus Christ. This could be true although Hebrews 1:5-7 seems to contradict that idea, in that it separates Jesus as an eternal member of the Godhead, from His created angels. Could it be that the word “angel” can have different meanings in different contexts? An interesting example of this possibility is when the girl Rhoda saw Peter at a gate after the angel released him from prison. When she insisted to those in the house that Peter was outside, they did not believe it, but said “It is his angel” (Acts 12:7-15). The book of Isaiah speaks of a special angel, the Angel of His Presence.

*In all their affliction He was afflicted, And **the Angel of His Presence** saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old (Isaiah 63:9, emphasis added).*

Who is the Angel of His Presence? It could be a special angel manifesting, representing, indicating or reflecting the visual glory of God, but since this is the only mention of the phrase in the Scripture, it remains unclear. Genesis 48:15-16 speaks of another angel, “the angel who redeemed me.” The passage seems to make it clear that this is no mere ministering spirit, but God. Since He was a redeeming angel, and the Angel of His Presence, it seems evident that the Angel of Jehovah must in some way be a visual manifestation of God through His Son Jesus Christ.

Fear of Death upon Seeing God

When Jacob wrestled with a Man one night on his way back to Canaan, he was told that he had wrestled with God. He called the name of the place Peniel because, he said, “... I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (Genesis 32:30). Jacob had assumed that he would die if he saw God. Old Testament saints did not seem to have doubts as to whether God could be seen. They were afraid of seeing God because they thought that they would die if they did. The Bible does not give the reason for this fear but they were not far from the truth.

When God called to Moses out of the burning bush, he “was afraid to look upon God” (Exodus 3:2-6). This may have been because of what Jacob said earlier. Later, on Mount Sinai, when Moses asked to see God’s glory, God said, “...no man shall see Me and live” (Exodus 33:18-20). The children of Israel were warned not to gaze upon God when He

manifested His glory on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-21). On another occasion, however, Moses and Aaron and seventy elders saw the God of Israel. It is said that they saw God and ate and drank. They did not die. (Exodus 24:9-11). Gideon, however, was afraid that he would die because he had seen an angel of Jehovah face to face (Judges 6:21-22). Manoah was also afraid when the angel of Jehovah appeared to him and his wife. He said, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" (Judges 13:22-23). They did not die.

It is not clear why there was a fear of seeing God back in the time of Jacob, but God made it very clear to Moses when He said that no man could see Him and live. Consequently, there was a renewed fear of seeing God. Some people, however, saw a measure of the glory of God and lived. The important truth is that Old Testament saints understood and believed that God did have visual form and that He could be seen. The more they realized the awesomeness of His glory the more they feared seeing Him.

Will the Pure in Heart Really See God the Father?

Many theologians and Bible scholars insist that God cannot be seen visually because He is invisible and Spirit. They seem certain that God has no shape or visible form. They say that He does not have form because He is omnipresent. These speculations will be considered in the light of the Scriptures in some of the following chapters. It would seem, at this point, that this position is inconsistent with many, many Scriptures that reveal that God can be seen visually. While it has been stated earlier in this chapter that the Scriptures say no man has seen God, it is clear that they do not mean that He cannot be seen.

Some theologians and Bible scholars have suggested that when we are brought to God and are before His throne that we will only see Jesus. Because of this view many interpret all visions of God in the Scriptures as Christophanies. This, of course, contradicts the visions that indicate otherwise.

When Jesus spoke of seeing God in His sermon on the mount, the hearts of the hearers may well have leaped with joy and hope. Those who knew the Scriptures had a basis for believing Him. There is no indication that anyone questioned His teaching about seeing God. Some might question today whether Jesus was referring to Himself or God the Father in His promise of seeing God, but who would His hearers have thought He was referring to? Would their concept of God have included Jesus? It is doubtful. Jesus was not revealing Himself as God at this time. He was obviously speaking of God the Father for He continued by saying,

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:9-10).

Jesus said the pure in heart would see God, but the Bible says, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Who then are the pure in heart? The tragic truth is, no man is pure in heart. The Bible describes the heart as deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). In the beginning of creation Adam and Eve were in fellowship with God. In time they sinned against God and through them sin and death came into the world (Genesis 3:1-19). As a result, the Bible says “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). Sin separates man from God and sins have hidden His face (Isaiah 59:1-2). The Bible makes it clear that we cannot see God in our sinful nature and with our impure hearts.

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without **which no man shall see the Lord**: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled ... (Hebrews 12:14-15, emphasis added).*

We need to be made righteous, holy, and pure before we can expect to see God.

How Can a Man be Pure in Heart?

How is this possible for a sinful man to be pure in heart? Eliaphaz asked Job, “What is man, that he could be pure?”(Job 15:14). Bildad asked Job, “How can a man be righteous before God, or how can he be pure ...?” (Job 25:4) Job knew that the only way to be pure was to be redeemed. He had said earlier in the conversation,

... I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27).

Job knew that he was not pure. Bildad had reminded him that even the stars are not pure in God’s sight, how much less man, who is a maggot and a worm (Job 25:5-6). How did Job expect to be made pure and someday see God? How did he expect to be redeemed? When God spoke to him later he admitted that he was vile (Job 40:3-4). Job’s final word to God was,

“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6).

The extent to which Job saw God that day caused him to abhor himself and repent. This response was similar to that of Isaiah when he saw the Lord and said,

Woe unto me! for I am undone! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts (Isaiah 6:5 DBY).

How then can we have a pure heart? How can we be pure from our sin? Are we as sinful creatures able to truly cleanse our hands and purify our hearts? Solomon, in the book of Proverbs asked, “Who can say, ‘I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin’”? (Proverbs 20:9). Man is unable to cleanse himself from sin and purify his heart. We need, as Job of old, a redeemer who can redeem us, cleanse us from our sins, and purify our hearts.

We Need a Savior to Purify Our Hearts

God sent His Son into the world to be an atonement for our sins and to be our Savior (I John 4:10). Since we cannot purify our own hearts, God provided One who could. The last book in the Old Testament foretold His coming, the One who purifies,

*Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap. **He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; he will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, as in former years"*** (Malachi 3:1-4, emphasis added).

The gospels record the coming of the Savior. He would not only redeem and purify Levi but also Israel and all who believe in Him. The book of Matthew tells of His birth and of what was revealed to Joseph, the husband of Mary. The Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,

... Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:20-21).

The book of Luke relates what an angel of the Lord said to shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem on the night that Jesus was born,

... behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11).

Jesus Christ is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe (I Timothy 4:10). He came to cleanse us from our sins and to redeem and purify us. We who have believed in Him are,

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and **our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works** (Titus 2:13-14, emphasis added).*

The Lord Jesus Christ purifies the heart. He has redeemed us by dying on the cross for our sins. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (II Corinthians 5:21). Our redemption is free to us as believers, but very costly to Jesus Christ. The Bible reminds us,

... you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Peter 1:18-19).

The book of Peter also tells us how Christ suffered for us, the One who committed no sin. On the cross He bore our sins in His own body that we might live for righteousness (I Peter 2:24). Therefore, we are not to be conformed to our former behaviors, but to be holy (I Peter 1:13-16). Just as we have been redeemed from our sins through Jesus Christ, it is also through Him that we believe in God and have hope and faith in Him (I Peter 1:20-21). Through Christ we are purified and taught to love with a pure heart.

***Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth** through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, **love one another fervently with a pure heart**, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever... (I Peter 1:22-23, emphasis added).*

As Jesus promised, the pure in heart shall see God. Through faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Redeemer we are redeemed, saved, and purified. Since we could not purify ourselves God undertook the work of purifying us through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

We are now being prepared daily for our entrance into glory and the throne room of God. Even now we are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace by faith ((Hebrews 4:14-16). We are also invited to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way (Hebrews 10:16-22). In a coming day Jesus will take us before the throne in heaven in the very presence of God, and we shall see Him! Oh what a wonder,

believers, the pure in heart shall see God. They shall see God as Stephen did just before he died, and they shall see Jesus at the right hand of God in great glory (Acts 7:55-56). What a glorious day that will be.

My God, How Wonderful Thou Art

My God, how wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty how bright,
How beautiful Thy mercy seat,
In depths of burning light!

How wonderful, how beautiful
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless pow'r,
And awesome purity!

Yet I may love Thee, too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art,
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.

Father of Jesus, love's reward,
What rapture it will be
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie,
And gaze, and gaze on Thee.

Frederick William Faber
Hymns of Truth and Praise #16

2

What is His Name?

Proverbs 30:4

Jesus said that the pure in heart will see God and the Scriptures have made it clear that God can be seen. A critical question follows as to who this God is that can be seen. The world acknowledges many gods in many forms. The Bible, however, states over and over again that there is only one God. The New Testament specifically states that there is one God, the Father (I Corinthians 8:6). It also states that He is the true and living God (I Thessalonians 1:9-10). People are known by their names. Does God have a specific

name by which He may be identified? What is God's name? This was the question a man named Agur asked long ago in the book of Proverbs when he said,

*Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One. Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? **What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?** (Proverbs 30:2-4, emphasis added).*

Agur's question is answered in the Word of God. God indeed has a name and His Son has a name. God is a God of names (Psalm 147:4). He names all things and those names have meaning. Names indicate the character or nature of things. God named things when He created them (Genesis 1:5-10), although Adam was given the responsibility to name the animals (Genesis 2:20). God's name has meaning and reveals His character. The Bible reveals that both God the Father and God the Son have many names and titles. There are so many that numbers of books have been written simply listing the names, describing, and explaining the meanings of the names of God and of Jesus Christ. Even with all these names, however, there are not enough to fully describe the greatness of God and His Son.

The first reference to God in the Bible is in the first verse of Genesis where it says that God created the world. The word "God" is a translation of the Hebrew word "Elohim" which means "The Supreme." Elohim is a plural noun, considered to be the plural form of Eloah. Amazingly, it is linked with a singular verb for "created." This is amazing since the Bible asserts over and over again that there is only one God. He is introduced in the beginning of Genesis as being both one and yet plural. When God created man He said, "Let Us make man..." (Genesis 1:26). Who was with God in creation? The Bible reveals that it was His Son (John 1:1-3).

The second chapter of Genesis reveals the name of God. After the creation of the world was completed God rested from all of His work. The Bible then introduces God by His name.

*These are the histories of the heavens and the earth, when they were created, in the day that **Jehovah** Elohim made earth and heavens, and every shrub of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for **Jehovah** Elohim had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground. But a mist went up from the earth, and moistened the whole surface of the ground. And **Jehovah** Elohim formed Man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Man became a living soul. And **Jehovah** Elohim planted a garden in Eden eastward, and there put Man whom he had formed (Genesis 2:4-8 DBY, emphasis added).*

Jehovah is translated “the LORD” in the King James Version and most other English translations, but “The LORD” is more of a title rather than a name. Darby’s translation (DBY), *The Holy Scriptures*, consistently translates the Hebrew word as Jehovah. In the text above, instead of LORD God, Darby’s translates it as Jehovah Elohim (Jehovah God).

God’s Name is Jehovah

God’s name is Jehovah. Jehovah is a transliteration of the Hebrew word יהוה (*JWHW* or *Yehweh*). This very personal and powerful name means the self-existing One, or I AM, or I AM that I AM (Exodus 3:14-17). The name Jehovah is very special. It is a description of the basic character of God. It is truly His name, not a title. Thousands of references are made of God’s glorious name Jehovah, throughout the Old Testament. Unfortunately, Hebrew scribes and English translators have obscured His name today. The Hebrew scribes were so afraid of taking Jehovah’s name in vain that they would not speak it. Instead, they substituted אדני (Adonai), which means Master or Lord. Unfortunately, almost all English translators consistently follow the Hebrew change. They explain, however, that Adonai is translated “the Lord” and YHWH (Yehweh or Jehovah) is translated “the LORD.” Since “the LORD” is more of a title than a name, the glorious name of Jehovah is diminished.

Moses was the first person recorded in the Bible to ask the name of God. This occurred after God appeared to Moses and called to him out of the burning bush in the wilderness near Horeb and said,

...I am the God of your father - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God (Exodus 3:6).

God told Moses that He was going to send him to Egypt to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 3:10). Moses questioned God about His ability to do this (Exodus 3:11), but God reassured Moses that He would be with him. Moses then said to God,

*...Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say, **What is his name?** what shall I say unto them? (Exodus 3:13 DBY, emphasis added)*

God answered Moses with a most astonishing answer, saying,

*...**I AM THAT I AM.** And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: **I AM** hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover to Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: **Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,***

*hath sent me unto you. **This is my name for ever**, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, **Jehovah the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hath appeared to me**, saying, I have indeed visited you, and seen that which is done unto you in Egypt; and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:14-17 DBY, emphasis added).*

When God revealed Himself to Moses as Jehovah, He indicated that He was not known by that name before. This is strange since God's people addressed Him as Jehovah from the beginning (Genes 4:26 DBY). Abraham, for example, when God provided a ram as a substitute offering for Isaac, called the name of the place at Moriah, "Jehovah will provide" or "Jehovah Jireh." (Genesis 22:13-14 DBY). God, however, said to Moses that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not know Him as Jehovah (Exodus 6:2 DBY). So while they used the name "Jehovah" in reference to God, they evidently did not know the meaning or significance of it. More specifically, God was known to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as "Almighty God" or God Almighty (El Shaddai). God made this clear when He spoke to Moses in the desert,

*...I am Jehovah. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as the Almighty God; but by my name Jehovah I was not made known to them. And I established also my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were sojourners. And I have heard also the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians have forced to serve, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their service, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and will be your God; and **ye shall know that I, Jehovah your God, am he** who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land concerning which I swore to give it unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; and I will give it you for a possession: **I am Jehovah** (Exodus 6:2-8 DBY, emphasis added)*

Moses, apparently, was the first man to whom God fully revealed His name in relationship to its meaning. God's personal name is Jehovah, and it describes another one of His many characteristics. His people now learned that God was not only Almighty, but that He was self-existing.

The Name of the Son of God is Jesus

The name of God's Son is Jesus. It is important to realize that the name Jesus also has meaning. His name was given to Joseph by the angel of God when he discovered that

Mary was going to have a child. His name indicates that He is the Savior. The gospel of Matthew records,

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus (Matthew 1:19-25, emphasis added).

The lovely name of **Jesus** comes from the name Jehovah for it means **Jehovah Saves** or **Jehovah Savior**. His name is also an indication of His basic character. God's name is intricately linked with that of His Son. They are One in the Godhead (John 10:29-30). In considering Jesus Christ and the name of Jehovah, Jesus referred to Himself as I AM in a singular way in addition to seven revelations, or I Am's, in the Gospel according to John. On one occasion, when the Jews were challenging Jesus, they said to Him,

*...Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, "If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death." "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **before Abraham was, I AM**" (John 8:52-58, emphasis added).*

Later, in Gethsemane, when a crowd came to arrest Him, Jesus referred to Himself as I AM when He went toward them. The Gospel of John states,

*Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." **Jesus said to them, "I am ..."** And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Then-- when He said to them, "I am,"-- they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "**I have told you that I am ...** Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way" (John 18:4-8).*

The words “*He*” after “*I am*” in the translation above were in italic in the original text, indicating the words were not in the original Greek text. They were omitted above to emphasize the reading as “I am.” It is evident from the Scriptures above that the Lord Jesus Christ is also the I AM, the self-existing One, and He is “Jehovah the Savior.”

Jehovah God’s Supremacy and Triumph over False Gods

After God revealed Himself to Moses as Jehovah, He sent him to Egypt to lead the children of Israel out of bondage to serve Him. Moses and his brother Aaron met with the children of Israel and then appeared before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Moses said to Pharaoh,

...Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go that they may celebrate a feast to me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, “Who is Jehovah, to whose voice I am to hearken to let Israel go? I do not know Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:1-2 DBY, emphasis added).

There were many gods in Egypt so when Moses spoke of Jehovah, Pharaoh said, “Who is Jehovah?” (Exodus 5:2 DBY). He was about to find out. As God brought the plagues upon Egypt, it was the Egyptian scribes who began to realize that this was “the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19 DBY). Ultimately, Pharaoh confessed to Moses that he had sinned against Jehovah and asked Moses to pray to Jehovah for him (Exodus 10:16-17 DBY). Finally, after Jehovah killed all of the firstborn in the land of Egypt, including the firstborn of Pharaoh, he called Moses in the night and said,

...Rise up, go away from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and go; and bless me also (Exodus 12:31 DBY).

Pharaoh came to know of the name of Jehovah, as did the whole land of Egypt and the countries throughout the area (Joshua 2:8-10 DBY). Canaan, a land full of idolatry was also to learn of Jehovah that He is the God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath (Joshua 2:11 DBY).

Tragically, Israel forsook Jehovah many times after leaving Egypt, and worshipped Baal and other false gods in Canaan and throughout the kingdom age. During one period in the history of Israel, the prophet Elijah called all Israel to Mount Carmel and asked,

...How long do ye halt between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him; and if Baal, follow him. And the people answered him not a word (I Kings 18:21 DBY).

Elijah then challenged the people by saying that the God who answers by fire, let Him be God (I Kings 18:23-24 DBY). The prophets of Baal called all day upon Baal but he did

not answer (I Kings 18:26 DBY). Finally, about the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah said to all the people,

*...Draw near to me. And all the people drew near to him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah which was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of Jehovah came saying, Israel shall be thy name; and with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah, and made a trench round about the altar, of the capacity of two measures of seed; and he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four pitchers with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering up of the oblation, that Elijah the prophet drew near, and said, **Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel**, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things by thy word. **Answer me, Jehovah, answer me, that this people may know that thou Jehovah art God**, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. And the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And all the people saw it, and they fell on their faces and said, **Jehovah, he is God! Jehovah, he is God!** (I Kings 18:30-39 DBY, emphasis added)*

Regardless of what Jehovah God had done for the children of Israel, and the many ways in which He had revealed Himself to them, time and again they turned from Him to idols. This has been the nature of man since the beginning of creation. Nevertheless, God created man for a purpose and when man sinned against Him a way of salvation was provided for him. Over and over again Jehovah proves Himself to be the one and only living God.

The Glorious Name of Jehovah God

God is a jealous God and He is jealous for His name (Exodus 34:14 DBY). After God delivered Israel out of Egypt and led them to Sinai, He revealed Himself to them on Mount Sinai and spoke these words,

I am Jehovah thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thyself any graven image, or any form of what is in the heavens above, or what is in the earth beneath, or what is in the waters under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and to the fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not idly utter the name of Jehovah thy God; for

Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that idly uttereth his name (Exodus 20:2-7 DBY, emphasis added).

The preceding Scriptures are words from the first of the Ten Commandments. Many English translations lose the significance of the name of God when they substitute “the LORD” for Jehovah. It is the name **Jehovah**, that is not to be uttered idly or taken in vain.

There are many references in the Scriptures relative to the glorious name of Jehovah. God’s name is a glorious and fearful name.

... take heed to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, to fear this glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD (Deuteronomy 28:58 DBY).

God’s glorious name is to be praised.

Thine, Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the splendour, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is thine: thine, Jehovah, is the kingdom, and thou art exalted as Head above all; and riches and glory are of thee, and thou rulest over everything; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make all great and strong. And now, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name (I Chronicles 29:11-13 DBY).

God’s glorious name is blessed.

Blessed be Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel, who alone doeth wondrous things! And blessed be his glorious name for ever! and let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen, and Amen (Psalm 72:18-19 DBY).

God’s name is everlasting.

I will record the loving-kindnesses of Jehovah, the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed upon us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel which he hath bestowed upon them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses. And he said, They are indeed my people, children that will not lie; and he became their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bore them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit: and he turned to be their enemy; himself, he fought against them. But he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people: Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him, his glorious arm leading them by the right hand of Moses, dividing the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name, --who led them through the depths, like a horse in the wilderness, and they stumbled not? As cattle go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah gave them rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name (Isaiah 63:7-14 DBY).

Jehovah God is our Creator (Psalm 100:3 DBY). He created the world through His Son, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9). He is the one and only God (I Kings 8:60 DBY). Jehovah is our God and Jesus is our God (Hebrews 1:8). When Agur asked the name of God and His Son's name he added,

*Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Two things do I ask of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the bread of my daily need: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, **Who is Jehovah?** or lest I be poor and steal, and **outrage the name of my God** (Proverbs 30:5-9 DBY, emphasis added).*

Agur not only knew the name of God, but he also seemed to realize the close relationship between the Father and the Son (Proverbs 30:2-4). God's name, Jehovah, and His Son's name, Jesus, are intricately related in the Godhead.

The glorious name of Jehovah identifies Him as the one true and living God. His name distinguishes Him from the gods in ancient times and from gods today. Sadly, the LORD has been substituted for His name in most English translations as though He were nameless. We need to lift up His name in worship as we lift up the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus, the Name Above All Names

The Son of God was not known by the name of Jesus in Old Testament days. He was only known as the Son and as the Anointed or Messiah. Earlier it was pointed out that He was given the name "Jesus" prior to His birth by Mary, as directed by the angel, who said, "... **you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sin**" (Matthew 1:21). Since the meaning of the name of Jesus means Jehovah Savior, or Jehovah saves, His very name proclaims the purpose of His coming to earth, and reveals the power of His name to save man from his sins.

The glorious name of Jesus, Jehovah Savior, is powerful and the only name by which we can be saved. He was crucified for our sins and is the only way to God the Father.

*Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' **Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved** (Acts 4:10-12, emphasis added).*

Jesus was in the form of God and took the form of a servant, a man. He came in obedience to His Father, an obedience that led to His death on the cross. He arose and ascended to His Father, who has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above all other names. We are instructed concerning Him,

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. **Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father** (Philippians 2:5-11, emphasis added).*

It will be the believer's joy to worship and praise the names of Jesus and Jehovah in the glory forever when Jesus Christ takes us to be with Him before God in the throne room with all the angels and other heavenly beings. Agur indicated that he did know the name of God and that it was his desire not to deny God or profane His name. People continued to worship false gods in the days of Paul the apostle, and they continue to worship false gods today. Paul affirms there is but one God and one Jesus Christ.

*Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is **one God, the Father**, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and **one Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom are all things, and through whom we live (I Corinthians 8:1-6, emphasis added).*

We are assured by the Scriptures, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross for our salvation, and by the witness of the Holy Spirit within us, that we have come to know the one true and living God.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (I John 5:9-13).

The Bible teaches that we can know the true God. We know that we know God through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When we become Christians we become children of God and know that we are of God.

*We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in **Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.** Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen (I John 5:19-21, emphasis added).*

When God revealed the meaning of His name, Jehovah, to Moses, He was about to deliver or save His people out of Egypt. Jehovah is a saving God. Joseph was told to call Mary's child "Jesus" for He would save His people from their sins. The name of Jesus means Jehovah saves, or Jehovah is salvation. Some day we shall see the Lord Jesus Christ and since it is clear from the Scriptures that Jehovah is the name of God the Father, it is Jehovah whom we shall see when we see God.

Call Jehovah Thy Salvation

Call Jehovah thy salvation, Rest beneath th'Almighty's shade,
In His secret habitation Dwell and never be dismayed:
There no tumult shall alarm thee, Thou shalt dread no hidden snare;
Guile nor violence can harm thee, In eternal safeguard there.

From the sword at noonday wasting, From the noisome pestilence,
In the depth of midnight blasting, God shall be thy sure defense;
He shall charge His angel legions Watch and ward o'er thee to keep;
Tho' thou walk thro' lonesome regions, Tho' in desert wilds thou sleep.

Since with pure and firm affection, Thou on God hast set thy love,
With the wings of His protection He will shield thee from above:
Thou shall call on Him in trouble, He will hearken, He will save;
Here for grief reward thee double, Crown with life beyond the grave.

Translated by James Montgomery
Hymns of Truth and Praise #493

*And Moses said to God, **Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM. And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover to Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: **Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hath appeared to me, saying, I have indeed visited you, and seen that which is done unto you in Egypt ...***** (Exodus 3:13-16 DBY emphasis added).

3

Seeing Him Who is Invisible

Hebrews 11:27

God is described as invisible just three times in the Bible and only in the New Testament (Colossians 1:15, I Timothy 1:17, and Hebrews 11:27), although the word “invisible” is used two additional times (Romans 1:20 and again in Colossians 1:15). Invisibility does not mean that something can never be seen. It does not mean that something does not have form or shape. The word “invisible” in the Bible is a translation from the Greek word “αορατος” (aoratos), which literally means “unseen.” Invisible

may be defined simply as unseen or hidden from view. God is presently to us an unseen God.

Theologians who maintain that God the Father can never be seen presume that because He is invisible, Spirit, and omnipresent, He has no form. Their reasoning is inconclusive and contradicts various Scriptures, as will be shown later. God is only invisible because He is unseen or hidden at this point in time, just as Jesus is also presently invisible or unseen to us. It may be that the Holy Spirit is always invisible, although He did take the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus. God is Spirit (John 4:24), but that does not preclude that He has no form. Jesus must be Spirit also because He is God, and He has a form and a body. God is also omnipresent, that is, everywhere present (Psalm 139:7-10). Again, that does not mean He cannot or does not have a form, since Jesus is also omnipresent and He has a form. The Bible does not, however, describe God the Father as having a body, only a form.

There are no references in the Old Testament indicating that God is invisible. Old Testament people did not think of God as not having visual form. Rather, they expressed fear that they would die if they saw Him (Judges 13:22). There is no teaching in the Scriptures that says that God the Father can never be seen, or that He has no form. The book of Hebrews speaks of Moses as “as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27). This verse will be considered in the following pages in reviewing the invisibility of God.

Obviously, God is able to become visible and invisible at will. This is also true of Jesus. While He was on earth He became invisible at times. He appeared and disappeared or hid Himself at times during His ministry (Luke 4:28-30 & 24:30-31). One time His disciples thought He was a ghost when He came to them walking on the sea (Matthew 14:25-31).

The Invisible Attributes of God

The first reference to the word “invisible” is in the book of Romans, but it speaks of the *attributes* of God, rather than of His appearance. Thankfully, His eternal power and Godhead are invisible attributes that are revealed and understood in His creation. Ungodly and unrighteous men suppress this truth and their denials of God are without excuse. In reference to the Gospel of Christ the apostle Paul writes,

*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world **His invisible attributes** are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His*

eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened (Romans 1:17-21, emphasis added).

While the truths of God are revealed through creation, His word also reveals many of His attributes, such as His righteousness, love, and grace. One of the reasons that God is invisible or unseen is because He is pleased when we come to Him, and live by faith (Hebrews 11:24-29). In the book of Hebrews we read that "...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Jesus, when speaking to Thomas said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). John, in writing about loving God said,

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (I John 4:20).

Faith is not only believing in an unseen God, but it is realizing that true reality does not consist in the things of this world, but of things in the heavenly realm.

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible (Hebrews 11:3).

...we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Corinthians 4:18).

Through faith comes the understanding of unseen things. It has been said that "seeing is believing," but the truth is "believing is seeing." Faith pleases God. It pleases God when we believe in Him without seeing Him. In fact, without faith we cannot please God.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

The invisible attributes of God have been revealed in creation and in God's Word. God's ultimate revelation of Himself was in His Son, Jesus Christ, when He came into the world to live and to die for our sins (Hebrews 1:1-3).

The Image of the Invisible God

The second and third references to "invisible" are in the book of Colossians. One describes Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God and the other refers to invisible things created by Him.

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and **invisible**, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:15-16, emphasis added).*

The above description of Christ can be compared with the description of Him in Philippians, where it is written that He was in the form of God, but took on Himself the form of a servant and of a man. We read,

*Let this mind be in you which was also in **Christ Jesus**, who, **being in the form of God**, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, **taking the form of a bondservant**, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8, emphasis added).*

Jesus is the image of the invisible or unseen God. He manifests the form of God. Clearly, Christ could not be the image of God or in the form of God if God does not have a form. Similarly, Jesus could not be in the form of man if man does not have a form. The book of Hebrews expands the description of Christ as it states,

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by **His Son**, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; **who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-4, emphasis added).*

Jesus is described as the brightness of God's glory and the exact image of His person or personality. Jesus is revealed as the image of God, radiating God's glory, and He is exactly like God in His personality. He is the complete image of His Father both visually and in character.

The King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible

The fourth reference to "invisible" is found in I Timothy. It is not totally clear from the context if it is referring to Jesus Christ or God the Father.

*However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first **Jesus Christ** might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to **the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God** who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen (I Timothy 1:16-17, emphasis added).*

A later reference in I Timothy, speaking of immortality and the King of kings and Lord of lords, appears definitely to be in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, for it states,

*I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until **our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing**, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the **blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen** (I Timothy 6:13-16, emphasis added).*

In the preceding Scriptures Christ Jesus is revealed as He is at the right hand of His Father in glory (Acts 7:55). The glory that Jesus revealed to His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (John 1:14) and to John on Patmos (Revelation 1:12-16) were earlier manifestations of the glory that He had with the Father before the creation of the world (John 17:5). The latter verse above, however, reveals the full glory of Christ “whom no man has seen or can see.” It may be concluded that He is the King eternal, invisible. As the Father is invisible, the Son is also.

Seeing Him Who is Invisible

The fifth and last reference to the word “invisible” is found in the book of Hebrews and refers to the faith of Moses. The author of Hebrews describes Moses as seeing the invisible God.

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured **as seeing Him who is invisible** (Hebrews 11:24-27, emphasis added).*

The context of the above may indicate “seeing Him” by faith. The phrase “he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” could be translated “the invisible (one) as seeing, he kept on.” It is clear, however, from the book of Exodus, that Moses believed that God could be seen when he asked God to show him His glory on Mount Sinai (Exodus 33:18). God answered by saying,

You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live ... Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen (Exodus 33:20-23).

Moses did not see the face of God that day but was allowed to see His back (Exodus 33:21-23). Other Scriptures, which will be cited later in following chapters, state that Moses indeed saw the form of God.

Why is the Face of God Hidden?

The invisibility of God may be understood by considering the hidden face of God. God hides His face for many reasons and there are many references in the Scriptures regarding the hidden face of God. Many of them are figures of speech. Others are not. God's face was hidden from Moses because he would die if he saw Him (Exodus 33:20). Evidently God's face is too glorious and awesome for man to behold. God also hides his face because of His anger and because of evil (Deuteronomy 31:15-18). Cain, after killing Abel, said to God, "... You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face."(Genesis 4:14). It is not clear whether or not Cain had ever seen God. He may have been speaking figuratively. God also hides Himself because of man's inclination to make and worship graven images. In speaking to the children of Israel God said,

*Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.' Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but **saw no form**; you only heard a voice ... **Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure** ... (Deuteronomy 4:9-16).*

In the book of Psalms, David asks, "How long will you hide your face from me?" (Psalm 13:1). Isaiah says simply, "Truly You are God, who hide Yourself ..." (Isaiah 45:15). Isaiah prophesied saying, "... your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). In another passage Isaiah says,

... there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities (Isaiah 64:7).

Finally, God hides His face so that we might live by faith (Hebrews 11:1-6). God clearly regards faith as the only way for man to please God and draw near to Him.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

The face of God is not hidden because He has no visible form, but because He is too glorious for sinful man to behold.

The Hidden Face of Jesus Christ

In the early church many believers had never actually seen Jesus. Jesus' face was hidden from them just as it is presently hidden from us. Peter, in writing to them about the purpose of their trials and their love for Jesus Christ, said,

*...that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, **whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls** (I Peter 1:7-9, emphasis added).*

Someday we will see Jesus who will take us to the Father, and we shall see them together as Stephen did so long ago, just before he died as a martyr (Acts 7:55-56). In the meantime, in our anticipation to see the face of Jesus Christ and of God the Father, we should be occupied in seeking His face in prayer.

... if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land (II Chronicles 7:14).

When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek" (Psalm 27:8).

If believers earnestly yearn to see the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, as Job, Moses, David, and His disciples did, we can prepare for this by searching the Scriptures for revelations and the many visions of God the Father and the Son, which describe them.

God is Spirit

The only verse in the Bible that states directly that God is Spirit is found in John 4:21-24, although the exact phrasing varies between translations. The King James translation reads, “God is a Spirit,” but the New King James version omits the definite article. Jesus said that God is Spirit while talking to the woman from Samaria (John 4:7-24). During their conversation the woman raised an issue and Jesus answered teaching her about worship.

... Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship (John 4:19-20).

*Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth** (John 4:21-24, emphasis added).*

The Samaritan woman apparently was questioning where the correct place to worship was. Jesus told her that she did not know what she worshipped and directed her to the worship of the Father. The woman was focusing on the physical. Jesus spoke of worship in spirit and truth. In saying that God is Spirit, the context indicates that it is a definition of His essential character and how we should worship Him, not whether He has visual form or not.

The Greek word πνευμά (spirit) is used in the New Testament in several ways and needs to be considered according to the context in which it is found. Jesus appears to be saying in the text above that because God is spirit, we should worship Him in spirit and truth. His focus seems to be on “spiritual” worship and truth. A similar emphasis on spiritual understanding and worship is reflected in the following Scriptures:

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your **reasonable service (or spiritual worship)** (Romans 12:1, spiritual worship and emphasis added).*

*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned** (I Corinthians 2:12-14, emphasis added).*

*Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:4-5, emphasis added).*

Theologians who deny that God has visual form often connect Jesus' statement that "God is Spirit" with another statement He made about a spirit. After His resurrection when He appeared to His disciples, they were terrified, thinking Jesus was a spirit. The account in Luke records,

*But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen **a spirit**. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for **a spirit does not have flesh and bones** as you see I have" (Luke 24:37-39, emphasis added).*

The inference of theologians who connect the two statements of Jesus fails to recognize the difference in the use of the word "spirit" in the statements. It is apparent that the disciples thought Jesus was an apparition or ghost, and Jesus clarified their misconception by explaining that He was not a spirit or ghost. Incidentally, some spirits, such as evil spirits or demons seem to need a body in which to dwell (Mark 5:13). Again, this does not mean that all spirits do not have a form or some kind of body. Angels, for example, are called spirits (Hebrews 1:7) and they appear to have bodies, but what kind? Their bodies were certainly not flesh and blood. There are different kinds of bodies described in the Bible, which will be considered in Chapter 4. There is also a distinction in the Scriptures between flesh and spirit as noted in Hebrews where a contrast is made between human fathers and God.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (Hebrews 12:9).

In the final analysis of the various Scriptures considered, it should be quite obvious that the use of the word in Luke 24:39 does not have the same meaning as that in John 4:24.

Another truth about spirits and bodies can be found in I Corinthians on the subject of resurrection. It introduces spirit or spiritual in a different dimension. The question is raised, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"(I Corinthians 15:35). After describing various kinds of glory the Scripture describes two kinds of bodies relative to the resurrection. It states,

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown

a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

This passage teaches that there is a spiritual body as well as a natural body. The Scriptures go on to relate that in the resurrection we shall be like Christ. The new life in Christ is a contrast between the fleshly, or natural life, and the spiritual life.

And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:45-54).

The ancient people of God had a concept of a spirit having a form or image. The book of Job has an interesting statement about a spirit with a form, and an image. Eliphaz in his first response to Job, in speaking about God, described a vision he had in which a spirit passed before his face.

*Now a word was secretly brought to me, And my ear received a whisper of it. In disquieting thoughts from the **visions of the night**, When deep sleep falls on men, Fear came upon me, and trembling, Which made all my bones shake. Then **a spirit passed before my face**; The hair on my body stood up. It stood still, But I could not discern its appearance. A **form** was before my eyes; There was silence; Then I heard a voice saying: 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?' (Job 4:12-17, emphasis added).*

Eliphaz saw the spirit as being from God. His conception is another example that gives rise to many questions about spirits in the Bible, especially since the word has different meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. A most important consideration is that if God is Spirit, then Jesus is also Spirit since He is God. What about angels and believers? Are they in some sense spirits? Consider the following Scriptures:

*Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to **the Father of spirits** and live? (Hebrews 12:9, emphasis added).*

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to **the spirits of just men made perfect**, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24, emphasis added).*

God is the Father of spirits. It is not clear who these spirits are from the context of the verse above. The reference to “the spirits of just men made perfect” no doubt refers to Christians. The angels are also referred to as spirits twice in the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 1:7 & 14). The theory that God has no form because He is Spirit is an oversimplification and certainly an incorrect theological conclusion.

The Omnipresence of God

The omnipresence of God is another factor in the theological speculation that God has no form or body and therefore cannot be seen. Scholars reason, if God is everywhere, how can He be limited to a specific place? Like their other theories, there are problems with this reasoning. No one can deny the omnipresence of God because several Scriptures describe it. For instance, Solomon ascribed God omnipresence when he dedicated the temple. He asked,

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built (I Kings 8:27).

Solomon realized that the heavens could not contain God. Yet, it is interesting to note that God came that day and manifested His glory in the temple in the form of a cloud (I Kings 8:11-12). In another passage the Psalmist asked where he could go to hide from God’s presence.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me (Psalm 139:7-10).

The omnipresence of God is also expressed in the prophecy of Isaiah.

Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? (Isaiah 66:1 & Acts 7:49).

Since God is omnipresent does that preclude that He cannot be present in a specific place such as on His throne, or of coming into the presence of His people? To promote such a

claim limits our concept of God by inserting our human perceptions of time and dimensional restrictions. Since Jesus is part of the Godhead, He must also be omnipresent. He is at the right hand of God in heaven (Romans 8:34). He also walks in the midst of the assemblies (Revelation 1:20, 2:1), and He is also in the midst when two or three are gathered together in His name (Matthew 18:20). In addition to that, Jesus is also in the believer (John 17:22-23). Does this mean that He cannot have a form or body or be in a specific place at the same time? Certainly not! We know that Jesus came to earth and took on the form of man and we expect Him to gloriously appear in the future.

God is invisible to us at this time but that does not eliminate the possibility that God has no visible features or characteristics. Many Scripture references cited in the Bible indicate that God has both a form and face. We are told over and over again to seek His face. While these may be figures of speech sometimes, nevertheless, God Himself has referred to His face when Moses asked to see His glory at Sinai. It may be true that we shall never fully see God just as we cannot fully see the sun because of its brightness. Light is said to be invisible, yet we can see the sun, although it may damage our eyes. It is sad that theologians have robbed God of His glory and robbed men of their visions of God. It is true that God is invisible, at least to us today, but we can rejoice that we can worship Him in spirit and in truth until the time when we actually see Him.

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious – Thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice, like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life Thou givest – to both great and small,
In all life Thou livest – the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish – but naught changeth Thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render – O help us to see
‘Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!

Walter Chalmers Smith
Hymns of Truth and Praise #4

4

The Image of God Genesis 1:27

The first mention of God in the Bible is in Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew word for God is “Elohim” which means “the Supreme.” Interestingly, Elohim is a plural word, used with a singular verb in this text. The significance of this is revealed later in the chapter when God creates man. The Scripture begins by stating, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” God is immediately revealed as the creator of all things, the last of which is man.

The first description of God is also given in the same chapter where it speaks about the image of God. His image is referred to when He speaks of creating man. On the

sixth day God had created the animals and then He described man as being made in the image of God.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:26-28).

It can be concluded from this text that God looks like a man. This concept prevails throughout the Scriptures. In various places in the Bible where a description of God is given, He has the shape of a man. When asked, children and many adult Christians think of God as resembling a man. They have good reason. Man was made in the form or shape of God. As indicated in the first paragraph above regarding the plural character of God in the title Elohim, it is significant that God said "Let Us make man in Our image," speaking of the Godhead as a plurality. Since God is one, this indicates the idea of the trinity of God. It also suggests that the image of the Father and the Son are the same.

The Image of God

The phrase "image of God" is found twice in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. The word "image," however, is used about a hundred times in the Bible in various ways. It is used in reference to God, to man, to Christ, to idols, and to inscriptions. The first use of the word "image" is coupled with the word "likeness" in the Bible. On the sixth day of creation God said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness ..." and then He "created man in His own image, in the image of God..." (Genesis 1: 26-28).

What do the words "image" and "likeness" mean? The word "image" in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word צֶלֶם (tselem), which means form or the resemblance of a form. An image is a form or a copy, simulation, representation, or shadow of a form. An image may be a similitude in varying degrees. The word is used repeatedly where God forbids the making of graven images or idols to worship. The word "likeness" is coupled with image and comes from the Hebrew word דְמוּת (demut), which means shape, figure, form or pattern. Throughout the Bible there are accounts in which images were made by man from wood or stone or molded from metal and worshipped as gods. The word "image" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "εἰκών" (eikon), which means form, statue, likeness, or representation of a form. The terms

“icon” and “iconography” are derived from eikon. The word “image” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word “χαρακτήρ” (charakter) which is associated with a tool for engraving or impressing a likeness on a coin.

The Scriptures, from the beginning, clearly teach that God has an image or form, and that man was made in His image. Theologians and Bible scholars who do not believe that God has a form argue that the image of God represents Him as a tripartite Being. They conclude that man, as the image of God, is also a tripartite being and that being created in the image of God has no relationship to the form of the man. This, however, is not what is revealed in the text itself. These theologians also argue that the image of God, representing Him as a tripartite being, has a mind, heart (emotion), and will. Their position necessarily excludes God as also having a form or body. Again, this speculation or specific premise of the image of God is not presented in the Bible.

The Form of God

God was referring to His own image and likeness when He spoke concerning the creation of man. God must have an image or form if man is made in God’s image. Since the basic root meaning of the word “image” connotes visual form, God must have a visual form. An image may also imply personality characteristics. This quality is revealed in the New Testament in reference to Christ as the image of God (II Corinthians 4:4).

Some theologians and Bible scholars who object to the concept that God can be seen and has a form assume that it would mean that He has a physical body. The Scriptures do not make any reference to God having a body, only a form. They do, however, refer to His head, hair, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, arms, feet, and heart in various places. If God does have a body, obviously it would not be physical. The term “physical” relates to material things and laws of nature. Man has a physical body made of flesh. God, although He has form, is a heavenly person, not earthly or physical. The Bible does not give a description relative to the substance or essence of God’s form except that He is described variously, as fire, spirit, and light, among others. These Scriptures will be reviewed throughout this book.

The Bible does make it clear that all bodies are not the same. There are natural bodies and spiritual bodies (I Corinthians 15: 44-45). As to form, consider fire, water, air, or clouds which take on form, though the forms may be illusive and variable. The Bible often describes God as fire or like fire.

What does the Bible teach about the image or form of God? When God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26), it seems evident that He was speaking of the image and likeness of the Father and the Son. He was referring

to the form of God. Again, who has seen the form of God? Moses evidently saw the form of God. God made this very clear to the children of Israel. The book of Numbers records,

*And Jehovah ... said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses: he is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly, and not in riddles; and **the form of Jehovah doth he behold**. Why then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses? (Numbers 12:5-8 DBY, emphasis added).*

The Israelites also saw a measure of the glory of God but not His form. One of the reasons God did not allow them to see His form was because He knew that they would make a carved image in the form of God. Moses said,

And take great heed to your souls (for ye saw no form on the day that Jehovah spoke to you in Horeb from the midst of the fire), lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the form of any figure, the pattern of male or female, ... and lest thou lift up thine eyes to the heavens, and see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, the whole host of heaven, and be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, which Jehovah thy God hath assigned unto all peoples under the whole heaven (Deuteronomy 4:15-19 DBY).

One day Jesus referred to the form or shape of God. He was speaking of the witness of John the Baptist and of His own witness, the works that He did, and of the witness of the Father. Jesus said,

*But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. **You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form** (John 5:36-37, emphasis added).*

The King James version translates the last two words in the reference above as “His shape” and the New King James translates them as “His form.” Why would Jesus refer to the shape or form of the Father if He did not have one? The book of Philippians, in teaching about the incarnation of Jesus Christ, His death, and exaltation says,

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, **being in the form of God**, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking **the form of a bondservant**, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those*

under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11, emphasis added).

The preceding Scripture speaks of Jesus as being in the form of God. The word “form” comes from the Greek word “μορφή” (morphe), which means shape or form. The same word is used in speaking of Jesus taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

The Bible does teach that God the Father has a form. To some this may seem contradictory to the teaching that God is Spirit, that He is invisible, and that He is omnipresent, but it is nevertheless true. Moses saw God’s back (Exodus 33:23) and His form (Numbers 12:5-8), and angels see Him (Matthew 18:10). Jesus sees Him and sits at His right hand (John 6:46, Hebrews 1:3). We cannot limit the essence of the eternal God by our own finite misconceptions. God can sit on a throne, be present in a specific place, and fill the universe and heaven of heavens at one and the same time. Nothing is impossible with God (Matthew 19:26).

Does the Bible describe the form of God? It should not surprise us that since man was created in the image of God, that is, in the similitude of God, that God has a form similar to man. One description of God having a form similar to a man is in the vision in which Ezekiel saw God enthroned in glory over the Cherubim.

*And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, a tumultuous noise, as the noise of a host: when they stood, they let down their wings; and there was a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads. When they stood, they let down their wings. **And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.** And I saw as the look of glowing brass, as the appearance of fire, within it round about; from the appearance of his loins and upward, and from the appearance of his loins and downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah.** And when I saw, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke (Ezekiel 1:24-28 DBY, emphasis added).*

Other descriptions of God were revealed to Daniel, to Stephen in the book of Acts, and to John in the book of Revelation. Amazingly, it pleased God to create man in His image and likeness. Equally incredible, the Bible says that God created man for His glory (Isaiah 43:5-7). Unfortunately, some theologians have robbed God of His glory and men of their visions of God by asserting that God does not have form. Their speculation is based on faulty ideas relative to the invisible characteristics of God, that He is Spirit, and omnipresent. These speculations were reviewed in the previous chapter.

Man was Created in the Image of God

God created man in His own image, but to what extent was man made in the image and likeness of God? The language of the Bible indicates that man was shaped or formed in the “likeness” of God. This means, of course, that man is only a similitude of the image, form, or shape of God. Man was created from earth (Genesis 2:7). Man is flesh, as distinct from God. One day God said, “My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh...” (Genesis 6:3). God, obviously, is not flesh (Matthew 16:17). Only His Son, Jesus Christ, was a partaker of flesh and blood, that He might destroy death (Hebrews 2:14-15). The book of Genesis describes the creation of man in the image of God.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:26-27).

The creation of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, are described in detail. Both of them were created on the sixth day of creation but at different times. Eve was created later from Adam, after Adam named the animals. From the language structure it would appear that animals were viewed and all were disqualified to be the helper for the man. None of them were like him. Adam saw this very clearly when Eve was brought to him.

And Jehovah Elohim formed Man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Man became a living soul... And Jehovah Elohim said, It is not good that Man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate, his like. And out of the ground Jehovah Elohim had formed every animal of the field and all fowl of the heavens, and brought them to Man, to see what he would call them; and whatever Man called each living soul, that was its name. And Man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but as for Adam, he found no helpmate, his like. And Jehovah Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Man; and he slept. And he took one of his ribs and closed up flesh in its stead. And Jehovah Elohim built the rib that he had taken from Man into a woman; and brought her to Man. And Man said, This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: this shall be called Woman, because this was taken out of a man (Genesis 2:7, 18-23 DBY).

It is evident then that man was not created exactly like God, but his form was similar to that of God. Man, for example, was created as male and female. Man was also created in a form that was unique and distinct from that of animals. Both of these truths are significant. The book of James says that “men...have been made in the similitude of

God.”(James 3:9). The word “similitude”and “likeness” are used alternatively in various translations.

The creation of man as male and female is elaborated upon in the New Testament. A distinction is made between the man and the woman. The subject of the glory of God and the glory of man is introduced. The first book of Corinthians, in teaching about praying and prophesying, says,

*For a **man** indeed ought not to cover his head, since **he is the image and glory of God**; but **woman is the glory of man**. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God (I Corinthians 11:7-12, emphasis added).*

Man was not only created for the glory of God, but also to be the image and glory of God. The woman, on the other hand, is the glory of man. She was created for man. Another distinction is introduced in the use of the word “image” with respect to the birth of Seth to Adam and Eve. The book of Genesis states,

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth (Genesis 5:1-3).

Seth is said to have been begotten in the likeness and after the image of Adam. This truth is reiterated in the first book of Corinthians where it says, “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”(I Corinthians 15:49). This Scripture looks back to the image in Eden and looks forward to the new image that believers will have in Jesus Christ.

God made man a little lower than angels (Psalm 8:5, Hebrews 2:7). Man was created to be distinct from animals. Man is an erect being, while animals walk on all fours. God made him upright in both form and character (Leviticus 26:13, Job 1:1, Psalm 20:8, Ecclesiastes 7:29). The flesh of man is also different from that of animals (I Corinthians 15:39). To maintain that man is the image of God because he a tripartite being having a soul, spirit, and will, does not distinguish him from animals. Animals also have souls, spirits, and wills (Ecclesiastes 3:18-21). God gave man dominion over the earth, but man lost his dominion when he fell into sin (Hebrews 2:6-8). He did not, however, cease being in the image of God (Genesis 9:6). Animals, incidentally, still fear man (Genesis 9:2). The theological concept that man is the image of God in that he is a tripartite being

is a philosophical fabrication rather than a Scriptural basis of interpretation. It is a forced interpretation based on false concepts relative to God as invisible, Spirit, and omnipresent, and therefore not having a form. In comparing man and animal, the Bible says in the following Scripture:

*I said in my heart, 'Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are **like animals**.' For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? (Ecclesiastes 3:18-21, emphasis added).*

The fall of man did not change the truth that man is the image of God. The fall and the flood did seem to change the relationship between man and animals. After the flood, animals could be killed for food. At this time God also introduced the death penalty for shedding the blood of man. God blessed Noah and his sons and said,

*... Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the **fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth**, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. **Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you**. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. **Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God he made man**. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it (Genesis 9:1-7, emphasis added).*

As stated previously, some theologians assert that man is not in the visual form of God because man is flesh and has a physical body. The Bible teaches that there are not only different kinds of flesh, but that there are different kinds of bodies. The truth that God is not flesh does not preclude that God does not have a form or body. Nor does it preclude that man was not created in the image of God, or in the form of God. Again, the form of man was similar to that of God. The Bible speaks of man as having a natural body. The Bible also speaks of spiritual bodies.

All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in

power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body (I Corinthians 15:39-44, emphasis added).

The uniqueness of man as the image of God is that man was created in the form of God. The simple interpretation of man as created in the image of God is that man looks like God. Man is a visual likeness of God. Conversely, God looks like man. Some visions of God describe Him “like” a man. Ezekiel’s vision, as previously described, is an example.

God dignified man by creating him in His own image. Amazingly, God then crowned man with glory and honor and gave him dominion over the earth. Man, through sin, has marred himself as the image of God and has lost the dominion God gave him. Praise God, through the salvation offered by faith in Jesus Christ, we shall someday bear the image of Christ. In a coming day, in contrast, as the Bible says, “... as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (I Corinthians 15:49).

Jesus Christ is the Express Image of God

Jesus Christ is declared to be the image of God three times in the New Testament. Wherein man was created in the image and likeness of God and is therefore similar to God, Jesus is said to be the express or exact image of God, both visually and in personality (Hebrews 1:1-3). The word “image” in reference to Jesus Christ as the express image of God, is a translation of the Greek word “χαρακτήρ” (charakter). It implies an exact copy or representation of God and of His personality or character. The Son of God is the impress of God the Father, of His personality, substance or essence.

One day, while Jesus was teaching His disciples about preparing a place for them in His Father’s house, Philip requested that Jesus show them the Father. Jesus answered,

...Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works (John 14:9-10).

In His answer Jesus was revealing a truth far beyond the place that man has in relationship to God. Jesus said that He was in the Father and that the Father was in Him. Earlier He had said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). Jesus was revealing that He was the Son of God, and that He was God. Jesus is the true, complete image of God. In writing about the gospel and how it is hidden to those who are lost, Paul the apostle said,

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the

image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake (II Corinthians 4:3-5).

How is Jesus the image of God? Is He in the form of God? The book of Philippians describes an amazing truth. It reveals that Christ Jesus was in the form of God, but took the form of a servant, a man, in obedience to His Father. The Scripture says,

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

The truth that Jesus, being in the form of God and equal to God, taking the form of a servant and the likeness of men, proves again that God has form as Jesus does. The same Greek word for form, “μορφή” (morphe), which means shape or form, is used in both references above, the “form of God” and the “form of a servant.”

The major theme of the book of Colossians is centered in Christology, the person of Jesus Christ. He is presented as God and His deity is revealed throughout the book. Jesus is revealed in Colossians as “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). The fact that Jesus is revealed as the image of the “invisible” God does not mean that God is always hidden, unseen, or invisible. The opposite is implied. Jesus, as God, is revealed as the creator and sustainer of all things.

Jesus Christ as the image of God is revealed most completely in the book of Hebrews. We read earlier that man is the image and glory of God (I Corinthians 11:7). Jesus radiates the glory of God and is the express or exact image or character of the total person and personality of God the Father. The book begins with,

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who **being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-4, emphasis added).*

The Darby translation reads,

*God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son, whom he has established heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who **being the effulgence of his glory and the***

expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, having made by himself the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high, taking a place by so much better than the angels, as he inherits a name more excellent than they (Hebrews 1:1-4 DBY, emphasis added).

Jesus is identical to the Father both visually and in character or personality. God the Father addresses Jesus as God (Hebrews 1:8-9). Although Jesus was temporarily made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, (Hebrews 2:9), He is far, far above the angels and they worship Him (Hebrews 1:4-6). Man was made in the image of God, but Jesus is the complete image of God. Jesus took upon Himself the form of a man and became our Savior that we might be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29).

In contemplating the dignity that God gave to man in creating him in His own image, it is amazing to consider His purpose, love, and grace in transforming His people into the image of Christ and fitting them for eternal glory before God the Father. What is most wonderful is that Jesus was willing to take upon Himself the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of men, and to die for our sins, that believers might be transformed in His image and that we might live with Him in the presence of God in heaven.

Believers are being Transformed into the Image of Christ

When sinners come in faith to Jesus Christ a transformation begins. Instead of being a simulation of the image of God, believers are changed into the image of Christ. God's ultimate purpose in creating man apparently was that He might create a people who are transformed and conformed to the image of His Son and to create a bride for Him. The creation of Eve for Adam is a shadow of the work that was done in creating a bride for God's Son (Genesis 2:21-24, Ephesians 5:23-32). The book of Romans describes part of the purpose of God for His children.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified (Romans 8:28-30).

The above text emphasizes that God predestined those whom He foreknew to be "conformed" to the image of Christ. The book of Philippians describes the change as a "transformation" of the believer's body that it might be "conformed" to the glorious body of Christ.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (Philippians 3:20-21).

The book of II Corinthians indicates that the transformation process has already begun in the believer. As the caterpillar enters into metamorphosis in the cocoon to become a butterfly, the believer is likewise being transformed on earth for heavenly glory.

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 by the Spirit of the Lord (II Corinthians 3:18).

Believers are encouraged in the book of Romans, not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2). The transformation of the believer into the image of Christ is compared with our earthy image in First Corinthians in the statement, "... as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man (I Corinthians 15:47-50). The book of Colossians describes this transformation in another way in saying that we, "... have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (Colossians 3:10).

Man became the apex of creation when God created the world. God glorified man by creating him in His own image and likeness and gave him dominion over all of the earth. Man, however, was created from earth and he was flesh. Consequently, man fell into sin, became a mortal, and death became his destiny. God in His grace still loved man and had a plan for his salvation. He sent His son, Jesus Christ, who is in the form of God and the express image of God in every way, to become our Savior. In doing so, the Lord Jesus took the form and likeness of man. He did this that He might die for our sins, regenerate us, and transform us into His own image. The Bible says,

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage...Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:14-15,17).

Jesus Christ has not only saved us from sin and death, but has made it possible for those who believe in Him to be transformed into His own image, the image of Christ; far, far above the image and likeness that Adam portrayed in the garden of Eden and the image that man still maintains today in the flesh. When we consider the cost of our redemption and transformation we can only echo the Scriptures, which read,

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:33-36).

All of these truths are of God the Father who says,

*I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the end of the earth, **every one that is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory**: I have formed him, yea, I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples be assembled: who among them declareth this, or causeth us to hear former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear, and say, **It is truth**. Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that **I am HE: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, I am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour**. It is I that have declared, and have saved, and have shewed, when there was no strange god among you; and **ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, that I am, God**. Yea, since the day was, I am HE, and there is none that delivereth out of my hand: I will work, and who shall hinder it? Thus saith **Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel I am Jehovah, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King** (Isaiah 43:6-15 DBY, emphasis added).*

God Himself speaks of His purposes in creating man. He created man for His glory. In declaring Himself as Jehovah God, He does so on the basis that no god was formed before him, and no other god is a savior. After God created man in His own image, by grace God recreated man in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10). Believers are being formed into the image of Christ. When we see Him the transformation will be complete. God will accomplish this through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Image of God

In the image of God man was formed from the earth
Created by God in His likeness.
He was not spirit but flesh by his birth
And without God he was lifeless.
God gave him life,
And also a wife,
That they might have children, and fill all the earth.

The image and glory of God, in God's likeness was man.
But his body was flesh like his mind
For he was of earth and totally human.
And the first to live of mankind.
When tempted to sin
And death came within
His image tarnished, God helped him become a new man.

The express image of God, Jesus like Him in person
Being God's glory and brightness
Was one with the Spirit and God's eternal Son
The light of the world that was lightless.

In Him was life,
And power so rife,
That through Him saints would become like the Son.

In the form of God being, Jesus took on the form of a man
In a body flesh, with a spiritual mind.
The Son of God lived as a human.
Tempted He proved to be one of a kind.
Then for us He died
On the cross crucified.
Though dead He was raised and with Him new life began.

In the image of Christ, saints are destined to be
Transformed from glory to glory
With a spiritual mind like Jesus to see
How God's love finished the story.
He gave His whole life
And made us His wife
In glory forever with a body like Him whom we'll see.

By H. Allen Hanson 9/1/05

5

The Presence of God

Hebrews 9:24

The Scriptures do not indicate the first time that God appeared visually to man. There is no record that He appeared for the first two thousand years after creation. His first recorded appearance was to Abraham when he arrived in Canaan after God told him to leave his own country (Genesis 12:7). It is clear, however, that God did visit the earth with His presence in Eden (Genesis 2:7-25). He spoke to Adam and Eve (Gen 1:28-30, 2:16-17, 3:9-19) in the garden, and later with Cain (Genesis 4:6-15). The only indication that God may have appeared to Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel was Cain's comment when he was punished by God and said, "... I shall be hidden from Your face ..." (Genesis 4:14).

From the time of the fall of man into sin, until the time of the flood, evil and violence continually increased (Genesis 6:5). Enoch and Noah found grace in the sight of God (Genesis 5:24, 6:8). After the flood, God visited the earth with His presence during the building of the tower of Babel when He confused their language and scattered the people

(Genesis 11:1-9). Within three hundred years, after the flood, the world had turned to idolatry. Even Abraham's father Terah was an idolater (Joshua 24:2). The Bible does not record any visits or appearances of God during those years.

The presence of God may be in a specific place such as in heaven (Ecclesiastes 5:2), on His throne (II Chronicles 18:18), on earth, or with a particular person or group of people (Genesis 11:5-9). Although the omnipresence of God is not defined by that term, it is evident from the Bible that He can be, and is, everywhere present (I Kings 8:27). It is also evident that God can be in a specific place at a given time and at the same time fill the heavens and the earth (Psalm 139:7-10). This is also true of His Son Jesus Christ, for He is one with the Father (John 14:10-11). Jesus Christ is in heaven at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19). He is with His church in evangelism (Matthew 28:20). He is also in the midst of each and every assembly or church (Matthew 18:20). It is not clear in many of the references to the presence of God whether or not God was visible. Some Scriptures seem to indicate that God was often present, but unseen.

Many Scriptures in the Old Testament and New Testament refer to the presence of God. Circumstances vary considerably, under which His presence is revealed or sought. The word "presence" in both testaments has various meanings and applications. The reality of the presence of God upon the earth is a basic consideration as a prelude to seeing Him. For example, we often hear the sound of people before we see them. The awareness of the presence of God should create in us an anticipation of seeing Him. The revelations regarding the presence of God give credence to the reality of God in relationship to His visual appearances to men as recorded throughout the Scriptures.

The Presence of God in Creation

The presence of God in creation is obvious and evident from the words He spoke as He created various things and named them each day (Genesis 1:3-27). His Son, Jesus Christ, was with His Father in creation. The book of Proverbs describes the Father and Son creating together.

Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from eternity, from the beginning, before the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there; when he ordained the circle upon the face of the deep; when he established the skies above, when the fountains of the deep became strong; when he imposed on the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him his nursling,

and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men (Proverbs 8:22-31 DBY).

Jesus Christ, called the Word in the following text, was with God in creation according to the Gospel of John and the book of Colossians. In both Scriptures Jesus is declared to be God. The world was created by God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. John said,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:1-4).

Chapter one, verses seven and fourteen of John's gospel reveal that Jesus Christ is "the Word" and that He is not only the creator, but that He became flesh and lived on earth. The book of Colossians, in referring to Jesus Christ, states,

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (Colossians 1:15-17).

The book of Psalms reveals that Jehovah God created the heavens by His word and by the breath of His mouth. Furthermore, we are told that from the place of His habitation, He looks upon the inhabitants of the earth. God also has a place of habitation where His presence exists.

*By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap; he layeth up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear Jehovah; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. Jehovah frustrateth the counsel of the nations; he maketh the thoughts of the peoples of none effect. The counsel of Jehovah standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation. Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people that he hath chosen for his inheritance! **Jehovah looketh from the heavens**; he beholdeth all the sons of men: **From the place of his habitation** he looketh forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth; He who fashioneth the hearts of them all, who considereth all their works (Psalms 33: 6-15 DBY, emphasis added).*

The Presence of God in Eden

God created Adam and Eve and placed them in Eden. God talked with them and told them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth, subdue and have dominion over it (Genesis 1:28). He gave Adam the responsibility of tending and keeping the Garden of

Eden. God told Adam that he could freely eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a pleasure for the eyes, and the tree was to be desired to give intelligence; and she took of its fruit, and ate, and gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of Jehovah Elohim, walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah Elohim, in the midst of the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:6-8 DBY).

Adam and Eve, after disobeying, hid themselves from the “presence of Jehovah” when they heard the sound of Him walking in the garden. Did they hide because they were afraid to face God? After talking with Adam and Eve, God cursed the serpent and made a veiled promise of Christ, as the seed of the woman, bruising the serpent (Genesis 3:14-15). Again, there is no indication from the Scriptures as to whether or not God was actually seen by Adam and Eve when they were in His presence in Eden so we cannot assume either way.

Cain and Abel in the Presence of God

The first two sons of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, grew to manhood and one day each of them brought an offering to God. Cain brought fruit from the ground and Abel brought a lamb. God responded to their offerings by accepting Abel’s offering and rejecting that of Cain. The account is as follows:

And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat. And Jehovah looked upon Abel, and on his offering; and upon Cain, and on his offering, he did not look. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. And Jehovah said to Cain, Why art thou angry, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, will not thy countenance look up with confidence? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him (Genesis 4:3-7 DBY).

Cain responded to God’s gracious instruction by rebelling against it and then killing his brother Abel. God came to Cain afterwards and asked him about his brother.

And Jehovah said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now be thou cursed from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield thee its strength; a wanderer and fugitive shalt thou be on the earth. And Cain said to Jehovah, My

*punishment is too great to be borne. Behold, thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground, and **from thy face shall I be hid**; and I shall be a wanderer and fugitive on the earth; and it will come to pass, that every one who finds me will slay me. And Jehovah said to him, Therefore, whoever slayeth Cain, it shall be revenged sevenfold. And Jehovah set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should smite him. And **Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah**, and dwelt in the land of Nod, toward the east of Eden (Genesis 4:9-16 DBY, emphasis added).*

Cain and Abel had learned about sacrificing to God. By the response of God they must have known what kind of offering to bring. When God did not accept Cain or his offering, He instructed Cain about what would be acceptable. Instead, Cain killed his brother. When God punished Cain, his response was that his punishment was too great and then he said, "... I shall be hidden from your face ...” Cain went out from the presence of God and lived in the land of Nod. Cain’s response is the first mention of the face of God in the Bible. Cain may have referred to the visual face of God or his statement may have been a figure of speech since God later told Moses that no one could see His face and live (Exodus 33:20).

Walking with God

The Bible also tells of two men who walked with God. One was Enoch and the other was Noah. Walking with God certainly implies being in His presence. Enoch escaped death and Noah escaped drowning when God caused the flood to destroy the world.

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him (Genesis 5:21-24).

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him, for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God (Hebrews 11:5).

Enoch pleased God and God took him away or “translated” him so that he did not die. Noah is described as a just man, perfect in his generations (Genesis 6:9). Noah also walked with God and escaped the destruction of the world through the flood. Noah evidently preached as he was building the ark (II Peter 2:4-5). Did Enoch or Noah actually see God as they walked with Him? It is difficult to think of them walking with God and not seeing Him in some way. The Bible simply does not tell us.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Presence of God

One day God spoke to Abraham, the son of Terah, and told him to leave his father's house and go to a land He would show him and make of him a great nation (Genesis 12:1-4). Abraham obeyed God and departed from Haran and went to the land of Canaan. God spoke to Abraham again after he came back from Egypt (Genesis 13:14-17) and when He told him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:1-2). It would seem that Abraham was in the presence of God when God spoke to him. The New Testament indicates that God actually appeared one of these time to Abraham in Mesopotamia before he went to Haran (Acts 7:2). God also appeared to him on three other occasions. These appearances will be considered later in Chapter six.

Isaac, the son of Abraham, was commanded by God to dwell in the land of Canaan. The presence of God was promised him, and God said that He would be with him.

*And there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine which had been in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech the king of the Philistines, to Gerar. And Jehovah appeared to him and said, Go not down to Egypt: dwell in the land that I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land; and **I will be with thee** and bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries; and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father. And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and unto thy seed will I give all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves--because that Abraham hearkened to my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws (Genesis 26:1-5 DBY, emphasis added).*

Years later, when Isaac was planning to bless Esau he said, "... Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in **the presence of the LORD** before my death" (Genesis 27:7, emphasis added). Isaac was very conscious of the presence of God in his life. In addition, God also appeared to him on at least two occasions and talked with him.

Isaac's son, Jacob became aware of the presence of God one night on his way to Padan Aram. As he slept in a deserted place he dreamed of a ladder to heaven with God standing above it (Genesis 28:5-17). He called the place the "House of God." After living for many years in Padan Aram with Laban, God told Jacob to return to Canaan and said, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, **and I will be with you**" (Genesis 31:3, emphasis added). God's promise to Jacob was one of continual presence.

Moses in the Presence of God

Centuries later, out in the backcountry of Mount Horeb Moses encountered the God of Israel. God spoke to him out of a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-6). God told Moses He

was going to send him to Pharaoh and bring His people out of Egypt (Exodus 3:7-10). When Moses said he was not eloquent God said, “**I will be with your mouth** and teach you what you shall say” (Exodus 4:12, emphasis added). Moses obeyed God and returned to Egypt after meeting his brother Aaron on the way (Exodus 4:19-28). Moses and Aaron met with the children of Israel, and told them the words of God (Exodus 4:29-31). Then they went before Pharaoh and told him that God had said to let His people go (Exodus 5:1). Pharaoh refused at first, but after a series of ten plagues he agreed to let them go when he realized that the God of Israel was present, destroying Egypt (Exodus 5 through 12). Later, as the children of Israel were leaving, Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued them with his army. God looked down and “troubled the army of the Egyptians” (Exodus 14:24). Later, at the Red Sea, God saved Israel in a miraculous way by opening a way in the sea and then destroying the Egyptians. The Bible describes the miracle.

*And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah made the sea go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry ground; and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and came after them--all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen, into the midst of the sea. And it came to pass in the morning watch, that **Jehovah looked upon the camp of the Egyptians, in the pillar of fire and of the cloud**, and embarrassed the camp of the Egyptians. And he took off their chariot wheels, and caused them to drive with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, Let us flee before Israel, for Jehovah is fighting for them against the Egyptians! And Jehovah said to Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may return upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength toward the morning; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overturned the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the host of Pharaoh that had come into the sea after them; there remained not even one of them. And the children of Israel walked on dry ground through the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore. And Israel saw the great power with which Jehovah had wrought against the Egyptians; and the people feared Jehovah, and believed in Jehovah, and in Moses his bondman (Exodus 14:21-31 DBY, emphasis added).*

When they came to Mount Sinai Moses prayed to God about leading the people of Israel and said, “Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people” (Exodus 33:12-13). God answered and said, “**My Presence will go with you**, and I will give you rest” (Exodus 33:14, emphasis added). Moses then said to God, “**If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up**

from here” (Exodus 33:15, emphasis added). Moses needed, and received, the assurance of the presence of God.

The Presence of God with Israel in the Wilderness and Canaan

On the way to the wilderness before Mount Sinai a pillar of cloud led the children of Israel by day and a pillar of fire led them by night (Exodus 13:21-22). These pillars were a visual assurance of the presence of God. At Sinai God gave the children of Israel the law and the Ten Commandments. He had them build a tabernacle for Him that **He might “dwell among them”** (Exodus 25:8). They were indeed in the presence of God. On one occasion God cautioned the children of Israel,

*... Whoever of all your descendants throughout your generations, who goes near the holy things which the children of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has uncleanness upon him, **that person shall be cut off from My presence: I am the LORD** (Leviticus 22:3, emphasis added).*

Moses summed up, in the book of Deuteronomy, the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt, the wilderness wanderings, and their battles, as they were about to enter into Canaan with the presence of God.

*To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him. Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt **with His Presence**, with His mighty power, driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day. Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other (Deuteronomy 4:35-39, emphasis added).*

God was with the children of Israel during their forty years in the desert under the leadership of Moses. Before they entered into Canaan they fought battles with Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and God destroyed these nations before them (Deuteronomy 31:4). Just before Moses died and Joshua and the children of Israel were about to enter into Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, Moses said,

Jehovah thy God, he will go over before thee, he will destroy these nations from before thee, that thou mayest take possession of them: Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as Jehovah hath said. And Jehovah will do to them as he did to Sihon and to Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land; whom he destroyed. And when Jehovah giveth them up before you, ye shall do to them according to all the commandment which I have commanded you. Be strong and courageous, fear

*them not, neither be afraid of them; for **Jehovah thy God, he it is that goeth with thee; he will not leave thee, nor forsake thee*** (Deuteronomy 31:3-6 DBY, emphasis added).

Moses repeated these words again to Joshua, concerning the presence of God, before all the people.

*And Moses called to Joshua, and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and courageous, for thou must go with this people into the land which Jehovah hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And **Jehovah, he it is that goeth before thee: he will be with thee; he will not leave thee, nor forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed*** (Deuteronomy 31:7-8 DBY, emphasis added).

Although God promised to be with the children of Israel, He warned Moses that they would some day turn from God to the gods of the Canaanites and forsake God. He then would forsake them. God said,

*Then my anger shall be aroused against them in that day, **and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them**, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, “Are not these evils come upon us, because our **God is not among us?**”* Deuteronomy 31:17, emphasis added).

The books of Joshua and Judges relate the times when Israel followed God, or turned from Him. When they were in trouble with enemies, God would raise up judges or deliverers. God was with each judge whom He raised up (Judges 2:18). One such man was Gideon, to whom God promised, “**Surely I will be with you**, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man” (Judges 6:16, emphasis added). Even though God did not appear visually during those times, the Israelites realized the presence of God during the times of each judge as they were miraculously delivered from their enemies.

The Presence of God in the Days of Samuel, David, and the Kings

Throughout the history of Israel the Bible records the many times in which they turned from God. The book of Judges ends with the words, “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Samuel was born in the days of the judges. His mother gave him to Jehovah, to serve in the tabernacle and there he served with Eli the priest. The Scripture says, “And the boy Samuel ministered to Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was rare in those days; a vision was not frequent” (I Samuel 3:1). One night, God called to the boy Samuel three times and then came and **stood by him** (I Samuel 3:4-10, emphasis added). What an amazing event, God standing beside a boy! When Samuel understood that God was

calling him he answered and God spoke to him, and warned him about the sins of Eli and his sons and of pending judgment. Samuel continued to grow before God.

*... Samuel grew, and **Jehovah was with him**, and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established a prophet of Jehovah. And Jehovah appeared again at Shiloh; for Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of Jehovah (I Samuel 3:19-21 DBY, emphasis added).*

When Samuel had grown old and God had rejected Saul, who was king of Israel, God sent Samuel to anoint David as His king (I Samuel 16:1-13). Later, before he actually became king, David was sought to play the harp for King Saul when he was troubled, because a servant of Saul said of David,

*Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skilled in playing, and he is a valiant man and a man of war, and skilled in speech, and of good presence, and **Jehovah is with him** (I Samuel 16:18 DBY, emphasis added).*

Later it became more and more evident to King Saul that Jehovah was with David (I Samuel 16:18 to 26:18) and he made many efforts to kill David.

David wrote about the presence of God in many of his psalms. Two of them express the great joy that David experienced in the presence of God.

*I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; **in Your presence is fullness of joy**; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:8-11, emphasis added).*

*His glory is great in Your salvation; honor and majesty You have placed upon him. For You have made him most blessed forever; you have made him exceedingly glad with **Your presence**. For the king trusts in the LORD, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved (Psalm 21:5-7, emphasis added).*

Before David died he told his son Solomon, "... my God will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you..." (I Chronicles 28:20). Later Solomon prayed that **Jehovah would be with Israel** (I Kings 8:54-57, Emphasis added). For centuries God was gracious to Israel even though they were unfaithful to Him.

During the period of the kings God had compassion on Israel because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and "**would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence**" (II Kings 13:23, emphasis added). Under the divided kingdom both Israel and Judah became increasingly more wicked and idolatrous, worshipping under every

high hill and green tree (II Kings 17:10-12). They became so wicked that God in anger did finally cast them “**out from His presence**” (II Kings 24:20, emphasis added). God ultimately forsook both Israel and Judah. Northern Israel was conquered and carried away captive into Assyria (II Kings 17:22-23). Later Judah was conquered, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and the people were taken captive into Babylon (II Kings 24:11-20). The very fact that the temple was destroyed, since that was the place where God dwelt among His people (Exodus 25:8), indicates that God’s presence was no longer with Israel. God forsook Jerusalem as He had forsaken the tabernacle at Shiloh earlier in the days of Samuel (I Samuel 4:21-22, Psalm 78:60).

After the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of a remnant of Israel to the land there was a change of heart in the people. This was not long lasting, however, and God spoke to Haggai the prophet, warning that the people were living for themselves and neglecting Him, for He said,

*Is it time for you that ye should dwell in your wainscoted houses, while this house lieth waste? And now thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but are not satisfied; ye drink, but are not filled with drink; ye clothe yourselves, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages for a bag with holes. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. **Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah.** Ye looked for much, and behold it was little; and when ye brought it home, I blew upon it. Wherefore? saith Jehovah of hosts. Because of my house that lieth waste, whilst ye run every man to his own house. Therefore over you the heavens withhold their dew, and the earth withholdeth its fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon man, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands. And Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and **all the remnant of the people, hearkened to the voice of Jehovah their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, according as Jehovah their God had sent him, and the people feared before Jehovah.** Then spoke Haggai, Jehovah's messenger, in Jehovah's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith Jehovah (Haggai 1:4-13, DBY, emphasis added).*

The New King James translation says, “**the people feared the presence of the LORD**” (Haggai 1:12, emphasis added). The children of Israel were again conscious of the presence of God among them and began working again on the new temple.

The Presence of God on Earth

Many Scriptures refer to the presence of God on earth from the time of David on throughout the Old Testament. David wrote of his enemies and said, “They shall fall and **perish at Your presence**” (Psalm 9:2-3, emphasis added). David also said’ “... **let the**

wicked perish at the presence of God” (Psalm 68:2, emphasis added). One psalmist said, “The earth shook; the heavens also dropped rain **at the presence of God**; Sinai itself was moved **at the presence of God**, the God of Israel” (Psalm 68:7-8, emphasis added). Another psalmist said, “The mountains melt like wax **at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord** of the whole earth” (Psalm 97:5-6, emphasis added). We also read, “Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at **the presence of the God ...**” (Psalm 114:7, emphasis added).

Fleeing from the Presence of God

During the times of the kings of Israel the prophet Jonah was commanded to go to Nineveh and preach against its sins. Jonah evidently was afraid and fled the other way to Tarshish, from the presence of God.

*But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from **the presence of the LORD*** (Jonah 1:3, emphasis added).

While on board the ship to Tarshish a violent storm came up threatening to destroy the ship. When the crew learned that Jonah was the cause of the storm, because he was fleeing from the presence of God, they were greatly afraid (Jonah 1:10). Jonah learned quickly and forcefully that he could not flee from the presence of God. He was thrown overboard and swallowed by a fish. There he prayed to God and was thrown up on land. Jonah finally obeyed God and went to preach to Nineveh. We, like Jonah, cannot escape the presence of God.

The Omnipresence of God

One day, while David was talking with Jehovah and considering God’s perfect knowledge and His personal understanding of David’s ways, he said, “Where can I flee from Your presence?” (Psalm 139:1-7). David realized that he could not escape from God for he said,

*Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from **Your presence**? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You* (Psalm 139:7-12, emphasis added).

God is present everywhere throughout His creation. At the same time, He can be in a specific place at a specific time. God can also withdraw His presence. As has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, Jesus Christ, like the Father, is also omnipresent. He is at the right hand of God, in the midst of the churches, and in the heart of the believer.

The Presence of God in Prayer and Worship

David spoke of being hidden in the secret place of God's presence (Psalm 31:20). He also encouraged others to come before His presence with thanksgiving (Psalm 95:2-3). Psalm 100 instructs us to come in the presence of God with singing, thanksgiving and praise (Psalm 100:1-5). Another Psalm says, "Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; the upright shall dwell in Your presence" (Psalm 140:13). Jehovah is an awesome and holy God. The prophet Zephaniah warns us, "Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD ..." (Zephaniah 1:7).

Christians are invited to come into the presence of God in prayer and worship. The book of Hebrews encourages us to come to the throne of God in prayer by these words, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Later on we read that we are to draw near to worship in the Holiest before God,

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Jesus has made it possible for us, as our Savior and Great High Priest, to draw near to God in worship in a far better way than the worship of God in the Old Testament tabernacle or temple.

The Presence of God and Jesus Christ

One day the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the temple and told him that his wife Elizabeth would have a son in her old age and that they should call him John, but Zacharias doubted the angel. The Bible relates,

*And Zacharias said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.' And the angel answered and said to him, "**I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings**" (Luke 1:18-19, emphasis added).*

The good tidings which came from Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, were that John would prepare the people for the coming of the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:17).

The Lord Jesus Christ brought a whole new dimension and reality to the presence of God. Before he was born, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream telling him that Mary had conceived through the Holy Spirit and that she would bring forth a Son (Matthew 1:20). His name was to be “JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). The Bible account continues by saying,

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us” (Matthew 1: 22-23).

The presence of God came to earth in Jesus Christ. Jesus is “Immanuel,” God with us. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh in the incarnation (I Timothy 3:16). The apostle John said of the Lord Jesus Christ,

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (I John 1:1-3).

They saw Him and they touched Him. With Jesus they were in the presence of God. Before His death, Jesus told His disciples that He must leave them and go to the Father (John 16:16-20). After Jesus was crucified and raised again He appeared to His disciples for a period of forty days (Acts 1:1-3). On the day of His resurrection two of His disciples were traveling to Emmaus and He drew near and ultimately revealed Himself to them (Luke 24:13-16). He then came to the disciples as they were sorrowing over His death (Luke 24:36-40). Before Jesus ascended to heaven He promised them that He would be “with you always, even to the end of the age”(Matthew 28:20). Finally, Jesus said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you”(Hebrew 13:5). Jesus assures all believers that He will never leave us. Only He Himself was forsaken, and that was on the cross of Calvary when He cried out, “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**” (Matthew 27:46, emphasis added). Jesus Christ arose. He has ascended and now appears in the presence of God for us as believers.

*For **Christ** has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear **in the presence of God for us**; not that He should offer Himself*

often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another--He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:24-26, emphasis added).

One day we shall all appear before God. We shall either stand before Him in the salvation which we have through faith in Jesus Christ, at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:9-11), or we shall appear before Him in judgment and condemnation before the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15). We are admonished therefore to repent and be converted.

*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so **that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord**, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began* (Acts 3:19-21, emphasis added).

As sinners we need to be saved. We can be saved by believing in Jesus Christ and receiving Him as our Savior. The Bible says, "...as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name..." (John 1:12). We can then be ready for Jesus Christ and be in His presence when He comes again.

In the Presence of Christ at His Coming

Jesus Christ will come again some day. He is going to come and take those of us who believe, those who are dead in Christ and those who are still alive, into the clouds to be with Himself (I Thessalonians 4:15-18). The hope of all who are preaching or sharing the gospel of Christ with others is that they too might be in His presence on that day. The apostle Paul said in the first book to the Thessalonians, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? **Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?**" (I Thessalonians 2:19-20, emphasis added).

What wonderful joy it will be to be in the presence of Christ. He has come to take us to the Father. The invitation is open to all. The Word of God says, "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). Our acceptance, of course, is in and through Jesus Christ, the Beloved of God, for the Bible says, "... He has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

In the Presence of God in Heaven

When we get to heaven we will be in the presence of God, forever. Jesus will bring us to the Father and present us before the throne. We praise Jesus Christ for His great salvation and His keeping power. In the book of Jude we read these words of exaltation,

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present **you faultless before the presence of His glory** with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen (Jude 1:24-25, emphasis added).*

Tragically, many will reject the love and grace of God and His free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Those who reject Christ will ultimately suffer the judgment of God and be cast out from the presence of God. Unrepentant sinners are warned,

***These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed (II Thessalonians 1:9-10, emphasis added).*

*... he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall **be tormented** with fire and brimstone **in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb** (Revelation 14:10, emphasis added).*

Long ago David prayed, after he had sinned, “**Do not cast me away from Your presence...**” (Psalm 51:11, emphasis added). David was restored in his relationship to God. It is critical that we as believers have a right relationship with God and are aware of His presence in our lives. Walking day by day in the presence of God should cause us to anticipate that glorious day when we shall see Him face to face.

In the Presence of God

1

In the presence of God lived Adam and Eve
In a beautiful place only God could conceive.
Together they walked, With each other they talked
As God visited them day upon day.
In fellowship sweet, as each time they would meet
They learned about God and His way.

2

There came a dark time, when God was away,
The tempter came into the garden that day.
To the woman he lied, Of the fruit God denied
For like God it would make them so wise.

By Satan deceived they in sin then conceived
Their nakedness seen with their eyes.

3

God sent them away from the garden that day
To a world that was cursed when sin led them astray.
Then sinners by name, They mortals became
Death was their fate in their lost destiny.
But God in his love, promised One from above
A Savior who would set them free.

4

Cain killed his own brother, in envy one day.
God cursed Cain upon earth, and he wandered away.
From the presence of God To the far land of Nod
And there he was hid from God's face.
With no Presence at all, men then started to call
On Jehovah God, pleading their case.

5

Only Enoch and Noah, through centuries of time
Lived in God's presence by His great grace divine.
With God they did walk, And with God they did talk
For hundreds of years as they lived among men.
These two, Scripture saith, pleased God by their faith.
And faith brings God's presence again.

6

One day Jesus came, and His presence became
Very precious to those who called on His name.
With Christ they walked, And with Him they talked
And heard of salvation, that He was the way
Christ died then for sin, their lost souls to win
And bring them to heaven one day.

7

In the presence of God, we will live some day
Christ is coming for us, and He is the way.
But we must believe, As we must receive
Christ as our Savior from sin, death and Hell.
For life is in Him and forgiveness of sin.
For Christ has done all things well.

H. Allen Hanson

*But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. **Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen** (Jude 20-25 emphasis added).*

6

I Appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob

Exodus 6:2

God has appeared to a variety of people down through the ages, for a variety of purposes. The first record in the Bible of the actual appearing of God was when He appeared to Abraham in the land of Canaan, after He called him out of Chaldea (Genesis 12:1-7), over two thousand years after creation. God appeared to Abraham at least three times during his lifetime. God also made appearances to Isaac and Jacob. Hundreds of years later, when God revealed Himself to Moses, He said, “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty” (Exodus 6:2-3). God revealed a different aspect of His character to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob than He did later to Moses. God revealed Himself to Moses as I AM and as Jehovah, the self-existing One (Exodus 3:14-15).

The word “appear” comes from the Hebrew word ראה (ra’ah) which means “to see.” God made Himself visible, at least to some extent, to men. After God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He appeared to Moses, then He appeared in the times of the judges, and later to Samuel, David, and Solomon. Why did God make these appearances? Only a few of the early appearances of God give any description of Him. When they do describe Him they show Him in the form of a man.

The Appearances of God to Abraham

A few hundred years after the worldwide flood, God told Abram (Abraham) to get out of his country and his father's house and go to a land that He would show him. At that time Abram was seventy-five years old. God promised to make him a great nation and that in him all families on earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-5). Later God revealed to Abraham that the blessing would come through his descendants or seed (Genesis 17:1-7). The New Testament makes it clear that God's promises to Abraham and his descendants of blessing on the earth were made in Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Abram, in obedience to God, took his wife and went to Canaan. When Abram arrived at Shechem in Canaan, God appeared to him. This is the first appearance of God mentioned in the Old Testament, although Acts 7:2 states that God appeared to him earlier in Mesopotamia. God appeared to Abram (Abraham) at least two additional times. The extent to which God revealed Himself visually to Abraham is not clear from the Scriptures.

*And Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And **Jehovah appeared to Abram**, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land. And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him. And he removed thence towards the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel toward the west, and Ai toward the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah, and called on the name of Jehovah (Genesis 12:6-8 DBY, emphasis added).*

In God's appearance to Abram at Shechem He promised that the land of Canaan would be given to his seed, or descendants. Some years later the word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision (Genesis 15:1). As they talked together Abraham asked about the promise to his seed since he did not have a son as an heir. God responded by promising to give Abram a son and also promised him as many descendants as the stars of the heavens. Abram believed God but then asked how he would know that he would inherit the land (Genesis 15:2-8). God answered Abram in an unusual way by instructing him to bring sacrifices and to place them in a certain way. Then God caused him to fall into a deep sleep.

And as the sun was just going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, a horror, a great darkness, fell upon him. And he said to Abram, Know assuredly that thy seed will be a sojourner in a land that is not theirs, and they shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. But also that nation which they shall serve I will judge; and afterwards they shall come out with great property. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass when the sun had gone down, and it was dark, that behold, there was a smoking furnace, and a flame of fire which passed between those pieces. On the same day

Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates... (Genesis 15:12-18 DBY).

As Abraham slept he experienced horror and great darkness. Then he saw a smoking furnace and a flame of fire passing through the sacrifices. This surely must have convinced him of the presence of Almighty God and the certainty of His promise. While he slept God revealed to Abram that his descendants would live in a foreign land for four hundred years, that they would come out with great property, and that He would give them the land that had been promised them. God assured Abram further by making a covenant with him.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him a third time and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before my face and be perfect" (Genesis 17:1 DBY). Abram "fell on his face; and God talked with him..." (Genesis 17:2-3 DBY). At that time God repeated His covenant with Abram and changed his name to Abraham because he would be the father of many nations. God went on to say that He would make him very fruitful and kings would come from him (Genesis 17:4-6). Abram was still waiting in faith, after nearly twenty-five years, for a son through his wife Sarai (Sarah).

Jehovah appeared a fourth time to Abraham in Mamre. This occurred shortly after His third appearance. This time Jehovah appeared in the form of a man. Two other persons like men appeared with Jehovah. It seems clear from the account that Abraham recognized God as soon as he saw the three men. The Bible describes the appearance of God to Abraham as follows:

And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre. And he sat at the tent-door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, three men standing near him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, Lord, if now I have found favour in thine eyes, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let now a little water be fetched, that ye may wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will fetch a morsel of bread; and refresh yourselves; after that ye shall pass on; for therefore have ye passed on towards your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, Knead quickly three seahs of wheaten flour, and make cakes. And Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf tender and good, and gave it to the attendant; and he hastened to dress it. And he took thick and sweet milk, and the calf that he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood before them under the tree, and they ate (Genesis 18:1-8 DBY, emphasis added).

This appearance of God to Abraham depicts Him as a man, standing with two others by some oak trees. He accepts the worship of Abraham and rests Himself as Abraham runs about to serve Him. There is no reason to assume that this is any one but God the Father.

God and those with Him eat as Abraham stands before them. Then God talks with Abraham and they begin by talking about Sarah.

And they said to him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return to thee at this time of the year, and behold, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the tent-door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age: it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am become old, shall I have pleasure, and my lord old? And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why is this, that Sarah laughs, saying, Shall I indeed bear, when I am become old? Is any matter too wonderful for Jehovah? At the time appointed I will return to thee, at this time of the year, and Sarah shall have a son. And Sarah denied, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And he said, No; but thou didst laugh. And the men rose up thence, and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to conduct them. And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? (Genesis 18:9-17 DBY).

God appeared to Abraham to tell him that Sarah would have the promised son the following year. Sarah laughed when she overheard this and Jehovah chided her a bit about it. As God had promised, Sarah conceived and gave birth to Isaac (Genesis 21:1-3). By this time Abraham was a hundred years old and Sarah was ninety.

One day God tested Abraham and asked him to offer up his son as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:1-2). Abraham obeyed God by taking Isaac to Moriah. Just before he slew his son God provided a ram as a substitute (Genesis 22:3-14). God was pleased with Abraham (Hebrews 11:6-8), because he obeyed God and because he was a man of faith (Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19). He believed God. He was called “the friend of God” several times in the Bible (II Chronicles 20:5-7).

One of the most revealing things that Jesus said about Abraham was that he, “rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). When the Jews questioned Jesus about seeing Abraham, Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). There is much that is unknown about God’s appearances to Abraham, but one thing is certain, God revealed Jesus Christ to him and that Christ would be his descendant and though Him all of the nations of the world would be blessed. It would seem that the great purpose in God appearing to Abraham was to reveal to him that he would become a great nation and that through that nation God would bless all people through his descendants, or his seed, Jesus Christ.

The Appearances of God to Isaac

God also appeared two times to Abraham’s son Isaac. The first time He appeared to Isaac was after his father Abraham died (Genesis 25:7 & 26:2). Isaac had gone to Gerar, during a famine in the land. God appeared to him and directed him not to go down into

Egypt. God also renewed the promise that He gave to Abraham concerning the land and concerning the promise of blessing through his seed.

*And there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine which had been in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech the king of the Philistines, to Gerar. And **Jehovah appeared** to him and said, Go not down to Egypt: dwell in the land that I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land; and I will be with thee and bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, **I will give all these countries**; and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father. And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and **unto thy seed will I give all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves**--because that Abraham hearkened to my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. And Isaac dwelt at Gerar (Genesis 26:1-6 DBY, emphasis added).*

The purpose of God in appearing to Isaac was to again, it seems, reveal that through his descendants, his seed, that all nations would be blessed. The Christ would come through him.

God appeared a second time to Isaac when he moved to Beersheba after the inhabitants of the land were striving with him over wells. God not only appeared to him but promised that he would be with him.

*And they dug another well, and they strove for that also; and he called the name of it Sitnah. And he removed thence and dug another well; and they did not strive for that. And he called the name of it Rehoboth, and said, For now Jehovah has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. And he went up thence to Beer-sheba. And **Jehovah appeared to him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. And he built an altar there, and called upon the name of Jehovah.** And he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well. And Abimelech, and Ahuzzath his friend, and Phichol the captain of his host, went to him from Gerar. And Isaac said to them, Why are ye come to me, seeing ye hate me, and have driven me away from you? And they said, **We saw certainly that Jehovah is with thee**; and we said, Let there be then an oath between us--between us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no wrong, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done to thee nothing but good, and have let thee go in peace; thou art now blessed of Jehovah (Genesis 26:21-29 DBY, emphasis added).*

After God appeared to Isaac at Beersheba and promised to bless him and be with him, Isaac built an altar and called upon the name of Jehovah. King Abimelech, a friend, and his captain visited Isaac at Beersheba. They were aware and acknowledged that Jehovah was with Isaac and asked for a covenant between them.

The Appearances of God to Jacob

God appeared at least three times to Jacob, the son of Isaac, and spoke to him once in a vision. The first time God appeared to him was at Luz or Bethel. Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau whom he had cheated out of a blessing from their father Isaac (Genesis 27:41-46). As he traveled from Beersheba to Haran he stopped to rest. During the night Jacob dreamed and in the dream God appeared to him.

*And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went towards Haran. And he lighted on a certain place, and lodged there, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of the place, and made it his pillow, and lay down in that place. And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to the heavens. And behold, angels of God ascended and descended upon it. And **behold, Jehovah stood above it.** And he said, **I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac:** the land on which thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places to which thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done what I have spoken to thee of (Genesis 28:10-15 DBY, emphasis added).*

Jacob awoke from sleep and became greatly afraid of the place. He concluded that God was there after seeing the angels, beholding God, and hearing the voice of God. The Bible describes his response.

*And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and said, **Surely Jehovah is in this place,** and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had made his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el; but the name of that city was Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and keep me on this road that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and a garment to put on, and I come again to my father's house in peace--then shall Jehovah be my God. And this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou wilt give me I will without fail give the tenth to thee (Genesis 28:16-22 DBY, emphasis added).*

God appeared to Jacob in a more dramatic and descriptive way than He had appeared to Abraham and Isaac. Jacob saw God standing at the top of a ladder reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending below Him. God renewed the promise made to Abraham and Isaac concerning the land and of his seed (Christ) blessing all nations. Jacob vowed a vow to God that if He would bring him back again, Jehovah would be his God. After spending many years with his uncle Laban, God told Jacob to return to the land with his family (Genesis 31:3). A little later God came to him in a dream and told

him that He was the God of Bethel and to return to the land of his family (Genesis 31:10-13).

Jacob had a most unusual encounter with God as he was returning to Canaan from Padan Aram. He had sent word to his brother Esau that he was coming and had received a message back that Esau was coming with four hundred men (Genesis 32:6). Jacob was afraid of Esau and prayed to God for deliverance (Genesis 32:9-12). That night, when Jacob was alone, a man came to him and wrestled with him and they talked as they wrestled.

*Then Jacob was left alone; and a **Man wrestled with him** until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but **Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.**" Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. And **Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."** Just as he crossed over Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip (Genesis 32:24-31, emphasis added).*

God came to Jacob in the form of a man, as He did with Abraham. This time God wrestled with him and they talked together and asked questions of one another as they wrestled. Jacob was given a new name that night, the name of Israel, which means "prince of God." Jacob called the place "Peniel" which means "face of God." Jacob saw God and his life was changed.

Jacob stayed for a period of time at Shechem, and while there God said to him, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother" (Genesis 35:1). Jacob then went Bethel (Luz), and when he arrived, "... he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because, there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother" (Genesis 35:6-7).

After Jacob built the altar at Bethel God appeared to him again and blessed him. He reaffirmed Jacob's new name, Israel, and reaffirmed the promises made to Abraham and Isaac.

*Then **God appeared to Jacob again**, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but **Israel shall be your name.**" So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your*

descendants after you I give this land.” Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him (Genesis 35:9-13, emphasis added).

God gave Jacob the name of Israel, which means “prince of God.” He promised Jacob as He had promised Abraham that many nations would come from him and that kings would come from him. He also promised the land again to Jacob’s descendants. Many years later, while on his way to Egypt to see his son Joseph, whom he had learned was still alive, God spoke to Jacob again in a special way. God promised him that he would not only see Joseph but that He would make a great nation of him in Egypt and would bring them back again to their land.

Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!” And he said, “Here I am.” And He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes” (Genesis 46:2-4, emphasis added).

Jacob went down into Egypt and was joyfully reconciled with his son Joseph, whom he thought was dead. Seventeen years later, just before he died in the land of Egypt, Jacob called his son Joseph, and referring again to the appearance of God at Bethel (Luz), said to him,

... God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, “Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession” (Genesis 48:3-4, emphasis added).

A little later Jacob blessed each of his sons prophetically (Genesis 49:1-28). His blessing for Judah predicted that kings would come from him and of the coming of Shiloh, which many Bible scholars interpret as referring to Christ (Genesis 49:8-12). Once again, God’s appearances focused on revelations concerning His Son and the coming blessings found in Him.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

God has described Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob many times in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament. He appeared to them as God Almighty or *El Shaddai* (Exodus 6:3). God appeared to each of them with the same promises, of their inheritance of the land of Israel and of a Savior through their descendants. The Bible does not describe God in most of His appearances to them except

when He visited Abraham at Mamre. At that time God appeared in the form of a man. Later descriptions of God in the Bible also describe a form similar to that of a man. The significance of God's appearance to Abraham was emphasized in the New Testament by Stephen just before he was martyred. In his message to the Jews, Stephen affirmed that God did indeed appear to Abraham and said,

*Brethren and fathers, listen: **The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham** when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, "Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you" (Acts 7:2-3, emphasis added).*

Why did God specifically appear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? This is not fully revealed. Perhaps it was because the world was full of idolatry at the time and God was calling a people for Himself. God did reiterate a promise He had made centuries before to Adam and Eve. He told Eve that her Seed would crush Satan (Genesis 3:15). God promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that through their Seed all of the nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:2, 18:18, 22:18) and that Seed refers to Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:15). The Bible reveals this truth further in the book of Acts.

*You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, "And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed." To you first, **God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities** (Acts 3:25-26, emphasis added).*

The God of Abraham is the one true and only living God. He is the only God who has revealed Himself visually as the Father and also through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only God who is a Savior. We needed a Savior because we are sinners and God cannot look at sin (Habakkuk 1:13). We can not save ourselves. God found a man, Abram (Abraham), among idolaters, who responded to Him when He called him. He believed God and obeyed Him by faith. Faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:6). God hides His face from sin, but He could appear to this man of faith and did. The powerful witness of Abraham is that he had faith and God appeared to him and promised a Savior for the world. God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to be our Savior (John 3:17). The faith of Abraham is referred to many times in the New Testament. His faith was "accounted to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). The relationship between the faith of Abraham and believers in Jesus Christ is described in the book of Romans on salvation.

*Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the **faith of Abraham**, who is the **father of us** all (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed-- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which*

*do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the **father of many nations**, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was **strengthened in faith, giving glory to God**, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. **It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead**, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification (Romans 4:16-25, emphasis added).*

We can be saved from our sins through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). God is a saving God. We, like Abraham, can be made righteous by faith in Christ. Abraham is called the father of our faith. The book of Galatians, as well the book of Romans, reveal the righteousness of faith and salvation.

*Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?--just as **Abraham believed God**, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that only those who are of **faith** are **sons of Abraham**. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."** So then those who are of **faith** are **blessed with believing Abraham** (Galatians 3:5-9, emphasis added).*

Abraham believed God. The gospel of Christ was preached to him beforehand. Jesus one time said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). Through faith we are called the sons of Abraham. The book of Galatians explains how we receive the promise made to Abraham, a promise made in Jesus Christ.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:13-14)

The God of Abraham Praise

The God of Abraham praise, Who reigns enthroned above;
Ancient of everlasting days, And God of love.
Jehovah, great I AM, By earth and heaven confessed;
I bow and bless the sacred Name, Forever blest.

The God of Abraham praise, At whose supreme command

From earth I rise, and seek the joys At His right hand.
I all on earth forsake, Its wisdom, fame, and power;
And Him my only portion make, My shield and tower.

He by Himself hath sworn, I on His oath depend,
I shall on eagle's wings up-borne, To heaven ascend;
I shall behold His face, I shall His power adore,
And sing the wonders of His grace Forever more.

The whole triumphant host Give thanks to God on high;
"Hail Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!" They ever cry.
Hail, Abraham's God and mine! I join the heavenly lays;
All might and majesty are Thine, And endless praise.

Daniel ben Judah

Hymns of Truth and Praise – Hymn #14

7

Show Me Your Glory

Exodus 33:18

Hundreds of years passed with no recorded appearances of God after He had appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As time passed, Jacob and his family moved down into Egypt. After the death of Jacob, his descendants, the children of Israel, lived in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years. Ultimately they were forced into bondage. The Egyptian Pharaoh, fearing the threat of the multiplying Israelites, ordered all male babies to be killed at birth, but the baby Moses was saved by an Egyptian princess and raised as her son. One day, when Moses was forty, he killed an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite, and had to flee to Midian. After living in Midian many years, an angel of God appeared to Moses in a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-4). He revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 3:6). This is the first reference in which God manifests a measure of His visual glory. He revealed Himself to Moses as I AM THAT I AM and “Jehovah.” He then sent Moses to Egypt to bring the children of Israel out of bondage (Exodus 3:7-10). Back in Egypt God told Moses that He had appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by His name Jehovah He was not known to them (Exodus 6:2-3).

Moses and his brother Aaron confronted Pharaoh, and after a series of ten plagues, culminating in the death of all of the firstborn in Egypt, led the children of Israel out of Egypt to the land God had promised them. Jehovah went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22). On the way, in the wilderness, the glory of God appeared to Moses and the children of Israel (Exodus 16:7-10). Later, at Mount Sinai, God manifested His glory several times to the children of Israel in a series of wonderful events (Exodus 19:1 through 31:35). He also revealed His glory from time to time during the forty years in the wilderness.

One day, while on Sinai talking with God, Moses said to God, “**Show me your glory**” (Exodus 33:18, emphasis added). Moses had been in the presence of God and, evidently, wanted to be shown the glory of God to a greater extent than the glory that had appeared to Israel earlier in the wilderness.

The Glory of God

The word “glory” in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word כבוד or כְּבוֹד (kabod) which is translated as glory, beauty, honor, and majesty. The New Testament Greek word for glory is δόξα (doxa) and is translated as glory, dignity, honor, praise, and worship. Various meanings and descriptions of glory are implied in both the Hebrew and Greek words, including beauty and splendor. One of the root meanings of glory refers to weight or heaviness. This concept is expressed in II Corinthians 4:17. Glory as weighty may refer to the great responsibilities of God and to the hosts of heaven who surround Him. Some theologians refer to the “shechinah” glory of God, as seen in the cloud and in

the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and temple. This word is found only in the targums, the Chaldaic version of the Bible, and in early Christian writings. As various Scriptures are reviewed it is evident from their contexts that in many instances glory is visual.

The first mention of the glory of God is in Exodus 16:7-10 when Moses told the children of Israel that they would see the glory of Jehovah. An emphasis throughout the book of Exodus is on the visual glory of God. The initial teaching on the glory of God refers to the visible manifestation of God and to the radiance that shines forth from Him. Stephen saw the glory of God just before he died as a martyr (Acts 7:55-56). Throughout the Scriptures God's glory is expressed in splendor, beauty, radiance and majesty. The glory of God also refers to His greatness, honor, responsibility and power. The glory of God as expressed in His greatness and honor is manifest in nature, in His Son, and in the host who worship Him. The glory of God is often described as fire in the Bible (Exodus 3:2, 19:16; Ezekiel 1:27-28). God is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29). Jesus will come in a flame of fire (II Thessalonians 1:7-8).

The phrase "glory of God" is only found twice in the Old Testament (Psalms 19:1 and Proverbs 25:2). It is found fifteen times in the New Testament. The phrase "glory of Christ" is found twice in the New Testament (II Corinthians 4:4 and 8:23). There are, however, hundreds of references to the glory of God using phrases such as "My glory," "Your glory," "His glory," among others. The glory of God is mentioned many times in the Psalms. The Scriptures speak of the glory of God the Father and of the glory of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ manifests the glory of God, His Father. The Father Himself manifests His glory including His visible glory.

There is a clear relationship between the image of God and the glory of God. Man is said to be the image and glory of God (I Corinthians 11:7). Glory has reference to visual brightness, radiance, or brilliance. Jesus is described as the brightness of His (God's) glory, the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:1-3). The glory of Christ was beheld by the apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration. His face shined and His clothes glistened (Matthew 17:1-2; John 1:14; II Peter 1:16-18). The image of God was considered in more detail in Chapter 4. It was pointed out that in both the Old and New Testament, image refers to form. The conclusion is that God has form. This truth will become even more evident and be clearly reinforced as various Scriptures are reviewed in the book of Exodus. It was stated also in Chapter 4 that the concept that man is the image of God in that he is a tripartite being, with mind, emotions, and will, is a philosophical rather than Scriptural base of interpretation. The conclusion is that as man was created in the image or form of God, Jesus is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. As man is similar in form to God, Jesus, by contrast, is in the exact form of God.

Many other manifestations of the glory of God are referred to in the Bible. God's glory is manifested in His voice. The voice of God was heard in Eden and at Mount Sinai (Genesis 3:8, Exodus 19:19). The voice of God was heard at the baptism of Jesus and in His transfiguration (Matthew 3:17, 17:5). The glory of God is manifested in heaven by the host who worship Him. He is also manifested in many ways on earth. Creation reveals His glory. God's people manifest His glory by their lives and witness for Him. The glory of God is manifest in His greatness, which is shown by the majestic creatures, seraphim, and cherubim that surround Him, and by the millions who follow Him and worship Him. God is the king and sovereign of the heavens and the earth. God is the judge of the whole world. He destroyed the earth with a flood and He destroyed Sodom and Gommorah. Through Jesus Christ He will again judge and destroy the world. The books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation describe the glory and greatness of God on His throne. David told of the glory of God when he said,

...Blessed be thou, Jehovah, the God of our father Israel, for ever and ever. Thine, Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the splendour, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is thine: thine, Jehovah, is the kingdom, and thou art exalted as Head above all; and riches and glory are of thee, and thou rulest over everything; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make all great and strong. And now, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name (I Chronicles 29:10-13 DBY).

The visual glory of God is revealed in man. The book of I Corinthians reiterates the truth that man is the image of God, adding that he is the glory of God. In speaking of the authority, or headship, of God, Christ, and man the statement is made,

... I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.... For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God ... (I Corinthians 11:3-7).

The visual glory of God is uniquely revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews describes the Son as the express, or exact image of God. It is said of Jesus,

... who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3).

While Jesus was on earth, His visual glory was not manifested, except on the Mount of Transfiguration described by John,

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy describe many manifestations of the visual glory of God at Sinai and during the forty years in the wilderness. At no time, before or since, does the Bible relate so many appearances of the glory of God. Moses asked specifically to see God's glory. To what extent did Moses see His glory? What affect did the glory of God have on him?

The Glory of God as Seen In the Wilderness

God began to reveal His visual glory in a sequence of events that is recorded in the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy. There is no record in the Bible that God had revealed His glory earlier. His appearances to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not indicate that He manifested His glory to them. God began by revealing His glory to Moses, then to all of the children of Israel. There were different ways, different degrees, and different places and circumstances in which God manifested His glory. It is evident from the Scriptures that God did not reveal His full glory at any time. On Mount Sinai, God revealed glorious manifestations of His visual glory and power to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and terrified them.

The Angel of Jehovah Appeared to Moses

The first time that God appeared to Moses was in a desert near Horeb or Mount Sinai. Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, when an angel of Jehovah appeared to him (Exodus 3:1-2 DBY). Moses had lived in Midian for forty years and was now eighty years old (Exodus 7:7 and Acts 7:29-30). As the account unfolds the angel of Jehovah equates Himself with Jehovah God.

*And Moses tended the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock behind the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God--to Horeb. And **the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn-bush:** and he looked, and behold, the thorn-bush burned with fire, and the thorn-bush was not being consumed. And Moses said, Let me now turn aside and see this great sight, why the thorn-bush is not burnt. And **Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, and God called to him out of the midst of the thorn-bush** and said, Moses, Moses! And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: loose thy sandals from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And **he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look at God** (Exodus 3:1-6 DBY, emphasis added).*

God called to Moses out of the burning bush and said He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. God told Moses that He was going to deliver the children of Israel and that He was going to send Moses to Egypt to bring His people out of Egypt (Exodus 3:7-10 DBY). Moses replied that the people would ask concerning the name of God (Exodus 3:13). God then revealed Himself as “I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14 DBY), the self-existing One, a meaning very similar to Jehovah. God then identified Himself by His name, Jehovah (Exodus 3:15 DBY). God told Moses to go to the children of Israel and say unto them, “**Jehovah the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hath appeared to me ...**” (Exodus 3:16 DBY, emphasis added). Moses answered God and said the people would not believe, nor listen, but would say, “**Jehovah has not appeared to thee**” (Exodus 4:1 DBY, emphasis added). God then gave Moses power to use his staff and change it into a serpent and do other miracles and then said, “**that they may believe that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee**” (Exodus 4:2-5 DBY, emphasis added).

Moses returned to Egypt and met with the children of Israel. Then he and Aaron, his brother, went in to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and said,

...Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go that they may celebrate a feast to me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, to whose voice I am to hearken to let Israel go? I do not know Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go (Exodus 5:1-2 DBY).

Pharaoh was slow to find out who Jehovah was. He refused to let Israel go, and instead taskmasters increased their burdens, and began to beat them if their work diminished (Exodus 5:4-18). The leaders of the children of Israel then complained to Moses and Aaron. Moses in turn complained to Jehovah (Exodus 5:19-23). God answered Moses saying, “Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh; for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land” (Exodus 6:1).

The Patriarch’s Knowledge of God Contrasted with that of Moses

When Pharaoh discouraged the children of Israel and they began to question Moses, God reassured Moses of who He, Jehovah, was and gave him a message for the people.

...God spoke to Moses, and said to him, I am Jehovah. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as the Almighty God; but by my name Jehovah I was not made known to them. And I established also my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were sojourners. And I have heard also the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians have forced to serve, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their service, and I will redeem you with a

stretched-out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and will be your God; and ye shall know that I, Jehovah your God, am he who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land concerning which I swore to give it unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; and I will give it you for a possession: I am Jehovah (Exodus 6:2-8 DBY, emphasis added).

When God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob they knew Him as Almighty God, El Shaddai. He made Himself known to Moses as Jehovah (I AM THAT I AM). God had revealed that He is almighty. Now God revealed to Moses His absolute existence. It is evident from the Scriptures that God's name was known before, but His people did not know its meaning (Genesis 2:4; 22:14 DBY). Moses came to know God by His name, Jehovah.

Jehovah in a Pillar of Cloud and a Pillar of Fire

After many confrontations with Pharaoh and a series of plagues from God, culminating with the death of all the firstborn, Egypt was devastated. Under the strong hand of God, Pharaoh agreed to let the children of Israel go. They were led by God by a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire through the Red Sea and through the wilderness to Mount Sinai.

And God led the people about, the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea; and the children of Israel went arrayed out of the land of Egypt ... And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, at the end of the wilderness. And Jehovah went before their face by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; so that they could go day and night. The pillar of the cloud did not remove from before the people by day, nor the pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:18-22 DBY).

The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire remained with the children of Israel throughout the forty years in the wilderness. The Scriptures state that God went before them in the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. The pillars rested over the tabernacle by day and by night after it was constructed, and directed them as they traveled and camped. It must have been an awesome sight and an assurance of the presence of Jehovah God.

The Children of Israel Saw the Glory of Jehovah in the Wilderness

During their journey to Sinai, the glory of Jehovah appeared to the children of Israel. This is the first mention of the glory of God in the Bible. In the wilderness on the way from Elim to Sinai they saw the glory of Jehovah (Exodus 16:7-10). The people had been murmuring against Moses and Aaron, wishing they were back in Egypt (Exodus 16:2-3).

God then promised Moses that He would rain bread from heaven (Exodus 16:4-5). Moses and Aaron reassured the children of Israel telling them that they would see the glory of God.

*... In the evening, then shall ye know that Jehovah has brought you out from the land of Egypt; and in the morning, then shall ye see the glory of Jehovah; for he has heard your murmurings against Jehovah; --and what are we, that ye murmur against us? And Moses said, When Jehovah gives you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for Jehovah hears your murmurings which ye murmur against him...and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah. And Moses spoke to Aaron, Say to all the assembly of the children of Israel, **Come near into the presence of Jehovah;** for he has heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, when Aaron spoke to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, that they turned toward the wilderness, and behold, **the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud.** And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak to them, saying, Between the two evenings ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God (Exodus 16:6-12 DBY, emphasis added).*

The glory of Jehovah was at this time seen by the children of Israel, in order that they might believe that He was their deliverer and God. This first appearance of God's glory simply describes an appearance in a cloud. Subsequent scenes of His glory increase in description and it is clear that these scenes were much greater than the earlier appearances of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Children of Israel Saw the Glory of Jehovah on Mount Sinai

The children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai in the third month after leaving Egypt, and camped there while Moses went up the mountain to God (Exodus 19:1-3). God told Moses He would come in the thick darkness of a cloud, that they might hear when He spoke to them and believe. The people were to hallow themselves and be ready on the third day when Jehovah would come down before the eyes of all the people. They were warned not to touch the mountain lest they be put to death. On the third day Jehovah came down on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:3-11 DBY).

*... on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings and a heavy cloud on the mountain, and the sound of the trumpet exceeding loud; and the whole people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the foot of the mountain. And the whole of mount Sinai smoked, because **Jehovah descended on it in fire;** and its smoke ascended as the smoke of a furnace; and the whole mountain shook greatly. And the sound of the trumpet increased and became exceeding loud; Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice. And Jehovah came down on mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain; and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up (Exodus 19:16-20 DBY, emphasis added).*

Over three million people saw this glorious manifestation of God. This number is estimated on the basis of the number of men of military age, about six hundred thousand, who came out of Egypt. Added to this are the younger and older men, women and children, and a mixed multitude, possibly of Egyptians (Exodus 12:37, 38:26, Numbers 1:46). They heard the thunders and saw the lightnings and the heavy cloud. They saw a smoking mountain as Jehovah descended on it in fire. They heard the exceedingly loud trumpet and the voice of God. How could the people not believe in God that day at Sinai? What a witness to all people down through the centuries!

Many Scriptures allude to God as fire, beginning with the burning bush which Moses had seen earlier. God is a consuming fire. Manifestations of God as fire will be considered from time to time relative to His appearances and visions to others in the Bible.

When Moses went up to God while He was on Sinai, God told Moses to warn the people not to break through the bounds and gaze lest they die. Only Aaron was allowed to come up with Moses (Exodus 19:17-25 DBY). While Moses was on the mountain God gave him the Ten Commandments. Down below, when the people heard the thunderings and saw the flames they were greatly afraid and said, "Let not God speak with us lest we die" (Exodus 20:18-19 DBY). Moses, however, "drew near to the obscurity where God was" (Exodus 20:21 DBY). God told Moses to tell the children of Israel, "Ye have seen that I have spoken with you from heaven" (Exodus 20:22-23 DBY). God then repeated the commandment for the children of Israel, "Ye shall not make beside me gods of silver, and ye shall not make to you gods of gold" (Exodus 20:23 DBY).

Forty years later Moses reminded the children of Israel that they had seen the glory of God at Sinai after coming out of Egypt. He said to them,

*Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did Jehovah make this covenant, but with us, even us, those who are here alive all of us this day. **Face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire Jehovah spoke with you** (I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to declare to you the word of Jehovah; for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up to the mountain), saying, I am Jehovah thy God who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Deuteronomy 5:2-6 DBY, emphasis added).*

Moses went on to remind the children of Israel,

*...when ye heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, and the mountain burned with fire, that ye came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; and ye said, Behold, Jehovah our **God has shewn us his glory and his greatness**, and we have heard his voice from the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God talks with man, and he lives. And now, why should we die? for this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of Jehovah our God any more, we*

shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we, and has lived? (Deuteronomy 5:23-26 DBY, emphasis added).

The children of Israel, in turn, were terrified by the voice of God coming out of the fire. They were afraid that they would now die.

Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and Seventy Elders Saw the God of Israel

After God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He gave detailed laws for the children of Israel relative to servants, property, Sabbaths, feasts, and daily living (Exodus 20 through 23). Then God invited Moses to come up to Him again, bringing Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, and seventy elders to worship. Only Moses, however, was invited to come near. After Moses wrote the words of Jehovah, they went up and saw the God of Israel (Exodus 24:1-10).

*... Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up; and **they saw the God of Israel**; and there was under his feet as it were work of transparent sapphire, and as it were the form of heaven for clearness. And on the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: **they saw God, and ate and drank**" (Exodus 24:9-11 DBY, emphasis added).*

The people whom He had chosen saw God and lived! Later, in Deuteronomy 4:10-12, it is made clear that they did not actually see the form of God, but some visual manifestation of Him. As it is difficult to see the sun because of its radiant glory, perhaps it is impossible to fully see God, particularly with our imperfect bodies at this time. This does not minimize what they did see that day. The mention of transparent sapphire stone beneath the feet of God is mentioned, which is described fully in other Scriptures (Ezekiel 1:26, Revelation 4:2-3). The glory of God remained on Sinai for six days.

...the glory of Jehovah abode on mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain, before the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and ascended the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24:17-18 DBY, emphasis added).

The appearance of the glory of God was like a cloud and fire in the eyes of the people, and Moses ascended into the cloud and drew near to God. When Moses came down after forty days with God he carried the two tablets of the Testimony, written and engraved by God (Exodus 32:15-16). The people, amazingly, after waiting for Moses to return, turned to idolatry, worshipping a calf Aaron had made (Exodus 32:1-6). When Moses saw this scene he became angry and he cast down the two tablets and broke them. He destroyed

the calf and asked who was on Jehovah's side and ordered the Levites to slay the offenders, about three thousand people. Moses then returned to God on Sinai and interceded on behalf of the children of Israel (Exodus 32:19-31). He also pitched his tent outside the camp. Whenever Moses entered the tent a pillar of cloud descended and Jehovah talked with him. The Scripture relates that "... **Jehovah spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend**" (Exodus 33:11 DBY, emphasis added). When the people saw the pillar of cloud they worshipped (Exodus 33:7-11 DBY).

"Show Me Your Glory"

Moses was talking to God one day and asked God, if he found grace in His sight, to show him His way that he might know God. God replied that He would. Moses then said, "Please, show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:12-18). God answered,

*... I will make all my goodness pass before thy face, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, **Thou canst not see my face; for Man shall not see me, and live. And Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me: there shalt thou stand on the rock. And it shall come to pass, when my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand, until I have passed by. And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see me from behind; but my face shall not be seen** (Exodus 33:19-23 DBY, emphasis added).*

Moses asked to see God's glory. God responded by referring to His face, which He equated with His glory. God knew that Moses wanted to see His face. He then promised Moses that He would cover him with His hand as His glory passed by and that Moses would see Him from behind. This Scripture makes it conclusive that God has both a face and a form. It was the face of Jehovah that Moses would not be allowed to see.

God told Moses to hew two new tablets of stone so He could write words that were on the first tablets and to come up to Mount Sinai and stand before Him (Exodus 34:1-4). As Moses stood there Jehovah came down.

... Jehovah came down in the cloud, and stood beside him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And Jehovah passed by before his face, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy unto thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but by no means clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head to the earth and worshipped ... (Exodus 34:5-8).

God proclaimed His name, Jehovah, and His character as He passed by Moses. Moses saw Jehovah God from behind and worshipped. Moses saw the back of God's form.

This truth is reiterated later to the children of Israel. They saw some measure of the glory of God, but Moses saw His form.

Moses was with God another forty days and nights, without food or water, and God rewrote the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone. Moses wrote additional words of God's covenant with the children of Israel. When he came down from the mountain "the skin of his face shown" through talking with God, and the people were afraid to come near him (Exodus 34:10-30). God's glory might be compared to the light of the sun, which will show on our face when we are exposed to it for a period of time.

Moses Saw the Form of God

The book of Numbers reaffirms that Moses saw the form of God. One day during the years in the wilderness, Mirjam and Aaron questioned whether God spoke only to Moses. God heard them and called Moses, Aaron, and Mirjam to come before the Tent of Meeting (Numbers 12:1-4). God came down in the pillar of the cloud and stood before them.

*And Jehovah came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses: he is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly, and not in riddles; and **the form of Jehovah doth he behold**. Why then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses? (Numbers 12:5-8 DBY, emphasis added).*

God Himself said that Moses beheld the form of Jehovah. God made it very plain to Mirjam and Aaron that He made a distinction between Moses and other prophets, speaking to them in visions or dreams, and to Moses openly. This distinction is also made in the extent to which the glory of God appeared to the children of Israel.

What the Children of Israel Did Not See at Sinai

The book of Deuteronomy makes it very clear that the children of Israel did not see the form of God at Sinai. They apparently saw only a measure of the glory of God when they stood before Him there. Moses reminded them, toward the end of the forty years in the wilderness, what they did and did not see.

*... the day that thou stoodest before Jehovah thy God in Horeb, when Jehovah said to me, Gather me the people together, that I may cause them to hear my words, that they may learn them, and fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and teach them to their children. And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and **the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven,***

with darkness, clouds, and obscurity. And Jehovah spoke to you from the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but ye saw no form; only ye heard a voice (Deuteronomy 4:10-12 DBY, emphasis added).

The children of Israel saw the fire, darkness, clouds, and obscurity. They heard God's voice, but they did not see His form. God had given Moses a warning to the children of Israel with the Ten Commandments, saying,

And take great heed to your souls (for ye saw no form on the day that Jehovah spoke to you in Horeb from the midst of the fire), lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the form of any figure ... (Deuteronomy 4:15-16 DBY, emphasis added).

It is clear that one reason the children of Israel were not permitted to see the form of God was because God knew that the children of Israel would make an image of Him. What the children of Israel saw was amazing enough in itself, for Moses continues by saying,

*... Jehovah thy God is a merciful God, --he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them. For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man on the earth, and from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, whether there hath been anything as this great thing is, or if anything hath been heard like it? **Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?** Or hath God essayed to come to take him a nation from the midst of a nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a powerful hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that Jehovah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewn, that thou mightest know that **Jehovah, he is God--there is none other besides him** (Deuteronomy 4:31-35 DBY, emphasis added).*

Moses saw the form of God, but the children of Israel did not! One obvious reason was their inclination to idolatry and graven images. This may be a major reason why God is hidden from people today.

The Glory of God and the Tabernacle

The book of Exodus describes God's commandments concerning the construction of a tabernacle and various furnishings for worship. The Levites were separated to serve as priests with Aaron as the high priest. When the tabernacle was completed, the cloud in which God manifested Himself covered the tabernacle, and the glory of God filled it.

*And he set up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the curtain of the gate of the court. And so Moses finished the work. And **the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle.** And Moses could not enter into the tent of meeting, for*

*the cloud abode on it, and **the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle**. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel journeyed in all their journeys. And if the cloud were not taken up, then they did not journey until the day that it was taken up. For **the cloud of Jehovah was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys** (Exodus 40:33-38 DBY, emphasis added).*

The cloud, manifesting the presence of Jehovah, was over the tabernacle throughout the forty years in the wilderness. When the cloud moved, the tent was taken down, and the people journeyed. When the cloud stopped, the tent was set up, and the people camped (Exodus 40:36-37).

The Glory of God Appeared to All the People

The book of Leviticus describes the beginning of priestly ministry and worship in the tabernacle. When all of the assembly of the children of Israel approached and stood before Jehovah, Moses told them that the glory of Jehovah would appear to them (Leviticus 9:5-6 DBY). The worship began with a sin offering, a burnt offering, and a peace offering. Aaron blessed the people, and then he and Moses went into the tabernacle, or tent of meeting, and came out and blessed the people.

*...and **the glory of Jehovah appeared to all the people**. And there went out fire from before Jehovah, and consumed on the altar the burnt-offering, and the pieces of fat; and all the people saw it, and they shouted, and fell on their face (Leviticus 9:23-24 DBY, emphasis added).*

When the glory of God appeared, and fire fell from Him consuming the offerings, the people fell down and worshipped.

God Appeared in the Cloud upon the Mercy Seat

In the inner chamber of the tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies, God promised Moses that He would appear in the cloud over the mercy seat which was over the ark of the covenant. God cautioned Moses that Aaron should not come at any time or he would die. Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, had already died before Jehovah when they approached with strange fire (Leviticus 10:1-3).

*And Jehovah spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they came near before Jehovah and died; and Jehovah said to Moses, **Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the sanctuary inside the veil before the mercy-seat which is upon the ark, that he die not; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat** (Leviticus 16:1-2 DBY, emphasis added).*

The book of Numbers describes a time when Moses entered the tabernacle to speak with God.

And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, then he heard the voice speaking to him from off the mercy-seat which was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim; and he spoke to Him (Numbers 7:89 DBY).

Moses heard the voice of God from above the mercy seat with the two cherubim. Cherubim and seraphim are winged creatures associated with the presence of God and are mentioned or described variously throughout the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

The Glory of God Appeared Throughout the Years in the Wilderness

The glory of God appeared throughout the forty years that the children of Israel journeyed in the wilderness. It was continually over the tabernacle as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They directed times of journey and times of encamping.

*And on the day that the tabernacle was set up, **the cloud covered the tabernacle** of the tent of testimony; and at even it was upon the tabernacle as **the appearance of fire**, until the morning. So it was continually: **the cloud covered it, and at night it was as the appearance of fire**. And **when the cloud rose from the tent, then the children of Israel journeyed; and at the place where the cloud stood still, there the children of Israel encamped**. According to the commandment of Jehovah the children of Israel journeyed, and according to the commandment of Jehovah they remained encamped; all the days that the cloud dwelt upon the tabernacle they encamped. And when the cloud was long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of Jehovah, and journeyed not. And if it were so that the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle, according to the commandment of Jehovah they encamped, and according to the commandment of Jehovah they journeyed (Numbers 9:15-20 DBY, emphasis added).*

The cloud of Jehovah was above the ark of the covenant as the children of Israel journeyed. When the ark set forward Moses said, “Rise up, Jehovah” and when it rested he said, “Return Jehovah” (Numbers 10:34-35 DBY).

The glory of God is often revealed as fire. Sometimes, when God’s anger was aroused at the children of Israel, His fire would burn and consume many of them (Numbers 11:1-3 DBY). An example is after the Israelite spies returned from Canaan and only Joshua and Caleb gave a good report. Upon hearing the bad report of the other spies the children of Israel rebelled and suggested that they select a leader and go back to Egypt. When Joshua and Caleb told the people not to rebel they threatened to stone them. Suddenly the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of the meeting before them all. God threatened to disinherit the children of Israel and make a nation of Moses (Numbers 14:1-12). Moses then pleaded with God for the children of Israel.

*And Moses said to Jehovah, Then the Egyptians will hear it; for in thy might thou broughtest up this people from the midst of them; and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, who have heard that thou, Jehovah, art in the midst of this people, that **thou, Jehovah, lettest thyself be seen eye to eye, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night;** if thou now slayest this people as one man, then the nations that have heard thy fame will speak, saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land that he had sworn unto them, he has therefore slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of the Lord be great, **according as thou hast spoken,** saying, Jehovah is slow to anger, and abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of thy loving-kindness, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now (Numbers 14:13-19 DBY, emphasis added).*

God listened to the plea of Moses and pardoned the people.

*And Jehovah said, I have pardoned according to thy word. But as surely as I live, **all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah!** for all those men who have seen my glory, and my signs, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice ... (Numbers 14:20-22 DBY, emphasis added).*

The glory of God again appeared at the rebellion of Korah and God ultimately consumed him and those who rebelled by having the earth swallow them up, and fire came from Jehovah and consumed others who were involved (Numbers 16:9-35 DBY). The glory of God appeared another time when the assembly gathered against Moses and Aaron and a plague was sent out upon the people (Numbers 16:41-48 DBY). After Mirjam, the sister of Moses, died in Kadesh, the people rebelled again because there was no water. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and again the glory of God appeared and He directed them to speak to a rock and bring water for the people (Numbers 20:1-8 DBY).

The last appearance of God to Moses was just before he died. God told Moses that the days were near for him to die and to present himself with Joshua at the tent of meeting (Deuteronomy 31:14 DBY).

*And **Jehovah appeared at the tent in the pillar of cloud;** and the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance to the tent. And Jehovah said to Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the strange gods of the land into which they enter, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. And my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and **I will hide my face from them,** and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, and they will say in that day, Have not these evils befallen me because my God is not in my midst? And **I will entirely hide***

my face in that day for all the evils that they have wrought, because they turned unto other gods (Deuteronomy 31:15-18 DBY, emphasis added).

God warned at that time that He would hide His face from the children of Israel in future days when they turned to other gods. This may well be another reason why God is invisible to men today.

God Went Before Israel as a Consuming Fire

The glory of God was made manifest when He fought for the children of Israel against their enemies. God went before them into battle. Moses and the children of Israel sang of Him after the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the army of the Egyptians.

*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song to Jehovah, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto Jehovah, for he is highly exalted: The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. My strength and song is Jah, and he is become my salvation: This is my God, and I will glorify him; My father's God, and I will extol him. **Jehovah is a man of war**; Jehovah, his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army hath he cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths covered them; they sank to the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, Jehovah, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And by the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown thine adversaries: Thou sentest forth thy burning wrath, it consumed them as stubble (Exodus 15:1-7 DBY, emphasis added).*

The children of Israel fought several nations before entering into Canaan. They fought against, and were victorious over the Amalakites, the Amorites, Bashan, and the Midianites. On two occasions Moses reminded the people, as they were nearing the promised land, that Jehovah God would be with them and fight for them as they encountered their enemies.

***Jehovah your God who goeth before you, he will fight for you**, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness where thou hast seen that Jehovah thy God bore thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came to this place. But In this thing ye did not believe Jehovah your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place for your encamping, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in the cloud by day (Deuteronomy 1:30-33 DBY, emphasis added).*

*Know then this day, that **Jehovah thy God is he that goeth over before thee, a consuming fire; he will destroy them**, and he will cast them down before thee, and thou shalt dispossess them and cause them to perish quickly, as Jehovah hath said unto thee (Deuteronomy 9:3 DBY, emphasis added).*

Just before Moses died he encouraged the children of Israel, saying,

*... Hear, Israel, ye are approaching this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be afraid of them; for **Jehovah your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you** against your enemies, to save you (Deuteronomy 20:3-4 DBY, emphasis added).*

Over a thousand years later, God has not changed. He still is like a mighty man of war, fighting against the enemies of His people. In the book of Isaiah it is written,

***Jehovah will go forth as a mighty man, he will stir up jealousy like a man of war: he will cry, yea, he will shout; he will shew himself mighty against his enemies** (Isaiah 42:13 DBY, emphasis added).*

There is no Biblical record that the enemies of the children of Israel ever saw the glory of God, but they certainly became aware of Him and His glorious power during the wilderness years, the conquest of Canaan, the times of the judges, and the kingdom years.

When will the Glory of God be fully Revealed to His Children?

Will Christians someday see the glory of God? Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” Moses asked to see the glory of God and was allowed to see the back of God. It made his face shine. What will happen if one day we see God? The book of II Corinthians gives a preview of what that might be. It compares the experience and ministry of Moses with that of the believer in Jesus Christ. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai after forty days before God, his face was shining, and he had to veil it from the children of Israel. The Scripture continues in application to the believer,

Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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 by the Spirit of the Lord (II Corinthians 3:12-18).

The believer is now being transformed as he beholds only a reflection of the glory of God. What will be the result when we come before the throne of God in heaven? At the

present time the glory of God is hidden from the unbeliever, but it is shining in our hearts as the Scriptures reveal,

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ... For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:3-6).

In comparing the experience of Moses with that of believers in Christ, the glory of God was reflected in the face of Moses while the glory of God shines within the heart of the believer. In a coming day that glory will be fully manifested. Paul in his letter to the Romans states,

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:18-21).

The Bible indicates that someday we shall see the visual glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and the glory of God the Father. In the book of Hebrews we are told that Christ, the captain of our salvation, is “bringing many sons to glory.”

*... we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons to glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:9-10, emphasis added).*

Someday Jesus will bring us to glory and we shall see, not only the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also the glory of God the Father. What a glorious day that will be! Although we do not see Him now, on that day when we see Him, we will truly “rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8).

The glory of God was revealed over and over again to the children of Israel during the forty years in the wilderness as He sought to create a nation for Himself. The frequency and intensity of these manifestations of the glory of God are unequalled in the Old Testament accounts. These manifestations to the children of Israel did not, however, reveal the form of God. What the children of Israel did see on Sinai, however, was spectacular. It was a most dramatic visual revelation of the glory of God, witnessed by over three million people. It was to Moses only, however, that God revealed His form.

When Moses asked to see His glory, God said no man could see His face and live. God did, however, show Moses His back parts. It is clear, however, that the Israelites did not actually see the form of God at Sinai. God verified this to their descendants over thirty years later when He had spoken to them out of the midst of fire, that they saw no form, but heard only a voice (Deuteronomy 4:12).

Jehovah is a God with visual glory. His visual glory has been seen in a measure, and to a greater extent by Moses. It was to Moses only that Jehovah spoke face to face as a man speaks with his friend (Exodus 33:11 DBY). The Bible says "... there arose no prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Jehovah had known face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10 DBY). As the glory of God was revealed progressively throughout the Scriptures, it is possible that revelations may continue into eternity. Certainly, when believers are in heaven they shall see more than Moses saw.

Jesus Christ is the image and glory of God and reveals the glory of God the Father. He is the King of glory of Psalm 24. In Daniel's vision (Daniel 7:9-14 DBY), in the vision of Stephen (Acts 7:55-56), and in the vision of John in Revelation (Revelation 4 and 5), there are clear descriptions of the glory of God the Father and the glory of Jesus Christ His Son being together. Believers can anticipate seeing the Father and the Son face to face in their glory in that coming day when we see them in all of their beauty, majesty, radiance, and splendor.

O That Will Be Glory

When all my labors and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

When, by the gift of His infinite grace,
I am accorded in heaven a place,
Just to be there and to look on His face,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me;
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.

Charles H. Gabriel
Hymns of Truth and Praise #620

8

The Captain of Jehovah's Army

Joshua 5:15

The wilderness years were finally over and Moses, the man of God, had died. God commanded Joshua to lead the children of Israel into Canaan, the Promised Land. This was the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants hundreds of years before.

During the forty years in the wilderness God had revealed Himself many times as the God of glory. He had manifested His visual glory to Moses and to the children of Israel in spectacular ways and daily in the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. Never again would God appear as often as He did in the wilderness. Joshua and Caleb were the only men remaining who lived during those years and had seen the glory of God. Only those who had been children were still alive after all of the men of that generation had died.

The children of Israel were now to begin a new venture, to conquer and take possession of Canaan. They were about to enter into full-scale war. Joshua had sent two spies into the land and into Jericho. The children of Israel knew that the possession of the land would be theirs only by conquest, for the land was already filled with many small nations, some of whom were populated by giants (Deuteronomy 31:3-8). God had promised them, however, that He would go before them and fight for them (Deuteronomy 31:3-4). All of the nations had become extremely wicked and God planned to destroy them (Deuteronomy 9:3-4, 20:1-17). The spies returned and reported that the inhabitants of the land were fainthearted because of the children of Israel (Joshua 2:24).

During the conquest of Canaan under Joshua and in the centuries that followed under the judges God revealed Himself visually several times. Throughout those years God revealed Himself visually to Joshua, Gideon, Samson's parents, and Samuel. As He had revealed Himself as the God of glory in Egypt and during the wilderness years, now He revealed Himself as a man of war.

Jehovah is a Man of War

Joshua was the military commander of the children of Israel during the wilderness years. He had seen the power of God when He destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea. After the crossing of the Red Sea, and the defeat of the Egyptians, Moses and the children of Israel sang a song.

*...I will sing unto Jehovah, for he is highly exalted: The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. My strength and song is Jah, and he is become my salvation: This is my God, and I will glorify him; My father's God, and I will extol him. **Jehovah is a man of war**; Jehovah, his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army hath he cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths covered them; they sank to the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, Jehovah, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy (Exodus 15:1-6 DBY, emphasis added).*

Jehovah had shown the children of Israel that He was indeed a man of war. He fought for them as Joshua led their army in a battle against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-13), and in later battles against the Canaanites, Sihon, king of the Amorites, Og, king of Bashan, and the Midianites. Moses had assured them,

*... Be not afraid, neither fear them; **Jehovah your God who goeth before you, he will fight for you**, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness where thou hast seen that Jehovah thy God bore thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came to this place (Deuteronomy 1:29-31 DBY, emphasis added).*

Later Moses reassured the children of Israel again, shortly before he died, that God would fight for the children of Israel against their enemies.

***When thou goest out to war** against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more numerous than thou, thou shalt not fear them; for **Jehovah thy God is with thee**, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye approach unto the battle... let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be afraid of them; **for Jehovah your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you** (Deuteronomy 20:1-4 DBY, emphasis added).*

Jehovah God had shown the children of Israel over and over again that He fought for them yet they continued at times to rebel in unbelief. Would they trust in God in the conquest of Canaan?

The Captain of Jehovah's Army

Armed with the instructions of God, and his past experience in battles in which God fought for the children of Israel, Joshua prepared for the conquest of Canaan. Not only had Joshua been instructed to be strong and courageous, but he had been commanded to meditate in the Book of the Law day and night (Joshua 1:6-8).

Joshua led the people to the west side of the Jordan River and camped at Gilgal. The crossing of the Jordan was miraculous. God stopped the waters and the children of Israel crossed on dry land, as the previous generation had crossed the Red Sea. As the fortress city of Jericho loomed before them, Joshua lifted up his eyes and suddenly a man stood opposite him with a sword drawn.

*And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood **a man before him with his sword** drawn in his hand. And Joshua went to him, and said to him: Art thou for us, or for our enemies? And he said, No; for **as captain of the army of Jehovah am I now come**. Then Joshua fell upon his face to the earth, and worshipped, and said to him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And **the captain of Jehovah's army** said to Joshua,*

Loose thy sandal from off thy foot: for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so (Joshua 5:13-15 DBY, emphasis added).

Who was the captain of the army of Jehovah? The Bible does not say, but Joshua worshipped Him and only God is worthy of worship. He may have been a vision of God the Father, or He may have been a vision of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. One truth is certain; Joshua saw someone representing God in the form of a man with a sword. When Joshua asked Him if He was for Israel, or for her enemies, He answered in the negative and said that He had come as captain of the army of Jehovah. Jehovah now revealed Himself as a warrior. His sword was drawn and He was ready for immediate warfare. God was not coming simply to help them in their warfare, but to lead them, as their commander. Joshua was ordered to remove his sandals because he was on holy ground. This is a reminder of how Moses was previously commanded to remove his sandals when God appeared to him in the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-6). Joshua, as Moses, was in the presence of a holy God. The appearance of the Captain of Jehovah's army was the first and only personal and singular vision of God to Joshua.

Why did God appear to Joshua at this time as a warrior? Three times, before entering the land, God had told Joshua to be strong and courageous and not to be afraid or dismayed for He would be with him (Joshua 1:5-9). Joshua had been one of the ten spies, who forty years earlier had seen the land, the fortified cities, and the enemy, many of whom were giants (Numbers 13:1-16). God came to Joshua to encourage him and to fight for the children of Israel. He gave Joshua a powerful vision for faith in the insurmountable task before him. God assured Joshua of His presence by appearing to him in the form of a man, a man of war.

The Conquest of Canaan

Joshua, encouraged by the vision of the Captain of Jehovah's army, encouraged the children of Israel by assuring them that God was in their midst and that He would dispossess the nations that were their enemies in the land of promise. They conquered and destroyed the city of Jericho under the miraculous hand of God. Within days they conquered all of the south land because Jehovah fought for Israel (Joshua 10:12-15 DBY). A few days later Jehovah God delivered the north country into their hands (Joshua 11:6-9 DBY). Small battles continued over the years and the people took possession of their inheritance.

Finally Joshua grew old and died at age one hundred and ten (Joshua 24:29). In spite of their failures, the children of Israel did remain true to God during the years of Joshua

and the generation following (Joshua 24:31). Before Joshua died he reminded the children Israel of how God had fought for them.

*... ye have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done to all these nations because of you. For **Jehovah your God is he that hath fought for you ... Jehovah your God, he will expel them from before you, and dispossess them from out of your sight; and ye shall take possession of their land, as Jehovah your God hath said unto you ... One man of you chaseth a thousand; for **Jehovah your God, he it is that fighteth for you,** as He hath said unto you** (Joshua 23:3-10 DBY, emphasis added).*

After Joshua's death and that of the generation following, there arose another generation which did not know Jehovah and began to serve the gods of the inhabitants of the land which had not been destroyed. The Bible describes their unfaithfulness (Judges 2:10-16). Nevertheless, God continued working with them through judges.

The Times of the Judges

After the death of Joshua the various tribes continued to take possession of their inheritance. They did not, however, completely dispossess their enemies, and ultimately forsook Jehovah and began to worship the gods of the land. God, in His anger delivered them into the hands of various nations for periods of time. When they cried to God He raised up judges or saviors to deliver them, but then the children of Israel would become unfaithful again. This sequence happened over and over again.

The times of the judges covered a period of about three hundred and fifty years, until the times of the kings (Acts 13:20). It includes the time recorded in the book of Ruth and the first part of the book of I Samuel. God raised up at least fourteen judges during those years beginning with Othniel and ending with Eli and Samuel.

God revealed Himself during the time of Joshua and Judges as Captain of Jehovah's Army to Joshua, as the Angel of Jehovah to Gideon and to the parents of Samson. He later appeared to Samuel. The rarity of these appearances was in sharp contrast to God's daily manifestations of His visual glory during the forty wilderness years. During the times of the judges Jehovah appeared as a warrior, a man of war, fighting for the children of Israel, or fighting against them when they forsook Him for other gods.

The Sword of Jehovah and of Gideon

The very nations that God had commanded the children of Israel to destroy, because of their wickedness, still remained in the land. The children of Israel, in their disobedience to God, and in their failure to dispossess and destroy their enemies still

dwelling in the lands of their inheritance, began to mix with the people. Then they forsook Jehovah and worshipped the gods of their enemies (Judges 3:5-8 DBY).

When the children of Israel cried to Jehovah in their servitude He raised up a deliverer and judge named Othniel (Judges 3:9-11). The Scriptures say that the “Spirit of Jehovah was upon him ... and he went out to war, and Jehovah gave ... the king of Syria in his hand.” Then the land had peace for forty years (Judges 3:10-11 DBY). Othniel was the first of the judges. God raised up Ehud, Shamgar, and Debora as judges after Othniel to deliver His people from their enemies (Judges 3:15 through 5:31). Despite their obedience, God did not reveal Himself visually to these leaders.

The children of Israel continued to do evil in the sight of Jehovah and He delivered them into the hand of the Midianites for seven years (Judges 6:2 DBY). Finally, they cried to God for help. God sent a prophet to them and admonished them for their disobedience (Judges 6:7-8). Then the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Gideon who became the fifth judge of Israel.

*And an **angel of Jehovah** came and sat under the terebinth that was in Ophrah, that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. And his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, to secure it from the Midianites. And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him, and said to him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said to him, Ah my Lord, if Jehovah be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his miracles that our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? And now Jehovah hath cast us off, and given us into the hand of Midian. And **Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have not I sent thee?** And he said to him, Ah Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my thousand is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And **Jehovah said to him, I will certainly be with thee;** and thou shalt smite Midian as one man. And he said to him, If now I have found favour in thine eyes, **shew me a sign that it is thou who talkest with me.** Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again (Judges 6:11-18 DBY, emphasis added).*

Who was the angel of Jehovah who appeared to Gideon? The text continues by saying “Jehovah looked upon him, and said ...” indicating that it was God talking to Gideon (Judges 6:14 DBY). Gideon responded by asking for a sign to prove that it was God talking to him. He prayed that he might bring an offering to Him indicating a realization that this was indeed Jehovah God. When Gideon presented his offerings as he was instructed, the angel of Jehovah touched them and fire rose up and consumed them. Then the angel disappeared (Judges 6:17-21). The Scriptures then state,

And Gideon perceived that he was an angel of Jehovah; and Gideon said, Alas, Lord Jehovah! for because I have seen an angel of Jehovah face to face... And Jehovah said to him, Peace be unto thee: fear not; thou shalt not die (Judges 6:22-23 DBY).

Gideon's response, "Alas, Lord Jehovah! for because I have seen an angel of Jehovah face to face" indicates that he thought he was seeing someone other than just an angel. An angel of a person may indicate a representation of the person himself (Exodus 3:2-6, Acts 12:14-16). The angel may have been reflecting or manifesting Jehovah God. It is significant that in the text above Jehovah Himself talked to Gideon.

A short time after the appearance of the Angel, the Midianites and Amalekites encamped in the valley of Jezreel. Then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon. He blew a trumpet and started gathering some of the tribes of Israel. Jehovah God had revealed Himself visually to Gideon, through His angel, assuring him that He would be with him as he went against the Midianites. God was still, as in the days of Joshua, a man of war. He was now about to demonstrate His power to Gideon in a miraculous way. God told Gideon that his army was too large and all of the men but three hundred were sent home. God then promised that He would save Israel by the three hundred. Later that night Jehovah told Gideon to go down to the camp of the Midianites. There he heard a man telling of a dream of a Midian tent being destroyed (Judges 7:9-14). His fellow said,

This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, the man of Israel: God hath given into his hand Midian and all the host (Judges 7:14 DBY, emphasis added).

Gideon was encouraged and assured that Jehovah would give him the victory. God gave Gideon more than a vision of Himself. He was directing the battle. As God had directed him, he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and gave each man a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a torch (Judges 7:16). Gideon then commanded them,

*... Look on me, and do likewise; behold, when I come to the extremity of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. And when I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, ye also shall blow the trumpets around the whole camp, and shall say, For **Jehovah and for Gideon!** (Judges 7:17-18 DBY, emphasis added).*

The three hundred men, led by Gideon, came to the outside of the camp of the Midianites in the night, surrounded it, blew the trumpets, broke the pitchers, and shouted, "**The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon!**" (Judges 7:20-21 DBY, emphasis added). The Midianites were so terrified that they fought each other as they fled. The children of Israel were once again delivered by Jehovah God as He fought for them.

Why did God appear to Gideon and not to the other judges? When the Angel of God had appeared to Gideon in his vision He had said to him, "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." God not only called Gideon to be a man of valor, but promised

to be with him. Jehovah was with Gideon and with the three hundred as they routed the enemy. Truly it was the sword of Jehovah and the sword of Gideon.

The years went by and the pattern continued. God would deliver the children of Israel only to have them forsake Him and become evil before Him. Judges were raised up time and again through whom God would deliver the people. After each judge there would be a period of rest after the children of Israel were delivered (Joshua 10 through 12). Then the children of Israel returned to do evil again. Finally, Jehovah gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years (Judges 13:1 DBY).

The Angel of Jehovah Appears to Samson's Parents

One day, while the children of Israel were under the hand of the Philistines, the Angel of Jehovah appeared to the wife of Manoah, a Danite. He told her that, although she was barren, she would bear a son, that he would be a Nazarite to God, and that he would begin to save Israel from the Philistines (Judges 13:2-6). The woman came and told her husband saying,

... A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of an angel of God, very terrible; but I did not ask him whence he was, neither did he tell me his name. And he said to me, Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son; and now drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not anything unclean; for the boy shall be a Nazarite of God from the womb to the day of his death (Judges 13:6-7 DBY, emphasis added).

The woman described the angel to her husband as a man of God, very terrible, or terrifying. The New King James translation describes Him as having a countenance like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome. Manoah prayed to God that the man of God come again to teach them what to do in regard to the child to be born. God listened to Manoah, and the angel of God came again to his wife and she called her husband (Judges 13:8-10 DBY). Manoah went with his wife to the man and asked if he was the man that spoke to his wife. He replied, "I am" (Judges 13:11). Manoah offered to give the man some food.

And Manoah said to the Angel of Jehovah, I pray thee, let us detain thee, and we will make ready a kid of the goats for thee. And the Angel of Jehovah said to Manoah, Though thou shouldest detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou shalt offer it up to Jehovah. For Manoah knew not that he was the Angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said to the Angel of Jehovah, What is thy name, that when thy word cometh to pass we may do thee honour? And the Angel of Jehovah said to him, How is it that thou askest after my name, seeing it is wonderful? (Judges 13:15-18 DBY).

Manoah was instructed to offer a burnt offering to Jehovah. He took the offering and an oblation and offered it upon the rock to Jehovah, and then a wondrous scene took place. The text says of the Angel of Jehovah,

... And he did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on. And it came to pass, as the flame went up from off the altar towards the heavens, that the Angel of Jehovah ascended in the flame of the altar; and Manoah and his wife looked on, and fell on their faces to the ground. And the Angel of Jehovah appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that it was the Angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said to him, If Jehovah were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and an oblation at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would he at this time have told us such things as these (Judges 13:19-23 DBY, emphasis added).

Manoah believed that he and his wife had seen God. They realized that God had received their burnt offering and that it was He who had told them of these things. The wife of Manoah conceived and bore a son and they called his name Samson (Judges 13:24).

Why did the Angel of Jehovah appear to his parents rather than to Samson? Two possible reasons should be considered. He instructed Samson's parents relative to his upbringing to become a Nazarite of God. They no doubt knew that Samson was not to cut his hair or drink strong drink, but they must have realized that his separation and service would require special upbringing since they had been told that he would begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Samson, himself, it turned out, was often of questionable character, nevertheless he did trust in God, as evidenced by his prayer just before his death (Judges 16:28). During his lifetime the Spirit of God came upon Samson from time to time and God used him mightily.

Jehovah Appeared Again at Shiloh

Samson was the thirteenth and last judge mentioned in the book of Judges. There were, however, at least two judges more who served before the times of the kings, Eli and Samuel. Eli was a high priest serving in the tabernacle at Shiloh and his sons served as priests, but were very wicked (I Samuel 2:12).

Samuel, as a boy, served under Eli in the tabernacle. Samuel's mother Hannah had given him to Jehovah because her prayer for a son was granted (I Samuel 1 and 2 DBY). The book of I Samuel relates that "the boy Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with Jehovah and also with men" (I Samuel 2:26 DBY). The Scriptures continue by saying, "... the boy Samuel ministered to Jehovah before Eli and the word of Jehovah was rare in those days, a vision was not frequent" (I Samuel 3:1 DBY). One night, as Samuel was sleeping in the tabernacle, Jehovah called to the boy.

... Jehovah called to Samuel. And he said, Here am I. And he ran to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I did not call: lie down again. And he went and lay down. And Jehovah called again, Samuel! And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I did not call, my son: lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither had the word of Jehovah yet been revealed to him. And Jehovah called again the third time, Samuel! And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me... (I Samuel 3:4-8 DBY).

Eli perceived that Jehovah was calling Samuel, and instructed him to lie down and that if He called again to ask Him to speak, for His servant was listening. Jehovah did come again, stood by Samuel, and called again.

And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at the other times, Samuel, Samuel! And Samuel said, Speak, for thy servant heareth. And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house; I will begin and make an end (I Samuel 3:10-14 DBY, emphasis added).

Samuel waited until the next morning to tell Eli about the vision and of the words that were spoken to him by Jehovah (I Samuel 3:15-18 DBY). The book of I Samuel relates,

And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established a prophet of Jehovah. And Jehovah appeared again at Shiloh; for Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of Jehovah (I Samuel 3:19-21 DBY, emphasis added).

Evidently God revealed Himself to Samuel from time to time. Eli continued as a high priest and judge during the early years of Samuel's ministry. In time, what Samuel related to Eli occurred as Jehovah had revealed. Israel went to war with the Philistines and took the ark of God with them (I Samuel 4:1-11). They were defeated, the ark of the covenant was captured, and Eli's sons were slain. When he heard the news he fell and died. He had judged Israel forty years (I Samuel 4:17-18 DBY).

The children of Israel lamented after the capture of the ark, and Samuel challenged them to return to Jehovah and they obeyed (I Samuel 7:2-4). Later, when the Philistines attacked Israel Samuel prayed to Jehovah, offered burnt offerings, and God answered him in a thundering way.

And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines advanced to battle against Israel. And Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were routed before Israel (I Samuel 7:10-11 DBY, emphasis added).

Once again Jehovah God thundered as a man of war, and defeated the enemies of the Israelites in answer to Samuel's prayer.

When Samuel grew old the elders of Israel came to him and said that they wanted a king like the other nations to judge them (I Samuel 8:1-6). Samuel prayed to God about their request.

And Jehovah said to Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them ... now hearken unto their voice; only, testify solemnly unto them, and declare unto them the manner of the king that shall reign over them (I Samuel 8:7-9 DBY, emphasis added).

Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel (I Samuel 9:15 to 10:1). Samuel became the last of the judges as the kingdom years began.

The Captain of Salvation

The glory of God was revealed to Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness. God revealed Himself as a man of war during the times of Joshua and the Judges. As the Captain of Jehovah's army, God is manifested as a man of war, a warrior, who fights the enemies of His people. The book of Joshua illustrates victorious Christian living because Joshua was Israel's savior, and his name means the same as Jesus, who is our Savior. Just as the children of Israel became unfaithful, we too are unfaithful. Just as God never forsook Israel, He will never forsake believers today (Hebrews 13:5).

A much greater battle was fought at Calvary than in Canaan. Jesus fought against Satan, sin, and death. Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation according to the book of Hebrews.

*For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make **the captain of their salvation** perfect through sufferings ... Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might **destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*** (Hebrews 2:10-15, emphasis added).

Through faith in Jesus Christ we can have salvation and eternal life (John 3:16). Ours is not an inheritance in Canaan but in the glory of heaven, for Jesus is bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

One day the final war will be won against Satan, the evil world, sin and death. Christ will come again, this time to judge and make war. The book of Revelation reveals the coming of Jesus Christ.

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness **He judges and makes war**. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS** (Revelation 19:11-16, emphasis added).*

This is the last and most glorious description of Christ, coming in glory with the armies of heaven. Like God the Father, Christ is a man of war. His war and judgment will climax in His rule over the world as King of kings. The initial war was won by Him on the cross of Calvary, and the final victory will take place when He comes again. Then Jesus Christ will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Great Captain of Salvation

Great Captain of Salvation,
Now Crowned with highest glory,
We joyfully raise our songs of praise,
and lowly bow before Thee.
We worship and adore Thee,
Each heart and tongue confessing,
To Thee once slain, worthy to reign,
Be honour, prayer and blessing.

J.G. Deck
Hymns and Spiritual Songs #261

9

I Saw the Lord

Isaiah 6:1

The times of the judges were followed by the kingdom years. During that period of about four hundred and fifty years God appeared to David, Solomon, and Isaiah. The angel of Jehovah appeared to David as He was about to destroy Jerusalem because of David's sin in numbering the children of Israel (II Samuel 24:1-25 DBY). David writes many descriptions of God that appear, in some instances, to be the result of a visual revelation. Jehovah appeared to Solomon twice (I Kings 11:9 DBY). Jehovah did not appear again until Isaiah saw the Lord in the year that King Uzziah died (Isaiah 6:1 DBY).

The Kingdom Years

Samuel was the last of the judges because the children of Israel wanted a king. Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. The Israelites sinned in wanting a king. They were rebelling against Jehovah and rejecting Him as their king. Nevertheless, God granted them a king. After King Saul was presented to them, Samuel reminded the children of Israel of their sin in asking for a king.

*... when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said to me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when **Jehovah your God was your king**...Now therefore stand and see this great thing which Jehovah will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto Jehovah, and he will send thunder and rain; and ye shall perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of Jehovah in asking for yourselves a king. And Samuel called to Jehovah; and Jehovah sent thunder and rain that day. And all the people greatly feared Jehovah and Samuel (I Samuel 12:12-18 DBY, emphasis added).*

God had revealed His glory to the children of Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan during the times of the judges. He was truly their king, leading them, providing for them, and fighting their battles for them, yet they forgot Him and rejected Him. When Samuel called upon Jehovah God and asked Him to send thunder and rain, the answer came immediately from Jehovah. Then the children of Israel feared God and confessed their wickedness in asking for a king. Samuel reminded them to follow Jehovah and serve Him with all their hearts (I Samuel 12:19-20 DBY).

King Saul, the first king of Israel, became disobedient to God and was rejected as king (I Samuel 13:11-14 DBY). David was then chosen of God and anointed to be the next king of Israel (I Samuel 16:1-13 DBY). God sought for a man after His own heart, who would do His will (I Samuel 13:14 DBY). Under the reign of David Israel became a

great nation. David had many enemies dwelling in Canaan, but he was a great warrior and fought many battles for God. He was victorious because he trusted in God.

David's Visions of God

David wrote many psalms or songs, many of them to Jehovah God. His early psalms were written as he was pursued constantly by King Saul. Saul was jealous of David and tried to have him killed. Saul knew that God had anointed David to be king in Saul's place (I Samuel 18:26 to 19:1 DBY). One of David's songs is recorded in II Samuel 22 and Psalm 18. He wrote it on a day in which he was delivered from Saul. David began praising Jehovah for delivering him out of the hand of his enemies and related how he called upon Him in his distress. He related how God heard his cry (II Samuel 22:1-7 DBY and Psalm 18). David then described a wonderful vision of Jehovah God and what God did after He heard the voice of David out of His temple.

*Then the earth shook, and quaked; The foundations of the heavens trembled And shook because he was wroth. **There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, And fire out of his mouth devoured: Coals burned forth from it.** And he bowed the heavens, and came down; And darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; And he was seen upon the wings of the wind. And he made darkness round about him a tent, Gatherings of waters, thick clouds of the skies. **From the brightness before him Burned forth coals of fire.** Jehovah thundered from the heavens, And the Most High uttered his voice. And he sent arrows, and scattered mine enemies; Lightning, and discomfited them. And the beds of the sea were seen, The foundations of the world were uncovered At the rebuke of Jehovah, At **the blast of the breath of his nostrils.** He reached forth from above, he took me, He drew me out of great waters; He delivered me from my strong enemy, From them that hated me; For they were mightier than I. They encountered me in the day of my calamity; But Jehovah was my stay. And he brought me forth into a large place; He delivered me, because he delighted in me (II Samuel 22:8-20 DBY, emphasis added. See also Psalm 18).*

David described a very detailed and descriptive visible manifestation of God in anger. The vision began with God hearing David out of His temple in heaven, shaking the earth and the heavens and coming down. This would be the first mention of a temple in heaven. David gave a description of Jehovah God in His anger. Smoke came from His nostrils, fire from His mouth, and there were burning coals. As in the book of Exodus, at the burning bush and at Sinai, God revealed Himself in fire (Exodus 3:2 and 19:18 DBY). Darkness was also found under Him and Jehovah God was riding upon a cherub. This was the first mention of God riding upon a cherub. Cherubs were created for the most holy place in the tabernacle above the mercy seat (Exodus 25:16-22 DBY). Cherubs or Cherubim are winged creatures who dwell with God (I Samuel 4:4, II Samuel 6:2, Psalm

80:1, and Psalm 99:1). David saw God riding upon them and they were also transporting God upon His throne in Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1:22-28 DBY). Cherubim have two or four faces and four wings (Ezekiel 1:5-6, 10:1-20, 41:18 DBY). Cherubim are similar to Seraphim, who are creatures with one face and six wings (Isaiah 6:1-6). Seraphim also dwell in the presence of God as He sits on His throne (Isaiah 6:1-6). John, in his vision of God in the book of Revelation, describes these creatures again (Revelation 4:1-9).

David's vision was of Jehovah flying upon a cherub and seen upon the wings of the wind. What a thrilling sight! God is seen flying upon the wind, and the wind has wings. Wings in the Hebrew (*kanaph*) are described as extremities. Wind in the Hebrew (*ruwach*) is the same word as spirit. Wings of the wind, a beautiful poetic expression, may allude to the vast outreaching of the Holy Spirit, carrying God into the infinite reaches of creation. Darkness and thick clouds are also about God, as was seen by the children of Israel at Sinai. David continued by describing the thunder from the heavens and the voice of God as He scattered David's enemies, reached down to take David and deliver him, because God delighted in him.

Visions of God in the Psalms

David wrote many more descriptions or views of God in the book of Psalms. His descriptions add to the ever expanding revelation of the visual glory of God. In Psalm 11:4 David spoke of Jehovah in the temple of God's holiness and of God's throne in heaven. David anticipated seeing God's face in righteousness and awaking with His likeness in Psalm 17:14-15. Psalm 18 reiterates David's description of God in II Samuel 22. In Psalm 27:4 David asked that he might dwell in the house of Jehovah and behold the beauty of Jehovah. David described the thousands of chariots, with God in the center, in Psalm 68:16-19. David blessed God in Psalm 103:1-19 as he announced that Jehovah had established His throne in heaven and that His kingdom rules over all. David also spoke of the power and splendor of Christ as a priest and judge among the nations in Psalm 110:1-6. He made references to Christ throughout the Psalms. David expressed his wonder of Jehovah God in Psalm 139 when he spoke of the Spirit of God and the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God. David realized the wonder of his own creation and of God's thoughts of him and of His abiding presence. David blessed Jehovah, his rock, who taught his hand to war and his fingers to fight in Psalm 144:1. David asked God to bow the heavens and come down, to touch the mountains, that they may smoke, and come down and rescue him. In Psalm 144 David spoke of the greatness of Jehovah and of how one generation would praise Him to another. David ended his praises by speaking of the glorious splendor of the majesty of God and of the glorious splendor of His kingdom.

Asaph, another psalmist, also wrote of the visual glory of God. In Psalm 50:1-3 he described God as shining forth and fire devouring before Him. Another psalmist described Jehovah as clothing Himself with majesty in Psalm 93:1. Yet another stated that clouds and darkness are around and a fire goes before Him in Psalm 97:1-3. Psalm 99:1 tells of Jehovah sitting between the cherubim. Still another psalmist said,

Bless Jehovah, O my soul! Jehovah my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with majesty and splendour; Covering thyself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent-curtain; -- Who layeth the beams of his upper chambers in the waters, who maketh clouds his chariot, who walketh upon the wings of the wind; Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flame of fire (Psalm 104:1-4 DBY).

The Angel of Jehovah Appears to David

One day Satan tempted David to take a census of the children of Israel. He did this against the advice of Joab, his military commander. It also displeased God and He attacked Israel. David then came to realize he had sinned against God and he asked God to take away his sin (I Chronicles 21:1-8 DBY). Jehovah, in judging David's sin, offered him three options: seven years of famine, three months of the sword of their enemies, or three days of the sword of Jehovah. David chose the sword of Jehovah as the judgment would be in God's hand (I Chronicles 21:9-13 DBY). God sent a pestilence and seventy thousand died (I Chronicles 21:14 DBY). Finally, the Angel of Jehovah stretched His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it and then God relented.

*And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; and as he was destroying, Jehovah beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough; withdraw now thine hand. And **the angel of Jehovah** stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And **David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Jehovah stand between the earth and the heavens, and his sword drawn in his hand**, stretched out over Jerusalem. And David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. And David said to God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? It is I that have sinned and done evil; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, Jehovah my God, be on me and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be smitten. And **the angel of Jehovah commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and rear an altar to Jehovah in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite ...** (I Chronicles 21:15-18 DBY, emphasis added).*

David saw the Angel of Jehovah with a sword in His hand, very similar to what Joshua saw in the Captain of Jehovah's army, outside of Jericho centuries earlier. This time the Angel is shown in judgment rather than in war. It would seem that the Angel of Jehovah is again a visual manifestation of Jehovah as He was in the burning bush to Moses.

David went up to Ornan, negotiated a purchase of the threshing floor, built an altar and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to Jehovah, and called upon Jehovah. God answered him from the heavens by fire upon the altar and then told the Angel to put away his sword in its sheath (I Chronicles 21:26-27 DBY). After David saw that Jehovah answered him at the threshing floor he sacrificed there (I Chronicles 21:28 DBY). The threshing floor of Ornan, where David built an altar to Jehovah, became known as “the temple mount” on the north side of the city of Jerusalem. This became the site of the temple built by Solomon. The Scriptures record,

And David said, This is the house of Jehovah Elohim, and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel. And David commanded to collect the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God (I Chronicles 22:1-2 DBY).

As David was preparing materials for the temple he said,

... Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be built for Jehovah must be exceeding great in fame and in beauty in all lands: I will therefore make preparation for it. And David prepared abundantly before his death (I Chronicles 22:5 DBY).

David called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build a house for Jehovah the God of Israel (I Chronicles 22:6 DBY). After the death of David, his son Solomon became the king of Israel. Soon he began to build the temple.

And Solomon began to build the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem on mount Moriah, where he appeared to David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And he began to build on the second of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign (II Chronicles 3:1-2 DBY, emphasis added).

The threshing floor or temple mount is now identified as Mount Moriah. The Scripture above also affirms that Jehovah appeared to David there.

God Appears to Solomon

God appeared to Solomon two times. The first time was at the high place at Gibeon, the site of the tabernacle which Moses had made. Solomon went there soon after he became king and offered a thousand sacrifices on the brazen altar before Jehovah (II Chronicles 1:1-6 DBY). Soon after the sacrifices God appeared to him.

In that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said to God, Thou hast shewn unto David my father great loving-kindness, and hast made me king in his stead. Now, Jehovah Elohim, let thy word unto David my father be firm; for thou hast

made me king over a people numerous as the dust of the earth. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy great people? (II Chronicles 1:7-10 DBY, emphasis added).

This was the first appearance of God to Solomon. There is no visual description of God. Later, when Solomon had completed the temple of God and the ark of the covenant was placed in the oracle, or holy of holies, the children of Israel began to praise Jehovah. As they praised God, the glory of Jehovah was seen again by the people for the first time in hundreds of years.

*And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place (for all the priests that were present were hallowed without observing the courses; and the Levites the singers, all they of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, clad in byssus, with cymbals and lutes and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets), --it came to pass when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one voice to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah; and when they lifted up their voice with trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised Jehovah: For he is good, for his loving-kindness endureth for ever; that then the house, **the house of Jehovah, was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not stand to do their service because of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of God** (II Chronicles 5:11-14 DBY, emphasis added).*

Once again a visual manifestation of the glory of God was seen in Israel. It is not clear when the cloud of glory had ceased to be seen in the tabernacle of Moses. It may have been when the ark was taken, followed by the death of Eli when his daughter-in law named her child "Ichabod" saying "the glory is departed from Israel" (I Samuel 4:19-22 DBY). Solomon prayed a long prayer to God for Israel at the dedication of the completed temple. After Solomon had finished praying the glory of God came again and filled the house.

*And when Solomon had ended praying, the **fire came down from the heavens and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Jehovah filled the house.** And the priests could not enter into the house of Jehovah, because **the glory of Jehovah filled Jehovah's house.** And **all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of Jehovah upon the house, and bowed themselves with their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshipped and thanked Jehovah: For he is good, for his loving-kindness endureth for ever** (II Chronicles 7:1-3 DBY, emphasis added).*

After the glory of Jehovah appeared in the temple, God appeared to Solomon a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon (I Kings 9:1-12, II Chronicles 7:12 DBY). This time God was responding to Solomon's prayer.

*Then **Jehovah appeared to Solomon** by night, and said to him: I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen for myself this place for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up the heavens that there be no*

rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; and my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from the heavens, and forgive their sin, and heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attentive to the prayer made in this place; for I have now chosen and hallowed this house, that my name may be there for ever; and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually (II Chronicles 7:12:-16 DBY, emphasis added).

When God appeared to Solomon the second time, He promised to answer his prayer saying that He had chosen the place of the temple as the place for sacrifice and that He would be attentive to prayer made there. Then God directed Solomon concerning his walk before Him, that he should walk as his father King David had walked (II Chronicles 7:17-22 DBY).

The tragedy is that Solomon became unfaithful to God. Solomon had many wives and his wives turned away his heart. Solomon did evil in the sight of Jehovah and did not follow Him fully. He built high places to worship other gods and sacrificed to them (I Kings 11:1-8 DBY). Solomon greatly angered Jehovah God.

And Jehovah was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from Jehovah the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, not to go after other gods; but he kept not what Jehovah had commanded. And Jehovah said to Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done by thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I commanded thee, I will certainly rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant: notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; I will rend it out of the hand of thy son; only, I will not rend away all the kingdom: I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen (I Kings 11:9-13 DBY, emphases added).

After Solomon died the kingdom became divided (I Kings 12:1-20 DBY). The northern ten tribes became the kingdom of Israel and the southern two tribes became the kingdom of Judah. During the kingdom period God raised up prophets, beginning with Samuel and including Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Elijah and the Fire of Jehovah

Elijah saw the fire of Jehovah on Mount Carmel when he challenged the prophets of Baal during the reign of Ahab (I Kings 18:17-39 DBY). The significance of this event is that God often manifests Himself in fire. The fire of Jehovah indicates the presence of God. During the confrontation Elijah drew near to all of the people and said,

... How long do ye halt between two opinions? if Jehovah be God, follow him; and if Baal, follow him. And the people answered him not a word. And Elijah said to the people, I, only I, remain a

prophet of Jehovah; and Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks: and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and put it on the wood, and put no fire; and I will sacrifice the other bullock, and put it on the wood, and put no fire. And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of Jehovah; and the god that answers by fire, let him be God ... (I Kings 18:21-24 DBY, emphasis added).

The prophets of Baal prepared their sacrifice and called on their god all day with no answer (I Kings 18:25-29 DBY). Then Elijah built an altar in the name of Jehovah, prepared the sacrifice, made a ditch around it, and drenched it with water (I Kings 18:30-36 DBY). Then Elijah called upon Jehovah.

*And it came to pass at the time of the offering up of the oblation, that Elijah the prophet drew near, and said, Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things by thy word. Answer me, Jehovah, answer me, that this people may know that thou Jehovah art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. And **the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And all the people saw it, and they fell on their faces and said, Jehovah, he is God! Jehovah, he is God!** (I Kings 18:36-39 DBY, emphasis added).*

Elijah encountered Jehovah later at Mount Sinai. When his ministry was over Elijah did not die but was taken up to heaven. It came to pass that Jehovah planned to “take up Elijah into the heavens by a whirlwind” (II Kings 2:1 DBY). On that day as Elijah talked with Elisha,

... behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire; and they parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the heavens (II Kings 2:11 DBY).

Evidently there are horses and chariots of fire in heaven. Years later the prophet Elisha and his servant were surrounded by an army. Elisha assured his servant that there were more with them than with the enemy. He then prayed to Jehovah that his servant might have his eyes opened. Jehovah opened the servant’s eyes and he saw, “the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (II Kings 6:12-17 DBY, emphasis added). Truly, Jehovah is a God of fire and His creatures in heaven are of fire.

“I Saw the Lord”

Isaiah was a prophet who lived during the latter half of the kingdom years. Both kingdoms, Israel and Judah were becoming increasingly wicked and corrupt before God. It appears that Isaiah began to prophesy during the reigns of King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam II of Israel. His prophetic ministry continued through the fall of the

northern kingdom of Israel, throughout the time of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and his son Manasseh. Early in his book Isaiah writes about his vision of the Lord.

*In the year of the death of king Uzziah, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him: each had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he flew. And one called to the other and said, **Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!** And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke (Isaiah 6:1-4, DBY, emphasis added).*

Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne. The first mention of seeing the Lord sitting on His throne was made by the prophet Micaiah during the reign of Ahab. He mentioned the host of heaven standing on His right and left sides (I Kings 22:19 DBY). The throne of God in heaven is also referred to by David in various places in the Psalms.

Isaiah's vision was one of a glorious heavenly scene, the first of a number of progressive visions to be seen by later prophets. The Lord is in a temple, high and lifted up and the throne on which He is seated is very, very high and awesome. Glorious six-winged creatures called seraphim are standing above the throne. This is the only place these creatures are named "Seraphim" in the Scriptures, but they seem to be similar to the creatures before the throne of God in the book of Revelation. There they are more fully described (Revelation 4:6-8). Seraphim evidently dwell in the presence of God. They appear to be totally occupied with, and enraptured by, the holiness of God and the worship of Him. The seraphim shield their faces with two wings and cover their feet with two other wings in the presence of the most holy and glorious God. They call to one another saying "Holy, holy, holy" and speak of the whole earth as full of God's glory. Cherubim, four-winged creatures, have been mentioned earlier as also dwelling in the presence of God, and of transporting Him from place to place.

In the scene before Isaiah, the voices of the seraphim shook the foundations of the threshold. The glory of God filled the temple or house with smoke. Isaiah was terrified and said,

*... Woe unto me! for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for **mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.** And one of the seraphim flew unto me, and he had in his hand a glowing coal, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he made it touch my mouth, and said, Behold, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin expiated (Isaiah 6:5-7 DBY, emphasis added).*

Isaiah realized his sin in the presence of a holy God. He was certain he would die. There was, however, a seraph who flew to Isaiah with a live coal from an altar by the throne. He touched Isaiah's mouth and his iniquity was taken away and his sin was purged. The

presence of an altar in heaven and of the provision for purging of sin is a totally new revelation. This revelation is a prelude to the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins. We cannot enter into the presence of a holy God except through Christ and having been cleansed by Christ's precious blood (John 14:6, I Peter 1:18-22, I John 1:7).

After having had his sins purged Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord and responded to Him. Isaiah is then given a rather strange message for the people.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? And I said, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go; and thou shalt say unto this people, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and healed (Isaiah 6:8-13 DBY).

The apostle John, in his gospel account, made reference to the above verses in Isaiah after writing about the teaching by Jesus. In His teaching Jesus had said,

A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light (John 12:35-36).

John continued by writing that although Jesus had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled (John 12:37-38). John went on by quoting Isaiah.

Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them" (John 12:38-40)

The people were responding to the message as Isaiah had prophesied. John concluded by saying, "**These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him**" (John 12:41, emphasis added). This statement has led some Bible scholars to conclude that Isaiah, in chapter six of his book, saw the glory of Christ. Isaiah, although he was a Messianic prophet, did not seem to be speaking of Christ in the context of that chapter. It seems more likely that Isaiah was seeing the glory of God the Father when he said, "I saw the Lord." Someday we will know.

Habakkuk's Vision of God

Habakkuk prophesied during the last days of Judah before the fall of Jerusalem. One day as he was praying for revival and mercy he saw a glorious vision of God.

*God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah **His glory covered he heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand,** And there His power was hidden. Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet. He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; The curtains of the land of Midian trembled (Habakkuk 3:3-7, emphasis added).*

Habakkuk asked God if He was displeased and angry with the rivers and was His wrath against the sea as he saw God riding on His horses and chariots of salvation.

*Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah You divided the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You and trembled; The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, And lifted its hands on high. **The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear.** You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah You thrust through with his own arrows The head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret. You walked through the sea with Your horses, Through the heap of great waters (Habakkuk 3:9-15 emphasis added).*

The glorious vision of God in His brightness and with rays flashing from His hand, and the things that he heard caused Habakkuk's body to tremble. His lips quivered at the voice and rottenness entered his bones (Habakkuk 3:16). Habakkuk reacted much as Isaiah did when he saw the Lord. In view of such holiness and glory, he felt deep rottenness, much as Isaiah did when he saw the Lord (Isaiah 6:5). What a gracious God and what a glorious sight awaits the saints when they enter glory!

... *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him: each had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he flew. And one called to the other and said, **Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!** And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, **Woe unto me! for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts** (Isaiah 6:1-5 DBY emphasis added).*

10

I Saw Visions of God

Ezekiel 1:1

The kingdom years were nearly over. The northern kingdom of Israel and Samaria had been conquered by Assyria. Over a hundred years had passed and the southern kingdom of Judah was about to be conquered by Babylon. Jerusalem was soon to be destroyed and the temple burned, and the Jews were about to enter into seventy years of Babylonian captivity. Nearly nine hundred years earlier, following the exodus from Egypt, God warned the children of Israel that if they became unfaithful to Him and worshiped other gods he would let other nations conquer them and take them into captivity (Deuteronomy 28:1-69 DBY). Those hundreds of years demonstrate the patience and faithfulness of God. God had also promised the children of Israel that if, in their captivity, they returned in obedience to Him, He would gather them again from the places of their captivity (Deuteronomy 30:1-3 DBY).

Ezekiel, a priest and prophet, prophesied before and during the Babylonian captivity. He was carried away captive eleven years before Jerusalem fell. His prophecies were to the Israelites in order to bring them back to God, and to remember that Jehovah alone was God. Over sixty times, scattered throughout the book, the statement is made, “They shall know that I am God” or “they shall know that I am Jehovah.” Ezekiel’s early prophecies centered on the destruction of Jerusalem, but much of his later prophecy was about the future glory of Israel.

During his years as a prophet Ezekiel saw nine visions of God. His first vision of God was far more glorious than any vision of God described previously in the Bible. Ezekiel’s visions illustrate the ever expanding and progressive visions of God in the Scriptures.

Ezekiel’s First Vision of God: A Form of Fire

Ezekiel’s first vision of God was by the river Chebar, a tributary of the Euphrates, north of Babylon. Ezekiel’s description of his first vision was very lengthy. He began with what he saw that day.

*Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and **I saw visions of God** (Ezekiel 1:1 DBY, emphasis added).*

This is the first vision of God recorded in the Scriptures in which the heavens were opened. David and Isaiah spoke of God’s throne in heaven and Isaiah saw Him on His throne, but most of the appearances of God were on earth. Ezekiel continued describing what he saw.

*And I looked, and **behold, a stormy wind** came out of the north, **a great cloud, and a fire** infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the look of glowing brass, out of the midst of the fire (Ezekiel 1:4 DBY, emphasis added).*

Ezekiel saw a stormy wind, like a whirlwind, coming out of the north in the form of a huge cloud with fire turning and twisting within it and engulfing itself. The brightness around it was radiating like glowing brass in a fire. It probably blazed forth with greater brightness than the sun in the heavens. The sight may have been similar to that which the children of Israel saw on their way to Mount Sinai. Within the twisting fiery cloud Ezekiel saw four living creatures.

... Also out of the midst thereof, the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled as the look of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings: their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. And the likeness of their faces was the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle. And their faces and their wings were parted above; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies (Ezekiel 1:5-11 DBY).

The four living creatures in the cloud of fire were cherubim (Ezekiel 10:1-20 DBY). They appeared somewhat like men, but each of them had four faces and four wings. The cherubim were similar in description to the seraphim in Isaiah's vision of God (Isaiah 6:2-3) and the creatures which John saw in the book of Revelation (Revelation 4:6-8). Seraphim differ from cherubim in that they have six wings instead of four. The cherubim in Ezekiel's vision were traveling. They moved in a very unique manner, straight forward, with their wings joined together, led by the Spirit.

And they went every one straight forward: whither the Spirit was to go, they went; they turned not when they went. And as for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, as the appearance of torches: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning (Ezekiel 1:12-14 DBY).

The living creatures were like fiery torches, with the fire racing up and down among them and flashing lightning. They ran back and forth like lightning, not really turning, but more gyroscopic in their movement. The creatures were led by the Spirit. Beside each of the creatures there were gigantic wheels, with wheels within the middle of the wheels.

And I looked at the living creatures, and behold, one wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, toward their four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was as the look of a chrysolite; and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not when they went. As for their rims, they were high and dreadful; and they four had their rims full of eyes round about. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went, thither would their spirit go; and the wheels were lifted up along with them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, they went; and when those stood, they stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up along with them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels (Ezekiel 1:15-21 DBY).

The wheels accompanied the cherubim as they went. The rims of the wheels were full of eyes. The spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. Wheels are also mentioned in Daniel's vision of God as the "fiery wheels of His throne" (Daniel 7:9). The eyes and the spirit may relate to the seven Spirits and the seven creatures full of eyes described by John in the book of Revelation (Revelation 4:5-6). A most astonishing and glorious scene was seen by Ezekiel over the heads of the living creatures,

*And there was **the likeness of an expanse over the heads of the living creature**, as the look of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And under the expanse were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two which covered on this side, and every one had two which covered on that side their bodies. And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, **like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty**, a tumultuous noise, as the noise of a host: when they stood, they let down their wings; and there was **a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads**. When they stood, they let down their wings (Ezekiel 1:22-25 DBY, emphasis added).*

Above the cherubim, over their wings, and held up by their wings, there appeared an expanse, as a vast crystal space. John describes a crystal sea of glass before the throne of God in the book of Revelation (Revelation 4:6). The cherubim are traveling, their wings creating a tumultuous noise, like the voice of God and the multitudes of heaven. A voice was heard over the heads of the cherubim. On the expanse above the cherubim was a throne.

*And above the expanse that was over their heads was **the likeness of a throne**, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was **a likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it**. And I saw as the look of glowing brass, as the appearance of fire, within it round about; from the appearance of his loins and upward, and from the appearance of his loins and downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the*

brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah (Ezekiel 1:26-28 DBY, emphasis added).

Over the vast crystal space above the cherubim Ezekiel saw a throne, like sapphire. Sapphire is a beautiful, transparent, blue stone. Ezekiel saw the likeness of a man upon the throne. Fire emanated from Him like glowing brass and there was brightness all around Him. The One on the throne was like a man except that His form appeared to be like fire, from His waist downward and from His waist upward. He was like a man of fire. All around Him there appeared glowing brightness like a rainbow in the clouds. Ezekiel saw the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah God! He fell on his face in worship.

The likeness of the glory of God had the likeness of the form of a man of fire. This is the first description of God in the Bible manifesting something far greater than the likeness of the form of a man. Abraham was the first to see God in the form of a man (Genesis 18:1-16 DBY). Jacob wrestled with God, who was in the form of a man (Genesis 32:20-30 DBY). The Captain of Jehovah's Army (Joshua 5:13-15 DBY), and the angels of Jehovah appeared in the form of a man (Judges 6:11-22 DBY). Since man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), it should not be surprising that God has a form like that of man. God, however, is not flesh. He is Spirit (John 5:24). This does not mean, however, that he has no form. His form is simply not physical. The essence or composition and appearance of His form is evidently fire, or like fire. The Scripture does not use the term "body" in reference to God but it does refer to a spiritual body (I Corinthians 15:44).

Ezekiel saw a glorious vision of God! Cherubim were carrying God on His throne. David described a similar scene in the Psalms when he said, "He rode upon a cherub and flew upon the wings of the wind" (Psalm 18:1-10). God also manifested Himself in fire in the burning bush to Moses (Exodus 3:1-6), and to the children of Israel in the pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21-22), and in His fire on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-18). The Scriptures speak of God as a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29). Ezekiel also saw a glowing brightness like a rainbow around the One on the throne. John, in his vision in the book of Revelation, saw an emerald bow around the throne of God (Revelation 4:3). God emanates beauty and glory far exceeding that of a rainbow in the clouds.

Ezekiel's vision is a continuation of the expanding revelation of the visual glory of God in the Scriptures. There is no mention of him seeing the face of God. Moses did not see the face of God for God told him that no man could see His face and live (Exodus 33:20 DBY). Jesus Christ, God's Son and the angels are the only ones, according to the Scriptures, who have actually seen the face of God (John 6:46, Matthew 18:10). Ezekiel's vision of God does not in any way diminish the visual glory of God. Some

might relegate his vision to symbolism, but there is no indication in the text that the vision is symbolic. Ezekiel's vision indicates, rather, a wondrous revelation of the visual glory of God.

May the children of God, as Ezekiel, be blessed by the vision and worship God for that which has been revealed in the Bible of His visual glory. What a wonderful, glorious vision of God! As believers we can anticipate seeing the visual glory of God when our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ brings us before Him (I Peter 3:18). We worship the God who so dignified man that He created him in His own image. Presently we are being changed (II Corinthians 3:18) and someday we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is (I John 3:1-2).

Ezekiel's Second Vision of God: In the Valley

After Ezekiel's first vision of God, a voice of One spoke to him, addressing him as "Son of man." Ezekiel was told by the voice to stand on his feet. The Spirit entered him and he was then told that he was being sent to the children of Israel to remind them of their rebellious ways and to let them know that a prophet was among them (Ezekiel 2:5). A hand gave Ezekiel a scroll to read and eat, and he was then told to go to the house of Israel and speak God's words to them (Ezekiel 2:9 to 3:1). He was also told that the people would not listen to him (Ezekiel 3:7). This was in preparation for Ezekiel's second vision of God.

Ezekiel's second vision of God began with a command of God to go to the children of Israel, and then of being lifted up by the Spirit.

*And he said unto me, Son of man, all my words which I shall speak unto thee, receive in thy heart, and hear with thine ears; and go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, --whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. And the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the sound of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from his place! --and the sound of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and the sound of a great rushing. And the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away; and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, and **the hand of Jehovah was strong upon me** (Ezekiel 3:10-14 DBY, emphasis added).*

Apparently Ezekiel was transported by the Spirit and the living creatures to the children of Israel who were captives at a place called Tel Abib by the River Chebar in Babylon (Ezekiel 3:14-15). Ezekiel was then instructed to go into a valley where God would talk to him. It was there that Ezekiel had his second vision of God.

*And the hand of Jehovah was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the valley, and there I will talk with thee. And I arose, and went forth into the valley, and **behold, the glory of Jehovah stood there, like the glory which I saw by the river Chebar**; and I fell on my face. And the Spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet; and he spoke with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thy house. And thou, son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee therewith, and thou shalt not go out among them. And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover; for they are a rebellious house. And when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house (Ezekiel 3:22-26 DBY, emphasis added).*

Ezekiel saw the glory of Jehovah standing in a valley. The glory was like that which he had seen in his first vision by the river Chebar. Ezekiel again fell on his face. After the Spirit entered him and set him on his feet Ezekiel was instructed about how God was going to use him to speak the word of God to the rebellious people. Ezekiel was told to warn the city of Jerusalem that a siege and sword would come against it in a judgment from God (Ezekiel 4:1-2, 5:1-17, 6:1-7 DBY). God told him to warn of the day of His wrath (Ezekiel 7:19 DBY) and that then “they shall know that I am Jehovah” (Ezekiel 7:27).

Ezekiel’s Third Vision of God: A Fiery Form in Jerusalem

The third vision of God appeared to Ezekiel as he sat in his house with the elders of Judah. The hand of Jehovah fell upon him. This time he saw a vision of a fiery form similar to what he saw in his first vision. During the vision Ezekiel was brought by the Spirit to Jerusalem.

*And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth of the month, that as I sat in my house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, **the hand of the Lord Jehovah fell there upon me**. And I looked, and **behold, a likeness as the appearance of fire; from the appearance of his loins and downward**, And he stretched forth the **form of a hand**, and took me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heavens, and brought me in the **visions of God to Jerusalem**, to the entry of the inner gate that looketh toward the north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. And **behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the appearance that I saw in the valley** (Ezekiel 8:1-4 DBY, emphasis added).*

The hand of Jehovah fell upon Ezekiel as he looked at the fiery form. Then the form of a hand stretched forth and took him by a lock of hair. The Spirit lifted up Ezekiel and brought him in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the inner north gate. Ezekiel now saw the appearance of the glory of God at the north gate of Jerusalem.

The God of Israel spoke to Ezekiel, telling him to look to the north at the image of jealousy. God spoke of the great abominations that Israel had committed there, causing Him to go from His sanctuary. Then God brought Ezekiel to the entry of the court and to the north entry of Jehovah's house where he was shown many abominations, idols, and worship of the sun (Ezekiel 8:5-16). As Ezekiel was shown these things, God was revealed as visually moving and leading Ezekiel as He was indicating His fury against the children of Israel.

Ezekiel's Fourth Vision of God: On the Temple Threshold

Ezekiel's fourth vision of God was preceded by a loud voice from God calling for battle. Six men appeared with weapons in their hands. Among them was one man clothed in linen with a writer's inkhorn at his side. The Scripture does not reveal who the "man in linen" is. He and the other men went in and stood by the bronze altar of the temple.

*And he cried in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Draw near, ye that have charge of the city, and every man [with] his destroying weapon in his hand. And behold, six men came from the way of the upper gate, which is turned toward the north, and every man [with] his slaughter weapon in his hand; and in the midst of them, one man clothed with linen, with a writer's ink-horn by his side; and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. And **the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon it was, to the threshold of the house**; and he called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's ink-horn by his side; and Jehovah said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof (Ezekiel 9:1-4 DBY, emphasis added).*

The glory of God had now gone up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple. God is envisioned as leaving His throne over the Cherubim and going up to the door of the temple. He is clearly in Jerusalem moving about the temple area and giving instructions to His servant, the man in linen (Ezekiel 9:5-7, and 11 DBY).

Ezekiel's Fifth Vision of God: Remounted on the Cherub

Ezekiel's fifth vision of God began with the appearance of the expanse over the cherubim and the likeness of a throne. The man in linen appeared again and was commanded to come in between the wheels under the cherub and fill his hands with coals of fire and scatter them over the city. Who was this "man" who is commanded to enter into the presence of the glory of God? Daniel also saw a vision of a man in linen who was very glorious (Daniel 10:5-6 DBY). He resembled the vision of Jesus Christ whom the apostle

John saw in a vision recorded in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:13-16). John also saw a vision of Jesus as the Lamb, approach the throne of God and take a scroll out of God's hand (Revelation 5:6-7). The "man in linen" could very well be Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, the cherubim stood on the right side of the temple and a cloud filled the inner court. The glory of Jehovah mounted up again from the cherub and came over the threshold of the temple as He did in the fourth vision of Ezekiel.

*And I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the head of the cherubim there appeared above them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And he spoke unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Come in between the wheels, under the cherub, and fill the hollow of thy hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight. And the cherubim stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court. And **the glory of Jehovah mounted up from the cherub, [and came] over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory** (Ezekiel 10:1-4 DBY, emphasis added).*

Ezekiel saw the man in linen go between the wheels of the cherubim as he was commanded. Then he saw God moving again from His throne and this time the temple was then filled with a cloud and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory. In the outer court of the temple Ezekiel heard the sound of the cherubim, like the voice of God.

And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh. And it came to pass when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubim, then he went in, and stood beside the wheel. And the cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim unto the fire that was between the cherubim, and took and put it into the hands of him [that was] clothed with linen; who took [it], and went out. And there appeared in the cherubim the form of a man's hand under their wings (Ezekiel 10:5-8 DBY).

The man in linen went in and stood beside the wheel. A cherub stretched forth his hand into the fire and put coals of fire into the man's hand. The man went out with the fire and, as he was told previously, scattered them over the city, indicating the coming judgment of God over Jerusalem. Ezekiel looked again and saw another vision of the cherubim and the wheels.

And I looked, and behold, four wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel beside one cherub, and another wheel beside another cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was as the look of a chrysolite stone. And as for their appearance, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel were in the midst of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it: they turned not as they went. And their

whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes round about, in them four [and] their wheels. As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, Galgal. (Wheel) And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. And the cherubim mounted up. This was the living creature that I saw by the river Chebar. And when the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them. When they stood, these stood; and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them: for the spirit of the living creature was in them (Ezekiel 10:9-17 DBY).

This vision of the wheels was like that which Ezekiel had seen in his first vision by the river Chebar. The cherubim were now mounted up, and with the wheels, were ready to depart. God was still on the threshold of the temple and was about to come again over the cherubim.

Ezekiel's Sixth Vision of God: At the East Gate

Ezekiel's sixth vision of God was again directed toward the threshold of the temple. He saw the glory of Jehovah depart from the threshold to stand over the cherubim again. The cherubim immediately lifted up their wings and went out to the east gate of the temple and the glory of God was over them there.

And the glory of Jehovah departed from over the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight, when they went out; and the wheels were beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of Jehovah's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were cherubim. Each one had four faces, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. And as for the likeness of their faces, they were the faces which I had seen by the river Chebar--their appearance and themselves: they went every one straight before them (Ezekiel 10:18-22 DBY, emphasis added).

Ezekiel saw the glory of God moving from place to place, sometimes from His throne over the cherubim and sometimes alighted and moving apart from them. Do we usually think of God staying seated on His throne? God is described as moving where He wills to go to accomplish His purposes, working with His creatures and men of earth. In this instance He is personally revealing the impending destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel's Seventh Vision of God: Going up from the City

Ezekiel's seventh vision of God began as the Spirit lifted him up and brought him to the east gate of the house or temple of Jehovah. There he saw twenty-five men, including

princes of the people, who devised iniquity and gave wicked counsel in the city of Jerusalem. Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy against them. They were told that Jehovah said that they would be slain by the sword. God said that they shall know that “I am Jehovah.”

And the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of Jehovah's house, which looketh eastward; and behold, at the door of the gate were five and twenty men; and I saw in the midst of them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. And he said unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise iniquity, and give wicked counsel in this city: who say, It is not the time to build houses: this is the cauldron, and we are the flesh. Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man. And the Spirit of Jehovah fell on me, and said unto me, Speak, Thus saith Jehovah: Thus have ye said, O house of Israel; and the things that come into your mind, I know them. Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and it is the cauldron; but you will I bring forth out of the midst of it. Ye have feared the sword, and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will bring you out of the midst of it, and give you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the borders of Israel; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah (Ezekiel 11:1-10 DBY, emphasis added).

Immediately after Ezekiel prophesied, Pelatiah, one of the princes died. Ezekiel then prayed for the remnant of Israel. The word of Jehovah came to him and reminded him of how the whole of Israel had departed from Jehovah and the reason He had scattered them among the nations.

When Jehovah had finished speaking to Ezekiel, he saw the glory of God over the cherubim again. The cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels, and the glory of God went up from the city.

And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and the wheels were beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of Jehovah went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city. And the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity; and the vision that I had seen went up from me. And I spoke unto them of the captivity all the things that Jehovah had shewn me (Ezekiel 11:22-25 DBY, emphasis added).

The glory of Jehovah went up from the city of Jerusalem and stood upon the mountain that is east of the city. This would most likely be the Mount of Olives, the mountain from which Jesus Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:6-12). This is also the mountain on which Christ will appear when He returns someday (Zechariah 14:3-4). After seeing this seventh vision of God, the Spirit lifted up Ezekiel and brought him by the Spirit of God

back to Chaldea. He told the Israelites in captivity all the things that Jehovah had shown him.

Ezekiel's Eighth Vision of God: Coming from the East

Several years passed between Ezekiel's seventh vision of God and his eighth. His seventh vision of God ended with the glory of God on the mountain to the east of Jerusalem. He was then brought by the Spirit of God back to Chaldea and the captives. During that period the word of Jehovah came to him many times saying to prophesy against the kingdom of Judah, continually warning of judgment. Ultimately, Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple burned, and the children of Judah went into captivity in Babylon. The word of Jehovah also instructed Ezekiel to prophesy against many of the nations around Israel, and judgment to come. Many of these prophecies were in regard to the end times and the restoration of Israel.

In the twenty-fifth year of the captivity and in the fourteenth year after Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed, the hand of Jehovah was again upon Ezekiel (Ezekiel 40:1 DBY). He brought him in visions of God into the land of Israel and set him upon a very high mountain. Toward the south was the appearance of a city (Ezekiel 40:1-2 DBY). Jehovah took Ezekiel to the city and there he saw a man with the appearance of brass or bronze, standing in the gate.

And he brought me thither, and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a flax-cord in his hand, and a measuring-reed; and he stood in the gate. And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thy heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for in order that it might be shewn unto thee art thou brought hither. Declare to the house of Israel all that thou seest (Ezekiel 40:3-4. DBY).

The bronze-like man with the flax-cord and measuring rod instructed Ezekiel to look and to hear what he was about to be shown. The Scriptures do not reveal who the bronze-like man was. He was quite possibly an angel. It appears that he was measuring a temple in Jerusalem and a place for sacrifice (Ezekiel 40 through 42). The temple as described by Ezekiel has never been built. It does not fit the description of the temple rebuilt in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, nor is it like the temple of Herod in the time of Christ. It seems to remain in the future. Some Bible scholars have thought it might be the millennial temple which will evidently exist on the earth during the thousand year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:4-6). The detailed instructions concerning this temple indicate that God was revealing to Ezekiel a future glorious temple in Jerusalem where He would dwell among His people.

After these revelations Ezekiel was led by the man with the measuring rod to the east gate of Jerusalem. There he saw his eighth vision of the glory of God, coming from the east toward the city (Ezekiel 43:1-2 DBY). Ezekiel heard His voice and saw His glory lighting the earth.

*And he brought me unto the gate, the gate which looked toward the east. And **behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and his voice was like the voice of many waters; and the earth was lit up with his glory.** And the appearance of the vision that I saw was according to the vision that I had seen when I came to destroy the city; and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar: and I fell upon my face. And **the glory of Jehovah came into the house by the way of the gate whose front was toward the east.** And the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and **behold, the glory of Jehovah filled the house.** And I heard one speaking unto me out of the house; and **a man was standing by me.** And he said unto me, **Son of man, [this is] the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever; and the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, they nor their kings, with their fornication, and with the carcasses of their kings [in] their high places** (Ezekiel 43:1-7 DBY, emphasis added).*

Ezekiel's eighth vision of the glory of God was like that which he had seen at the river Chebar in his first vision. Once again he saw the glory of God as a man-like person in the form of fire, sitting on a throne over cherubim. This time the glory of God was moving from the east toward Jerusalem. His voice was heard, like the sound of many waters and His glory lit up the earth. The glory of God came in by way of the east gate. He entered the temple and His glory filled the temple. The Spirit lifted Ezekiel up and brought him into the inner court. He heard someone speaking to him and a man stood by Ezekiel. The man appeared to be the bronze-like man, or angel, with the measuring rod. Ezekiel heard a voice that said this is the place of his throne. The voice also said that he would dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. Ezekiel was then brought back to the east gate of the temple. It was shut. Jehovah said to him,

*This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter in by it: for **Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it; and it shall be shut.** As for **the prince, he, the prince, shall sit in it to eat bread before Jehovah: he shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go out by the way of the same** (Ezekiel 44:2-3 DBY, emphasis added).*

The eastern gate to the temple was shut in Ezekiel's vision. In the future, the prince will sit in it and eat bread before Jehovah. Who is the prince? There are many references to the prince in God's words to Ezekiel. Earlier, God had told Ezekiel to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel because they did not feed His flock (Ezekiel 34:1-10 DBY). God then promised of a future time when He would search out His sheep and set up one shepherd over them, His servant David, a prince in their midst (Ezekiel 34:11-24). Could

the prince sitting in the gate be King David of old, or does it refer to Jesus Christ as the Son of David?

Today, the eastern gate to the old city of Jerusalem and the temple mount, known as the Golden Gate, is sealed up with stones. It was blocked up sometime after the Crusaders were driven out of Jerusalem by the Muslims. Some Bible scholars have speculated that it was closed to keep the Messiah from entering it. In considering the words of Jehovah relative to the eastern gate being shut, until the time when the prince sits in it, God may have been referring to Messiah the Prince described in the book of Daniel (Daniel 9:25). If this is so, the eastern gate has been kept closed by God, awaiting the second coming of Christ.

Ezekiel's Ninth Vision of God: In the Temple

Ezekiel was brought to the north gate of the temple after seeing the vision at the east gate. There he saw his ninth and last vision of the glory of Jehovah.

And he brought me the way of the north gate before the house; and I beheld, and lo, the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah: and I fell upon my face. And Jehovah said unto me, Son of man, apply thy heart, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the statutes of the house of Jehovah, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary; and say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Let it suffice you of all your abominations, O house of Israel, in that ye have brought strangers, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to profane it, even my house, when ye offered my bread, the fat and the blood; and they have broken my covenant besides all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of my holy things, but have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: No stranger, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel (Ezekiel 44:4-9 DBY, emphasis added).

The glory of Jehovah in this vision filled His temple and Ezekiel fell on his face in worship. God expressed His concern for the holiness of His house and that only His people could enter it. God also foretold of the presence of the prince (Ezekiel 45:1-17 DBY). He does not reveal who the prince is, but it may be a prophecy concerning the presence of His Son, Jesus Christ. One truth is clear, that the glory of Jehovah will be there.

The Glory of God in the Temple and in the City

Ezekiel's vision was of the glory of God coming into the temple in Jerusalem. This seems to refer to God the Father but it could refer to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in His glory, entering into the temple at His second coming. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of Himself as coming in great glory (Luke 21:27). He described His coming as lightning from the east flashing to the west (Matthew 24:27). Zechariah prophesied that He would stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:3-4). Jesus said that the people would see Him sitting at the right hand of Power (God) and coming in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 26:64).

Will God come into the temple at Jerusalem in a coming day? There are many references in the Scriptures that indicate that He will. God has said repeatedly that He would dwell with His people Israel (Exodus 25:8, Exodus 29:45-46, I Kings 6:13, Psalm 132:14). That was the purpose of the tabernacle and the temple. It seems quite probable that both the Father and the Son will come into the temple and make their throne there. It can be assumed that the Father and the Son are always together now. The Lord Jesus serves as God's king (Psalm 2) and He serves as our great high priest (Hebrews 8:1). He will serve as a king and priest upon His throne.

Will the glory of God fill the temple during the millennial period as in the tabernacle and Solomon's temple? Will the Father dwell with His Son in the new temple at Jerusalem? It would appear so from the last chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel. God spoke of the temple as His sanctuary and described the ministry. He spoke of the Prince entering by the east gate. The Prince came into the midst of the people and made offerings to Jehovah (Ezekiel 44 through 46). The Prince appears to be the Lord Jesus Christ, making offerings as our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14).

The city is described in great detail as to its divisions and the location of its gates. The gates are named after the various tribes of Israel. A special possession in the midst of the city shall be for the Prince. The name of the city from that day will be, "**Jehovah is there**" (Ezekiel 48:1-35 DBY). Since the presence of God will be there, and since Jesus said that the pure in heart will see God, the Father and the Son will evidently be visible to those who have been purified in their hearts and belong to Him.

Ezekiel's Visions of God

Why was Ezekiel given so many visions of God? God's visual glory was seen by Ezekiel as a climax of the ever expanding visions of God seen previously by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Minoah, David, Solomon, and Isaiah. Ezekiel saw a vision of God as a man of fiery form, sitting on a throne above gigantic cherubim, flashing lightning and surrounded by a beautiful rainbow. He heard the voice of God, like

the sound of great waters. He saw God moving from Chaldea to Jerusalem. He saw Him at times alighting from His throne and then remounting it. He saw God standing in a valley. He saw Him again in Jerusalem going up from the cherubim to the threshold of the temple. He saw the glory of God fill the temple. Then he saw the glory of God go up from the midst of Jerusalem and stand on the mountain east of the city. Ezekiel saw the glory of God come from the east and light the whole earth, and then enter the city and temple, filling the temple with His glory. Finally Ezekiel saw the glory of God and the Prince. The Prince, although there are some puzzling concerns about Him and His offerings, may be the Lord Jesus Christ.

The vivid and intensive glory of the visions of God seen by Ezekiel continued over a relatively long period of time. They were far more extensive and glorious than any previous vision of God in the Scriptures. It was the will of God from the beginning to dwell among the people He created. He provided redemption through Jesus Christ for their sins so that they might be forgiven and become His children. All people, and particularly the children of Israel, have rebelled against Him and do not believe in Him, regardless of the various ways in which He revealed Himself to them. Ezekiel needed to be certain that Jehovah was God, and each vision revealed His splendor and majesty. Ezekiel shared his visions with the children of Israel so that they too might believe and be assured that Jehovah was God. Believing in God and having purity before Him was required if He was to live among His people. His people needed to realize that Jehovah God is holy, awesome, and terrifying, yet also loving and forgiving. His people need to be prepared to meet this awesome, holy God. Visions of Jehovah, like Ezekiel's, open the minds and hearts of His people for this purpose.

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart –
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought, by day or by night –
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word –
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son –
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise –
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart –
High King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Irish Hymn
Hymns of Truth and Praise #431

11

I Beheld the Ancient of Days

Daniel 7:9

Jerusalem fell as the prophet Ezekiel had warned. The children of Judah were taken captive to Babylon and seventy years of captivity began. Ezekiel himself had been taken captive before the fall of Jerusalem. His prophecies were not only a warning to the Jews because of their unfaithfulness, but promised a gathering again of Israel, and a glorious future for Israel in the end times. Daniel was also a captive in Babylon. His prophecies were centered on the nations of that time, of Babylon and Media Persia, and of future

nations that would arise, until the coming of the Messiah, and the end times in the history of the world.

Daniel was a youth when he was taken captive and was much younger than Ezekiel. It is possible that they may have known each other. Daniel became prominent in the governments of two world powers. He rose to fame when God gave to him the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:1-45). Later he gave the king another interpretation of a dream (Daniel 4:1-27). Daniel's service continued on to King Cyrus of Persia (Daniel 1:21).

Daniel saw a vision of God that exceeded the visions of Ezekiel. He was the last prophet recorded in the Old Testament to have such a visual revelation of God. It was said of Daniel, after he had prayed to God, that Gabriel, an angel was sent to give him an answer because he was greatly beloved (Daniel 9:22-23).

During the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions in his head (Daniel 7:1). As the dream continued Daniel saw a vision of God the Father on a throne and His Son Jesus Christ coming to Him in the clouds as the Son of Man (Daniel 7:9-14). This is the first vision in the Bible of the Father and Son together. It continues to reveal the expanding vision of God in the Scriptures, showing more and more of His glorious visual appearance and the future kingdom of His Son.

The Visions of Daniel

God gave Daniel many visions, the first of which enabled him to interpret the dreams and visions of two kings of Babylon. He also had a series of visions of beasts, sequenced to reveal a panoramic view of the rise and fall of future world kingdoms or nations. He saw a winged lion, a bear, a winged leopard, and an iron beast. Later he had a vision of a ram and a goat. The winged lion is obviously Babylon, as seen in archeological forms representing that nation. Daniel lived to see the second kingdom, Persia or Media Persia. History has revealed that the various beasts represent Greece, Rome, and Western Civilization. All of Daniel's visions of beasts culminate in the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ. The predictions of Daniel are so accurate that Bible critics have concluded that the prophecy had to be written at a much later date. They fail to take into account that Daniel wrote as a prophet of God.

Why are the kingdoms represented as beasts? All of them were despotic, cruel, and alien to God and to His purposes. Nevertheless, God rules over the kingdom of men (Daniel 4:25, 32). In a coming day the Lord Jesus Christ will war against rebellious nations and reign over this world as KING OF KINGS and LORD of LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

Daniel's Vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man

During the reign of Belshazzar, a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel had a dream and saw visions in his head while in bed. In his visions he saw four winds of heaven break forth upon the sea and four great beasts rise up out of the sea. Daniel continued to watch and then he “beheld ... the Ancient of Days” sitting on a throne, among other thrones (Daniel 7:9 DBY). Who was the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel’s vision? As the vision continued it was clear that He was God the Father, not Jesus Christ, for the Son of Man comes to the Ancient of Days, with the clouds, later in the vision. The Ancient of Days and His throne are gloriously described.

I beheld till thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was flames of fire, and its wheels burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened (Daniel 7:9-10 DBY, emphasis added).

As Daniel watched he saw the “Ancient of Days” or God the Father in his vision. The term “Ancient” means long existence from the beginning of things and also means venerable. His clothing is described as white as snow. Another Scripture states that He covers Himself with light as a garment (Psalm 104:1-2). The hair of His head is like pure wool. This is the first time in the Scriptures that God’s head and hair are described. Amazingly, or maybe not so amazingly, this description is very similar to the description of Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:12-18). This should be expected since Christ is described as the express image of God (II Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). God sat on His throne in visual splendor and glory, in flames of fire with its wheels and streams of fire. This is a reminder of Ezekiel’s vision of God (Ezekiel 1:1-28). The thousand thousands ministering to God and the ten thousand times ten thousand standing before Him are a prologue to John’s vision recorded in the book of Revelation (Revelation 4 and 5). Finally, Daniel saw that the judgment was set and the books open, as is also shown in the book of Revelation (Revelation 20:11-14).

Daniel saw a glorious vision of God the Father. The Scriptures unfold an ever more expanding vision of Him in His visual glory. Daniel saw another spectacular sight in his vision, the Son of Man coming to the Father. Before he saw this, however, his attention was drawn back to the beast with the little horn. He watched as the beast was slain and given up to be burned with fire. The dominion of the other beasts was also taken away but their lives were prolonged (Daniel 7:11-12). Then as the night visions continued, Daniel saw the Son of Man.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man, and he came up even to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14 DBY, emphasis added).

Daniel saw a vision of the Son of Man coming in clouds. He is coming to receive His everlasting kingdom from God the Father. The Son of Man can be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. John also saw a prophetic vision of Jesus Christ coming to the Father, but this was related to His coming to earth in great glory (Matthew 24:27, 26:64, Mark 13:26, 14:62; Luke 21:27; Revelation 1:7). Daniel saw a glorious vision of the Ancient of Days (God the Father) sitting on a throne, and the Son of Man (the Lord Jesus Christ) coming with the clouds of heaven to Him, to receive His everlasting kingdom. This is the first vision in the Bible of the Father and Son together.

After the vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man, the vision of the four beasts continued. Each of the beasts or kingdoms would rise and rule over the earth for a period unto the end times. The end times indicated war with the saints of God. In the end the Ancient of Days brought judgment in favor of the saints to possess the kingdom forever. The interpretation ends, obviously referring to Christ, "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Daniel 7:15-28 DBY).

Two years after his vision of the four beasts, and beholding the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man, Daniel saw a vision of a ram with two horns and a goat with a great horn (Daniel 8:1-9). The angel Gabriel came in the appearance of a man and gave Daniel the interpretation. The ram represented the rise of Persia and the goat represented Greece. Together the visions revealed Babylon, Persia and Greece. History reveals the notable horn on the goat as Alexander the Great. The four-winged leopard also represented Greece, as did the goat. The goat's great horn was broken and in its stead came four horns. The four in each vision indicate what history has recorded, that Alexander's kingdom was divided into four kingdoms by his generals after his death. These kingdoms were in conflict with each other until the rise of the fourth kingdom, which we now know to be Rome. The rise and fall of these kingdoms led up to the time of the "Prince of princes" (Daniel 8:15-27). It would appear that this was the period leading up to the time of Christ. The description of the fourth beast or kingdom of iron, and iron and clay, no doubt refers to the rise and fall of Rome and of the rise of western civilization and then the second coming of Christ.

Why did God reveal a vision of Himself as the Ancient of Days to Daniel? Daniel's glorious vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man coming with the clouds

appears in the center, after his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and before his visions of the beasts. The visions are intricately related to each other. God is revealed in a court scene as the judge of all of the kingdoms in the world. Daniel was given a panoramic picture of all of the kingdoms of time. Daniel had previously asserted to kings of Babylon that God rules over the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:25, 32; 5:21). Daniel saw a vision of the Ancient of Days, sitting on a throne, ruling over the nations and then ultimately placing all nations under the eternal dominion of His Son. Daniel evidently needed to know the certainty of the coming kingdom of God as he saw the rise and fall of nations on earth.

Why were the various visions of kingdoms given in a series of unfolding histories? Why were the visions cloaked in mystery? God has His own way of concealing and revealing truth so that as prophecies are fulfilled there comes a realization that God does indeed rule over all. Why did God reveal Himself with the Son of Man coming to Him in the clouds of heaven? It was revealed to Daniel so that he would know and prophesy that the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) would ultimately be given a kingdom that would rule over all.

Daniel's Vision of the Glorious Man

Daniel had other amazing visions concerning coming kingdoms, the coming of the Messiah (Christ), and the end times, although he did not have others of God the Father. The angel Gabriel revealed time periods to Daniel that history and Biblical scholarship have shown to be precise predictions as to the time of the coming of Christ and His crucifixion.

Some years later, during the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia, while Daniel was mourning and fasting, he saw a vision of a man clothed in linen. Daniel had been fasting for three weeks and was by the river Hiddekel, or Tigris, with some other men. The men with him did not see the vision but fear fell upon them and they fled and hid themselves (Daniel 10:1-7 DBY). The description of the man in linen was glorious, very much like the description of the Lord Jesus in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:13-15).

... I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, and his loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz; and his body was like a chrysolite, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as torches of fire, and his arms and his feet as the look of burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude (Daniel 10:5-6 DBY, emphasis added).

When Daniel saw this great vision his strength left him and he felt corrupt. He heard the voice of the man's words and fell into a deep stupor with his face to the ground. Then a

hand touched him, and set him upon his knees and the palms of his hands (Daniel 10:8-10 DBY). The man began to speak to Daniel.

... O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words which I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent. And as he spoke this word unto me, I stood trembling. And he said unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come because of thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. And I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people at the end of the days: for the vision is yet for many days (Daniel 10:11-14.DBY).

As the man was speaking Daniel fell on his face again and became dumb. Someone touched his lips and he was able to speak to the man (Daniel 10:15-16 DBY).

...My lord, by reason of the vision my pains are turned upon me, and I retain no strength. And how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remaineth no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me (Daniel 10:16-17 DBY).

Daniel's response indicated that he believed he was seeing and talking to the Lord. He fell on his face again, an indication of worship, and the man accepted his worship. The reaction of Daniel is like that of John in his vision of Christ in the first chapter of the book of Revelation. The touch and the assurances were also alike. Could the man in linen be Jesus Christ? It would certainly appear so. Daniel was told not to fear. The man in linen told him that he had come to declare unto him that which was set down in the Scripture of Truth (Daniel 10:21 DBY). As he talked to Daniel, he asserted that he would tell him the truth. He also spoke, as had been revealed to Daniel earlier, of the rise of kingdoms after the time of Daniel. These included Greece and its division into four smaller nations, in conflict with each other. Out of one of these nations a king would come who would not regard God, but would magnify himself above all (Daniel 11:1-36).

... the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished: for that which is determined shall be done. And he will not regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women; nor regard any god: for he will magnify himself above all. And in his place will he honour the god of fortresses; and a god whom his fathers knew not will he honour with gold and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things (Daniel 11:36-38 DBY).

This king appears to be the antichrist who will rule over the world from Jerusalem in the last days, before the second coming of Christ. Jesus Christ will destroy him at his

coming (II Thessalonians 2:8). The man in linen described his conflicts with kings of the south and north whom it seems he will overpower. He will enter into Israel and many other countries will be overthrown. Tidings from the east and north, however, shall ultimately trouble him (Daniel 11:40-44). Evidently this king would rule from Israel.

And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the mountain of holy beauty; and he shall come to his end, and there shall be none to help him (Daniel 11:45 DBY).

The man in linen continued revealing to Daniel end time occurrences including the tribulation period, and the resurrection. Then Daniel was told to shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end (Daniel 12:1-4). As Daniel continued to look, two others come and talked to the man in linen, asking the time of the fulfillment of these wonders. He saw the man clothed in linen, who was over the waters, hold up his right hand, and heard him swear by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times and half a time, when the power of the holy people shall be completely shattered. Then all things shall be finished (Daniel 12:5-8). Daniel said that he did not understand and was told again that the words were closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

The Purpose of Daniel's Visions

Daniel was given the task of interpreting the dreams of kings, which gave a time sequence of the rise and fall of nations of the world as it was related to his own panoramic visions of the future. Nebuchadnezzar's dreams served to declare that God ruled in the kingdoms of men and He rules over the history of nations. God knows when nations will rise and fall. The history of nations will climax in the coming of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:11-15). All the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of Christ (Revelation 11:15).

The glorious vision of God as the Ancient of Days, sitting in judgment over the nations, and the coming of Jesus Christ to receive glory, dominion, and an everlasting kingdom reveals the central and ultimate purpose of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. God revealed Himself and His Son in a glorious and mighty way to Daniel to empower the message.

O Worship the King

O worship the King, all glorious above,
O gratefully sing His power and His love;
Our Shield and Defender, the **Ancient of Days**,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,

Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space,
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, Thy pow'r hath founded of old;
Hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender! How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend.

From **Psalm 104** By Robert Grant (emphasis added)
Hymns of Truth and Praise Hymn # 22

12

We Beheld His Glory

John 1:14

Down through the centuries from the time of creation God has revealed Himself in a variety of ways to man. Some of these revelations were visible manifestations or visions of Himself. God made man in His own image and man was the apex of all that He created (Genesis 1:26-27). God made man for His glory and it was His desire to have a relationship with him (Isaiah 43:7). In the beginning God walked and talked with man

(Genesis 1:27-30, 4:6-15, 5:24, 6:13-22). Although God talked with Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Enoch, and Noah, there is no record in the Scriptures that God actually revealed Himself visually to them or anyone else during the centuries up until the time of the flood. In the process of time, beginning in Eden, man began to walk contrary to God. Over time man ceased to believe in God, became evil, and ultimately worshiped other gods and idols (Genesis 6:5, Joshua 24:2).

Why did God not reveal Himself visually to man? The Scriptures give a variety of reasons; first, God is holy and He hides His face from sinful men (Genesis 4:14), second, God is so glorious that sinful men would die if they beheld Him (Exodus 33:18-20), third, God did not reveal himself visually because He knew that men would make images of Him (Deuteronomy 4:11-16), and fourth, faith pleases God and God desired man to believe in Him without seeing Him (Romans 1:16-17, Hebrews 11:6). It is God's desire to reveal Himself to man in his heart. God did, however, begin to reveal partial manifestations of His visual glory after the flood. His visual manifestations of Himself were progressively expanded throughout time to various people, as recorded in the Scriptures, for various purposes. Finally, God revealed Himself through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).

God, even in the beginning, did reveal a visual manifestation of His glory when He created man. He created man in the image and likeness of God, or in the form of God (Genesis 1:26-27). It may be concluded that since man was made in the image and likeness of God that God the Father has an image or form in the likeness of man. It is instructive that many visions of God show Him with a man-like form. Man, however, is an incomplete visual image or likeness of God. Man is flesh or carnal, and God is spirit or spiritual. Jesus Christ, and He only, is the perfect and complete image of God the Father, visually, and also in personality. Some have concluded, erroneously, that because Jesus is the image of God that He is the only visible person in the Godhead. This has led others to conclude that every visual manifestation of God in the Old Testament must be that of the pre-incarnate Christ. This is not true, for God the Father does indeed, as has been shown in the Scriptures, have a visual form of His own.

The Revelation of God through the Lord Jesus Christ

Why did God send His Son to this earth? We know that He sent Him, because of His love for us, to become our Savior from sin and death (John 3:16). He also sent His Son that we might know God (John 1:12, Galatians 4:4-6). Ultimately, Jesus will bring us to God (John 14:6). Jesus was the Messiah, the anointed One, the promised Savior throughout time and throughout the Scriptures. He was promised from the day that Adam and Eve disobeyed God and fell into sin, became creatures of death, and were separated

from God. (Genesis 3:15). The Scriptures teach that God spoke to sinful man in a special way through His Son.

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the **brightness of His glory and the express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-4, emphasis added).*

The above text relates that God has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. It is significant that after stating that God now speaks to us through His Son, the glory of His Son, Jesus Christ, is described. Jesus is the heir of all things. The world was created through Him, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. He has purged our sins. He is now seated at the right hand of God. It is stated that He is the brightness of God's glory and the express or exact image of God's person or personality. In contrast to man, who was created in the image of God, that is, in visual likeness, Jesus Christ is the precise image of God inwardly as well as visually. The Scriptures continue as God addresses His own Son as God (Psalm 45:6-7). The Son of God is God and radiates the brightness of the glory of God. Man is the image and glory of God (I Corinthians 11:7). Jesus Christ reveals the majestic image and full glory of God. If the book of Hebrews was written by the apostle Paul, his vision of the glory of Christ would mean that as he wrote about Jesus being the brightness of the glory of God, he was writing as an eye witness, for he had seen the glory of Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5, 22:6-15, 26:12-19).

Other Scriptures reveal Jesus Christ as the image of God. Before He came to earth, by means of His miraculous birth in Bethlehem through the virgin Mary, He was with His Father in heaven. Jesus was evidently, from eternity, in the form of God.

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being **in the form of God**, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking **the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men**. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11, emphasis added).*

The above text states that Christ Jesus was in the form of God and equal with God. This is clearly speaking of Him in relation to His Father. This text again proves that God the Father has form. Image and form have similar meanings. Jesus was in the form of God and took the form of a servant and the likeness of men. He was in the form of God; that is, in a form identical to God, before He took on human form. Incidentally, both of the words “form” in the text above come from the same Greek word. Jesus left His place in glory to become our Savior. He has now returned to His place in glory.

The Scriptures remind us again that Jesus Christ is the image of God and that the world was created by Him and for Him. In Him all fullness dwells.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:15-20, emphasis added).

Jesus is the image of the invisible or unseen God. Jesus is also the glory of God, but He did not reveal His glory and the glory of His Father until later to three of His disciples. He did tell His disciples that if they have seen Him they have seen the Father (John 14:9). It is evident that He was not talking to them about seeing the visual glory of the Father. He was no doubt talking about who He was and that He was one with the Father (John 14:10, 17:21).

We Beheld His Glory

One day Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain and revealed His glory. Why did He do this? Although some of His disciples had concluded that He was the Messiah, their faith vacillated from time to time. They had heard His words and seen many miracles yet they had doubts. What would convince them that He was the Son of God? Did they need more signs? Peter had already confessed that Jesus was the Son of God (Matthew 16:16). A few days later Peter, James and John were to have a glorious visual proof that Jesus was the Son of God.

*Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and **He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His***

clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead" (Matthew 17:1-9, emphasis added).

Peter, James and John saw the glory of Jesus Christ when He was transfigured before them. He became radiant, his face was shining like the sun and his clothes were as white as light. Never had they seen such a sight. As the disciples were talking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them and they heard the voice of God the Father declaring that Jesus was His beloved Son and that they were to hear Him, that is, to believe and obey Him. As man is the image and glory of God (I Corinthians 11:7), so Jesus, in a far more excellent way, being the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, reflected and revealed the glory of His Father that day.

The three disciples were instructed by Jesus not to tell the vision until after His resurrection. John and Peter wrote later of their vision of the glory of Jesus Christ, but James did not because Herod killed him soon after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 12:2). John wrote of the vision of Christ's glory as he introduced Jesus Christ in his gospel account. He declared that the Word was God, that He was in the beginning with God, and that all of creation was made through Him.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (John 1:1-3).

John did not identify the Word as Jesus Christ until after he described more about Him and of His coming into the world.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many

as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:4-13).

It is clear from the above text that John was referring to the coming of Jesus Christ. He declared that He is life and light. He is the true light. Although not received by His own people, Christ is the one who gives believers the right to become children of God.

Finally, John revealed the wonder of the incarnation; the Son of God becoming flesh, a human being who lived among them. He then bore testimony that he and others had seen the glory of Christ and what that meant.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:14-17).

John declared, "We beheld His glory." He added, "... the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John, together with Peter and James, were eye witnesses of the glory of Christ. It was glory that only the Son of God would radiate. The voice of God had confirmed this truth by saying, "This is My Beloved Son" (Matthew 17:5). John knew that Jesus was the Son of God and he knew that He was God because he had seen His glory, which could only come from God.

Peter expressed his vision of the glory of Christ differently as he wrote about the truth of Jesus Christ to those who believed and to many who doubted. Many wondered if Jesus Christ was truly the Son of God. Did Jesus really come from God? Peter reaffirmed that Jesus was the Son of God.

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain (II Peter 1:16-18, emphasis added).

Peter let it be known that the coming of Christ and the power of Christ were not a clever fable. He declared that he and the other men on the mount that day were eyewitnesses of the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had also heard the voice of God the Father from heaven declaring Jesus as His beloved Son.

Peter, James, and John were a three-fold witness of the manifestation of the glory of Jesus Christ on that mountain. Their testimony assures us that as the glory of Christ was

seen, that He is truly the Son of God. The truth that Jesus is the brightness and glory of God, testifies again that God Himself has form with visual brightness and glory.

The Glory of Christ at Calvary

Just a few days before He was crucified Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah (Matthew 21:7-11, John 12:14-16, Zechariah 9:9-10). The Scriptures indicate that His disciples did not understand the significance of this until later.

*Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but **when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered** that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him (John 12:14-16, emphasis added).*

When was Jesus glorified? A short time after riding into Jerusalem Jesus said that the hour had come that He would be glorified. It is clear that He was speaking of His death.

*The hour has come that the **Son of Man should be glorified**. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain (John 12:23-24, emphasis added).*

A few days later Jesus prayed to His Father asking Him to glorify His Son, that He in turn might glorify His Father. Jesus spoke of a glory that He had with His Father before the world began.

*Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. **Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You**, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:1-5, emphasis added).*

The writer of the book of Hebrews, in speaking of the death of Jesus Christ, compares Him to man, who was made a little lower than angels and crowned with glory and honor at creation.

*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death **crowned with glory and honor**, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons to glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:9-10) .*

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was meant to shame and curse Him (Matthew 27:20-23, Deuteronomy 21:23, Galatians 3:13). Instead, He was glorified and He glorified His Father in heaven. In some wonderful way Christ was made perfect as He suffered for our sins and provided salvation. As the captain of our salvation He is also bringing us as many sons to glory.

The Glory of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

The disciples of Jesus asked Him one day as they were sitting near the temple about the end times and signs of His coming. Before these questions, his disciples had been marveling at the temple (Matthew 24:1-2). Jesus began by telling them that the temple would be destroyed. He talked about false christs coming and of the Abomination of Desolation prophesied by Daniel. He told them of a great tribulation that would come. He spoke of catastrophies on earth and of cosmic disturbances (Matthew 24:7, Mark 13:24-26). Then Jesus told them about His second coming in glory.

And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (Luke 21:25-27).

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven (Mark 13:24-27).

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:27).

Jesus told His disciples that when He comes they will see Him coming in a cloud with power and great glory. He also said that His coming will be like lightning flashing from the east to the west.

Later, after Jesus was arrested, He was brought before a council of the high priest, elders, and scribes (Mark 14:53). The high priest asked Him if He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered him,

...I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven (Mark 14:62).

When Jesus described His second coming He did not delineate the two phases of His coming, the rapture and the day of Christ. The rapture is the catching up of dead and living believers to meet the Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:15-17). Christ will come at that time for those who have believed in Him. He said, “I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3). There is no mention of a manifestation of the visual glory of Christ at that time. After the rapture Christ will come with His saints in great power and glory. This is called the day of Christ (II Thessalonians 2:2, Mark 13:26-27). At that time Christ will come to make war with the nations, to execute judgment, and to rule over the earth for a thousand years (Revelation 19:11-16, 20:4).

The day of Christ will come as a thief in the night, when least expected, when He will come in judgment on unbelievers (I Thessalonians 5:1-3). Believers are reassured that the day of Christ will not overtake them because they are not children of darkness but of light. God has not appointed believers to wrath but to salvation (I Thessalonians 5:4-11). It is a day in which Jesus Christ will appear in power and great glory. He is coming to take vengeance on those who have rejected Him, and make war with those nations who have opposed Him.

*... it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the **Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire** taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed (II Thessalonians 1:6-10, emphasis added).*

The day of Christ will reveal Jesus Christ, with His mighty angels, coming in flaming fire. As God the Father was revealed as flaming fire in the vision of Ezekiel, likewise the Son of God will be manifest in fire. He is coming in judgment and will punish with everlasting destruction those who have not obeyed the gospel. Christ is also coming to be glorified in His saints and to be admired by those who have believed in Him. Christians have gone through many persecutions and tribulations and God will repay those who have troubled them.

The day of Christ will also be a time when Jesus comes to destroy the “man of sin” who has exalted himself above all that is called God. The Scriptures describe what will take place on that day.

*Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and **the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.** Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And **then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.** The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thessalonians 2:1-12, emphasis added).*

The man of sin, the son of perdition is the one generally referred to as the antichrist. He will be revealed in the last days, but preparations for him have been at work since the Scripture above was written. Jesus Christ will consume him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him with the brightness of His coming. The day of Christ will be a time of war as Jesus Christ comes against the nations. The apostle John saw a vision of Him coming when he was on the Island of Patmos.

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. **His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.** And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS** (Revelation 19:11-16, emphasis added).*

Jesus said, before He was crucified, that He was coming in power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). He is coming again on a white horse, in righteousness and judgment and to make war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on His head are many crowns. He is coming to strike the nations and to rule over them. In the meantime Jesus Christ is now in heaven, seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-34, Romans 8:34, Ephesians 1:20, Hebrews 1:3).

The Glory of Christ in Heaven

A short time before Jesus was crucified He prayed to His Father that His Father would glorify Him with the glory that He had with the Father before the world was made.

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You ... I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:1-5).

As Jesus continued praying He began to pray for those who did believe and will believe in Him. He prayed that they might be one as He was with the Father. He said that He had given them the glory that His Father had given them. Then He prayed they might be with Him and that they might behold His glory.

*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, **that they may behold My glory** which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world (John 17:20-24, emphasis added).*

Someday we as believers will behold the glory of Jesus Christ. He is indeed "bringing many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10). What an awesome day that will be when we see Him in His glory! The apostle John saw a vision of His glory when he was on the Island of Patmos. He heard a loud voice and turned to see who was speaking.

*Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands **One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.** And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead ... (Revelation 1:12-17, emphasis added).*

John saw a vision of the glory of Jesus Christ. He had already seen His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, but now he saw Christ in His heavenly glory. His head and hair were as white as snow, like that of the vision of His Father as the "Ancient of Days" in the vision of Daniel. (Daniel 7:9-10). His eyes were as a flame of fire, as they will also be when He comes on a white horse to judge, make war, and rule over the nations

(Revelation 19:11-16). His feet are like brass and His voice as many waters, reminding us of the vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:24-28, 43:2). Truly Jesus Christ is the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3). When John saw all this glory he fell at Jesus' feet as dead. Jesus touched him and told him not to be afraid.

... Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death (Revelation 1:17-18).

Jesus revealed Himself to John as the crucified One, who has arisen and is alive forever. He then revealed to John the mystery of the seven stars in His right hand and the seven lampstands. The stars are seven angels of seven churches, and the lampstands are seven churches (Revelation 1:20). Jesus was revealed as walking in the midst of the lampstands as He walks in the midst of the churches. At the same time, Jesus Christ is seated on a throne at the right hand of God His Father (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus, like God the Father, is omnipresent and He is God. The Father said to His Son,

... Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions (Hebrew 1:8-9).

God the Father called Jesus God. He spoke of Jesus Christ's throne and kingdom as being forever and ever. The first book of Timothy describes the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He will manifest in His own time.

... He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen (I Timothy 6:15-16).

Amazingly, someday we as believers will approach our Lord Jesus in His full majesty and splendor, and we will see Him, and Oh, what glory that will be! Then He will take us to see the glory, splendor, and majesty of His Father.

The Visual Glory of God the Father

The visual glory of God the Father was revealed in numerous ways through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament asserts this truth in a variety of Scriptures. First of all, the New Testament clearly reveals Christ Jesus as the brightness of His (Father's) glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:2-3). This speaks of the image and glory of both the Son and God the Father. Secondly, Jesus is described as being in the form of God (Philippians 2: 5-7). This clearly indicates that God the Father

has a form. Thirdly, Jesus radiated the glory of His Father on the Mount of Transfiguration as the bright cloud overshadowed the disciples and the voice of God spoke to them (Matthew 17:1-9). Fourthly, the vision of the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration and the vision of John on Patmos are very similar to the visions seen by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, recorded in the Old Testament.

13

He Saw the Glory of God and Jesus

Acts 7:55

Stephen, who lived in the days when the early church began, was the first Christian martyr. Before he died he saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). As the disciples were multiplying, some of the widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food in the church. The apostles asked the brethren to seek seven men to be appointed for the responsibility of looking after them. They

were to be of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Stephen was one of the men selected (Acts 6:1-5).

After Pentecost, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter had fearlessly preached that Jesus was the Christ, that he had been raised from the dead, and that men needed to repent and believe in Him for salvation. Thousands believed and were baptized, and the early church was formed (Acts 2:1-47). Immediately, the Jewish leaders began persecuting, threatening, arresting, and bringing the apostles before their councils (Acts 4 & 5). The church, however, continued to grow.

Stephen was a man full of faith and power, doing great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8). He was evidently a powerful witness for Christ. One day a group arose to oppose him. They were from a synagogue called the Freedmen (Acts 6:9). They disputed with Stephen, but were unable to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke to them. Then they persuaded some men to bring false accusations against Stephen and to say he had said blasphemous things against Moses and God. They stirred up the people, and then the elders and the scribes brought Stephen before the council (Acts 6:10-12).

False witnesses were set up before the council who said that Stephen had spoken blasphemous things against the temple and the law. They also accused him of saying that Jesus of Nazareth was going to destroy the temple and change the customs delivered by Moses. As the council looked on Stephen they saw his face as the face of an angel (Acts 6:13-15). The high priest asked Stephen if the charges brought against him were true (Acts 7:1).

Stephen's Defense

Stephen began his defense by going back to the time of Abraham in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2). He used the opportunity to teach the word of God and preach the gospel. In the course of his message he summarized, from memory, over two thousand years of Hebrew history. He began by saying,

Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, "Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you" (Acts 7:2).

Stephen emphasized that the God of glory had appeared to Abraham and told him to go to another land. Stephen continued by telling how God worked with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Acts 7:6-19). He told of Moses and how God appeared to him in a bush of flaming fire (Acts 7: 20-33). Stephen reminded his listeners that this was the Moses the people had rejected forty years earlier when they said, “Who made you a ruler and a judge?” (Acts 7:35). God sent this Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. Stephen also reminded his listeners of something else Moses had said to the children of Israel.

... ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear (Acts 7:37, Deuteronomy 18:15).

Stephen emphasized something which his listeners should have understood, that Moses was foretelling the Messiah to come, Jesus Christ. He went on to describe the reaction of the fathers to Moses when he brought them the law received from God on Mount Sinai. He reminded his listeners that their ancestors had rejected Moses and the law, and in time turned to idols. Finally, Stephen concluded his defense by exhorting his accusers.

You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it (Acts 7:51-53).

When his listeners heard these things they were cut to the heart and, in their fury gnashed at Stephen with their teeth (Acts 7:54). As they began venting their rage at him, Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at His right hand.

Stephen Saw the Glory of God and Jesus Standing at His Right Hand

As Stephen gazed into heaven he saw a more glorious sight than any previously recorded in the entire Scriptures. He saw the Father and Son together, with Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts 7:55-56 emphasis added).

Stephen's testimony of what he saw was too much for the Jewish elders, scribes, and council members because they realized that he was telling them that he saw Jesus as God and equal with God the Father. They cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord (Acts 7:57). Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him (Acts 7:58).

The significance of what Stephen saw just before he was stoned is very great. He saw the Father and Son together. The only person previously recorded in the Scripture seeing a similar vision was Daniel when he saw the Ancient of Days on a throne and the Son of Man coming to the Ancient of Days in the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7:9-14). Daniel's vision showed the Son of Man coming to the Father. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father, as equal with God. Moreover, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ were each shown as having a distinctive form.

The Purpose of Stephen's Vision

Why was Stephen given a vision of God and Jesus together as he was about to die? It would appear that Jesus was standing to receive him to glory. Stephen's witness that he saw the glory of God and Son of Man standing at His right hand was a testimony to those who heard that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. Stephen was also assured that the Lord Jesus and God the Father were waiting to welcome him to glory.

Stephen had a further testimony as they were stoning him. He called on God saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" and fell asleep (Acts 7:59-60). He died like the Lord Jesus who said, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34) and "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

Stephen's testimony may have been primarily for the benefit of one witness who would never forget what he saw that day. As the angry Jewish elders, scribes, and council members stoned Stephen, they had laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. He had seen Stephen's face as an angel. He had heard his testimony and his exhortation that they were rejecting Jesus as their fathers had rejected Moses and the law. He had heard Stephen tell of his glorious vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ at His right hand. He had heard Stephen ask God to forgive them. Saul would never forget Stephen nor the scene he saw that day, or that he had consented to his death (Acts 7:58, 8:1).

Although Saul mounted a great persecution against the church after the death of Stephen, he was about to see the glory of Christ himself on the road to Damascus, and be converted to Christ. Stephen's vision and dying words may have been used of God to convict Saul's heart.

Stephen's testimony of what he saw that day should move believers to wonderfully anticipate seeing the glory of God and Jesus standing at His right hand. The view of the "glory of God and Jesus" and the "Son of Man and God" provides a double witness, sealing the truth that both members of the Godhead have individual form. Glory be to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Jesus, In His Heavenly Glory

Jesus, in His heav'nly glory,
Sits with God upon the throne;
Now no more to be forsaken,
His humiliation gone.

Never more shall God, Jehovah,
Smite the Shepherd with the sword;
Ne'er again shall cruel sinners,
Set at nought our glorious Lord.

Dwelling in eternal sunshine
Of the countenance of God,
Jesus fills all heav'n with incense
Of His reconciling blood.

On His heart our names are graven,
On His shoulders we are borne;
Of our God beloved in Jesus,
We can love Him in return.

Robert Chapman
Hymns of Worship & Remembrance #76

14

The Heavenly Vision

Acts 26:19

Stephen, a servant of the early church and powerful witness for Christ, had been martyred. A young man named Saul was present at the stoning and consented to his death. Shortly after the death of Stephen a great persecution arose against the church in

Jerusalem and the believers, except for the apostles, were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 7:57-60, 8:1-3). Saul became a leader of the persecution, making havoc of the church, dragging off men and women to prison (Acts 8:3).

Saul was not content in persecuting the Christians in Jerusalem. His anger and hatred led him to ask the high priest for letters authorizing him to search out believers as far as Damascus, which was about one hundred fifty miles to the north.

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2).

Saul's purpose in securing the letters was to go to Damascus, seek out and bind men and women who had become followers of Christ, and bring them in chains to Jerusalem to be punished.

Saul's Vision of Jesus

Saul, with his letters to the synagogues of Damascus, set out with a contingent of men for the city. Saul was not prepared for what would happen as he traveled on his mission of vengeance. As they neared the city he was suddenly stopped in his tracks as he was confronted by a vision of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. The Scripture describes the vision as follows:

*And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly **a light shone around him from heaven**. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "**Who are You, Lord?**" And the Lord said, "**I am Jesus**, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:3-6, emphasis added).*

Saul was blinded by a brilliant light that shined around him from heaven and he fell to the ground. A voice spoke to him asking, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul realized it was the Lord as he asked who He was. The Lord answered simply, "I am Jesus." Jesus told Saul that he was persecuting Him in his persecution of Christians. When Jesus told him that it was hard for him to kick against the goads He may have been referring to Saul's conscience, particularly in regard to the martyrdom of Stephen. Immediately Saul asked the Lord what He wanted him to do. Saul quickly submitted to Jesus and was told to go into the city and there he would be told what to do. Saul's vision of the glory of Jesus changed the entire direction of his life. Realizing that Jesus truly was the Christ, the Son God, he now understood that Stephen had seen the glory of

God and Jesus at His right hand in heaven. He told of his vision of Christ many times during his lifetime.

Saul in Damascus Praying

The men who were traveling with Saul stood speechless. They heard a voice but did not see anyone (Acts 9:1, 2, and 7). Saul rose from his feet and realized that he was blind. He had to be led by the hand into Damascus. For three days he could not see and did not eat or drink (Acts 9:7-9). There was a disciple of Christ in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord Jesus spoke to him in a vision.

... Ananias ... arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight (Acts 9:10-12).

When Ananias questioned the Lord, for he had heard of Saul and what he had done to the saints in Jerusalem, the Lord told of His plans for Saul.

... Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake (Acts 9:15-16).

Ananias went to the street called Straight and entered the house where Saul was praying. He laid his hands on Saul and spoke to him.

... Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17).

Saul's vision of the Lord Jesus Christ caused him to believe and be converted to Christ. Ananias was sent to him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul's eyesight was immediately restored and he arose and was baptized. After spending some days with the disciples in Damascus he began to preach the Christ in the synagogues, that He was the Son of God. As Saul continued in his ministry he confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus, proving that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 9:18-22).

Saul as Paul the Apostle and Missionary

Saul was not only converted to Christ, but he was also a chosen vessel of Christ to bear His name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15-16). Some time later the Holy Spirit sent him out as a missionary to various parts of the world and

he became known as the apostle Paul (Acts 13:1-14). At the end of his third missionary journey Paul went to Jerusalem (Acts 20:16 to 21:17). While he was there he went to the temple. Jews from Asia Minor stirred up a crowd, laid hands on him, seized him and dragged him out of the temple. They were seeking to kill him. All of Jerusalem was in an uproar, and when news came to the Roman commander of the garrison, he and his soldiers intervened. They stopped beating Paul, and the commander ordered him to be bound with two chains and taken to the barracks. Because of the violence of the mob Paul had to be carried to the stairs. The crowd shouted, "Away with him!" (Acts 21:15-36).

Paul's Account of His Vision of Christ

Paul asked to speak to the commander as he was being led into the barracks. He explained that he was a Jew from Tarsus and a citizen of that city. Tarsus was a Roman colony city and anyone born in a colony city was considered a citizen of Rome. Paul asked to be permitted to speak to the people. The commander gave him permission. Paul stood on the stairs and motioned to the crowd. There was a great silence and he began speaking to the people in the Hebrew language (Acts 21:37-40). When he spoke in Hebrew they became even more silent.

*Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now. ... I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished. Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, **suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me.** And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" So I answered, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said to me, "**I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.**" And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. So I said, "What shall I do, Lord?" And the Lord said to me, "Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do." And since **I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus** (Acts 22:1-11, emphasis added).*

After Paul had arrived in Damascus the Lord sent him to a disciple named Ananias to give him back his sight. Ananias explained why Jesus had appeared to him and that he had been chosen of God as a witness for Christ throughout the world.

*Then one, Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, came to me; and he stood and said to me, "Brother Saul, receive your sight." And at that same hour I looked up at him. Then he said, "**The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.** For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard"* (Acts 22:12-15, emphasis added).

Paul told his audience that the vision had blinded him, that he could not see for the glory of the light, and had to be led by the hand into Damascus. Paul also related to the people that Ananias had said to him that the God of our fathers had chosen him that he should know His will and see the Just One and hear His voice. This statement by Ananias was not included in the early account of Paul's vision. Paul continued by describing what occurred when he returned to Jerusalem after seeing the vision. One day while he was praying in the temple, he fell into a trance and saw Jesus again.

*Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that **I was in a trance and saw Him** saying to me, "Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me." So I said, "Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him." Then He said to me, "Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles"* (Acts 22:17-21, emphasis added).

Part of Paul's defense was that he had consented to the death of Stephen, indicating that this was still on his mind. He then went on to state that he was sent to the Gentiles. When Paul's audience heard this word they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live." They cried out, tore their clothes, and threw dust in the air. The commander immediately ordered that Paul be brought into the barracks to be examined by scourging. Paul objected, saying that he was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-28). After a plot by the Jews to kill Paul became known he was taken to Caesarea (Acts 23:11-24). There he stood trial before Felix, and later Festus, two Roman governors (Acts 24 & 25). After many charges and hearings before the Jews, Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 24:27 through Acts 25:1-12)

The Heavenly Vision

A few days later King Agrippa and his wife came to greet Festus. Festus told the king about Paul, the accusations that had been made against him, and of Paul's appeal to Caesar. The king asked if he might hear the man himself. The next day Paul was brought into an auditorium before Festus, King Agrippa and his wife, and an assemblage of

prominent men of the city. Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself” (Acts 25:13 through 26:1).

Paul began his testimony by acknowledging the expertise of King Agrippa in the customs of the Jews. Agrippa was a Jewish king. Paul related that he had lived as a Pharisee and that he believed he must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. He told how he had persecuted many who followed Jesus in Jerusalem, shut them up in prison and voted against them who were put to death. He punished many in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. Paul said that he was so enraged against them that he persecuted them even to other cities (Acts 26:1-11). He then told of his conversion on the road to Damascus.

*While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road **I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me** and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” So I said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “**I am Jesus**, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:12-18, emphasis added).*

Paul testified to King Agrippa that he had seen a vision on the road to Damascus. He said that he saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun shining around him and those who journeyed with him. They all fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice in the Hebrew language. It was Jesus talking to him. Jesus told Paul why He had appeared to him; to make him a minister of the things he had seen and heard. Jesus told him that He was sending him to Jews and Gentiles to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. He was being sent that people might receive the forgiveness of sins and an inheritance through faith in Him. Then Paul turned to the king and said,

*Therefore, King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision**, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance (Acts 26:19-20, emphasis added).*

As Paul was making his defense Governor Festus told him in a loud voice that much learning had made him mad. Paul replied that he was speaking words of truth. Paul

turned to King Agrippa and asked him if he believed. Agrippa replied, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian” (Acts 26:24-28). Paul responded to King Agrippa by saying,

... I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains (Acts 26:29).

When Paul had said this, the king and the others discussed what they had heard and said, “This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.” King Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar” (Acts 26:30-32).

Paul’s Visions of Christ

Paul was converted through a vision of Christ, and was called to be an apostle. Unlike the other apostles, Paul was not called while Jesus was ministering on earth. He was called after the crucifixion and ascension of Christ. He became a witness of Christ through visions and revelations. In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians he claimed to be an apostle and that he had seen Christ.

*Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? **Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?** Are you not my work in the Lord? (I Corinthians 9:1, emphasis added).*

Paul continued by saying,

*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. **Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.** For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed (I Corinthians 15:1-11, emphasis added).*

Paul saw Jesus Christ and received the gospel from Him. He affirms this in his letter to the Galatians in which he states,

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus (Galatians 1:11-17, emphasis added).

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote that he would come to visions and revelations of the Lord. He went on to say that he was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations (II Corinthians 12:1-7).

The Brightness of the Glory of Jesus Christ

Many Bible scholars believe that the book of Hebrews was written by the apostle Paul, because of various internal evidences. If this is true, the glory of Christ described in the first chapter was written by one who was an eye witness of His glory. The Son of God is described as,

... being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:3-4).

Fill All My Vision

Fill all my vision, Savior I pray,
Let me see only Jesus today;
Though thro' the valley Thou leadest me,
Thy fadeless glory encompasseth me.

Fill all my vision, every desire
Keep for thy glory; My soul inspire,
With thy perfection, Thy holy love
Flooding my pathway with light from above

Fill all my vision, Let naught of sin
Shadow the brightness shining within.
Let me see only Thy blessed face,
Feasting my soul on Thy infinite grace.

Fill all my vision, Savior divine
Till with thy glory my spirit shall shine.
Fill all my vision, that all may see
Thy holy Image reflected in me

Avis B. Christiansen
Hymns of Truth and Praise #421

15

Behold, a Throne Set in Heaven

Revelation 4:2

John is referred to as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23, 21:20). He was one of the youngest of the twelve apostles. Jesus allowed only Peter, James and John to be with Him on several occasions: at the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:35-42),

when they saw the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-2; John 1:14; II Peter 1:16-18), and in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-38).

The years have gone by and John has grown old. He had been banished to, or imprisoned on, the Island of Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9). John evidently was special to the Lord like Moses, Daniel, and David. He was chosen to see the greatest revelations of Jesus Christ and of God the Father in majestic glory on His throne in heaven. John begins to relate what he saw by saying,

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near (Revelation 1:1-3).

The revelation was from Jesus Christ, of Jesus Christ, and from God and of God, and was signified by His angel. After greeting the churches and telling of the coming of Christ, John begins to relate the first of the revelations of Jesus Christ and of God the Father.

John Saw the Glory of Jesus Christ

The first revelation that John saw was of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the churches of Asia. He described what he saw and heard.

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like **the Son of Man**, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead... (Revelation 1:10-17, emphasis added).*

John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Throughout the Scriptures the Spirit of God came upon those to whom God revealed Himself and through whom He used for His glory. John needed to be in the Spirit. The revelations began on the Lord's Day. This is the only place in the Scriptures where this term is found. Some have thought that it refers

to the first day of the week. It is evident that it was the Lord's Day throughout the book of Revelation.

John saw the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in even greater glory than that seen on the Mount of Transfiguration. He heard a loud voice behind him saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last." This may have been the voice of God or of Christ. When John turned he saw the brilliant majesty of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. He was clothed with a long garment and girded with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, like His Father, the Ancient of Days, described in the book of Daniel. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His face was like the sun shining at it brightest. His voice was like the sound of many waters, like the voice of God described throughout the Bible. His feet were like burning brass. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. John was terrified and fell at His feet as dead. Jesus laid His hand on John and spoke to him (Revelation 1:17).

...Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches (Revelation 1:17-20).

This was the same Jesus on whom John had laid his head before He was crucified (John 13:23). Jesus revealed Himself to John as the First and the Last, that is, the eternal One. He also identified Himself as the crucified One, the One who lives and was dead, and is alive forevermore. Jesus told John to write the things which he had seen and the things that will come after. He then revealed the mystery of the seven lampstands and seven stars as seven churches and their angels.

Jesus told John to write to the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 1:19). Each letter contained a revelation of Christ, an encouragement or warning and a call to repent (Revelation 2&3). John looked up after this and saw a door open in heaven. He heard again a voice like a trumpet speaking to him and saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things that must take place after this" (Revelation 4:1-2).

John Saw a Throne Set in Heaven

John was immediately in the Spirit again upon hearing the trumpet-like voice telling him to come up, and saw a throne set in heaven (Revelation 4:2). The throne in heaven is mentioned thirty-eight times in the book of Revelation, from chapter one to chapter

twenty-two. It was the throne of God and was seen by John in a variety of perspectives. It is first mentioned in chapter one in John's greeting to the seven churches.

John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1:4-7).

The One who is and who was and who is to come is God the Father. The message is from the Father and His Son. Jesus Christ is described as the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. He is the One who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. He is coming again in the clouds.

After John saw the revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ he was told what to write in letters to the seven churches of Asia. In the last letter to the churches John was told to write to the Laodiceans about sitting down with Him with His Father on His throne.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 3:20-22).

The Lord Jesus revealed to John that He sat with His Father on His throne and that those who overcame would be granted the privilege of sitting with Him on His throne. In all of the revelations of the throne in heaven, it should be obvious that it is not empty, nor occupied by an invisible God. After hearing about the throne of God, John saw a throne set in heaven and someone sitting upon it.

John Saw One on the Throne

The throne that John saw was not empty, nor was the One upon it invisible. John saw the One on the throne. It is evident that the One on the throne was Almighty God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.' Immediately I was in the Spirit; and **behold, a throne set in***

heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 4:1-5, emphasis added).

John saw the One on the throne as a jasper and a sardius stone. Jasper is a beautiful gem of various delicate colors, especially green. Sardius is a red gem the color of ruby or garnet. An emerald rainbow glowed or radiated around the throne creating a beautiful, colorful, and majestic sight. John saw the glory of God as very much like what Ezekiel had seen by the river Chebar centuries before (Ezekiel 1:26-28). John also saw a scene that had never been recorded in the Scriptures. He saw twenty-four elders sitting on thrones around the throne of God. They were wearing white robes and crowns of gold on their heads. Out of the throne came lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire burned before the throne. They are the seven Spirits of God.

John Saw Elders and Creatures Around and Before the Throne

Around the throne were the thrones of the twenty-four elders. Before the throne there was a beautiful crystal sea, clear as glass. In the midst and around the throne there were four living creatures who worshipped God day and night. They were similar to the seraphim described in Isaiah, having multiple faces and six wings (Isaiah 6:1-3).

*Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were **four living creatures** full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “**Holy, holy, holy, lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!**” Whenever **the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created”** (Revelation 4:6-11, emphasis added).*

The living creatures say “Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty” and give God glory, honor, and thanksgiving. The twenty-four elders cast their crowns before the throne and acknowledge the worthiness of God to receive glory, honor, and power because He created all things. Why do they say and do this continually? They do so because God is holy! They do so because they know God is worthy! The throne scene in which Isaiah

saw Jehovah God also included six winged creatures, called seraphim, saying, “Holy, holy, holy” (Isaiah 6:1-3).

As John continued to look he saw a scroll or book in the right hand of God. It was written inside and on the back and sealed with seven seals (Revelation 5:1). The book contained revelations of past, present, and future events. The content of the book, as each of the seals was opened, is a central theme in the book of Revelation.

John Saw a Lamb in the Midst of the Throne

John was looking at the book of seven seals when he saw a strong angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals?” No one in heaven or earth was able to open it or look at it (Revelation 5:2-3). John was grieved upon hearing this.

*So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. **Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.**” And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb as though it had been slain**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne (Revelation 5:4-7, emphasis added).*

Who is this worthy One? Who is the Lion of Judah and who is the Lamb that was standing after being slain? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? He alone is worthy to approach the throne of God, take the scroll and open its seals. Jesus Christ is the Lion, the King of Judah (Revelation 5:5). He is the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Jesus was slain and shed His blood that we might be redeemed (I Peter 1:18-19). After He purged our sins Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:1-3). John saw the Father and Son together in the midst of the throne of God.

When the Lamb had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before Him with harps and golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and sang a new song (Revelation 5:8-9).

... You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

John Saw a Multitude around the Throne

Then John saw and heard a multitude of angels around the throne with the living creatures and elders. They numbered over one hundred thousand, and thousands and thousands more. They were all praising and worshipping Him who sat on the throne, and the Lamb. They were praising and worshipping the Father and the Son.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever (Revelation 5:11-13).

Heaven is made up of a gigantic congregation of worshippers of God and of the Lord Jesus. No such previous scene had been described in the entire Scriptures. This is truly the ultimate vision of the ever-expanding revelation of the visual glory of God in the Bible. As this great multitude is praising and worshipping they refer to Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb, so it is obvious that they, as well as John, see them in all of their majesty and glory. The book of Hebrews anticipates this scene.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

John Saw a Great Multitude Standing before the Throne of God

As John continued to watch he saw a great multitude standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb. Where did this multitude come from who saw God sitting on the throne, and also the Lamb? What was their appearance?

*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our **God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!**" All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 7:9-12, emphasis added).*

One of the elders who sat on one of the thrones around the throne of God asked John who these people might be. John said, “Sir, you know” (Revelation 7:12-14). The elder told John they are the ones who come out of the great tribulation.

... These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation 7:14-17).

The multitude crying out “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” must have seen them, as well as John, for they also refer to God as sitting, and of the presence of the Lamb. During the tribulation period, many people will be martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ. Now they will be brought before the throne of God to receive their reward. Their reward is to be before God, to see Him, and to serve Him day and night. The Lamb will shepherd them, caring for their every need.

John Saw Seven Angels Who Stand before God

When the seventh seal was opened there was silence in heaven for about a half hour. Then John saw seven angels who stand before God. They are given seven trumpets. There is a golden altar of incense before the throne. An angel having a golden censer was given incense to offer, with the prayers of the saints, upon the altar before the throne. The smoke and the incense ascended before God from the angel’s hand (Revelation 8:1-4). The tabernacle and the temple of the Old Testament each had a golden altar of incense (Exodus 30:1-3). The altar and the other furnishings used in worshipping were figures of heavenly things (Hebrews 9:1-26).

The Kingdom of God and of Christ

The sounding of the seventh trumpet and the third woe began with a scene again in heaven. During the sounding of this trumpet the mystery of God was finished. John heard loud voices and a proclamation about the kingdoms of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

... “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One

who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned”
(Revelation 11:15-17).

John was still before the throne of God. When the proclamation was made concerning the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ, and their eternal reign, the elders fell down and worshiped Him for taking His great power and reigning.

John Saw a Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand before the Throne of God

John saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with one hundred and forty-four thousand (Revelation 14:1). Mount Zion refers to Jerusalem so he sees a scene on earth. It would seem that these are those who were sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:1-8). Suddenly John heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like loud thunder. This is no doubt the voice of God. John also heard harpists playing harps. His eyes are now on things in heaven again and it seems that the one hundred and forty-four thousand are there too. They sing a new song before the throne, the living creatures and the elders.

*They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault **before the throne of God** (Revelation 14:3-5, emphasis added).*

It is clear that these are redeemed souls and apparently they are Jews. They are brought before the throne of God and are found without fault before Him. John saw the hundred and forty-four thousand before the throne of God. Obviously, as John saw the throne and God upon it, the hundred and forty-four thousand did too.

Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent Reigns!

After these things John heard the voices of a great multitude in heaven saying, with a loud voice, “Alleluia!” or Hallelujah. (Revelation 19:1). The word Alleluia is only found four times in the Bible and only in the book of Revelation. The word comes from Hebrew and means Praise the LORD or Praise Jehovah. The expression “Praise the LORD” is found numerous times in the last books of the Psalms. The occasion for the multitude to so lift up their voices in praise and worship of God is His impending judgment of the harlot church. The Lord God Omnipotent reigns.

*After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped **God who sat on the throne**, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "**Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!**" (Revelation 19:1-6, emphasis added).*

Then John saw a multitude in heaven worshipping God on the throne. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Thank God, the Omnipotent, our all powerful God reigns! Praise His Name! Someday, we too will join that chorus of praise before His throne.

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

John saw heaven opened again. He saw a white horse with someone sitting on it. He was dressed as a warrior, and armies in heaven were following Him on white horses. Where were they going? What was about to take place?

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. **His eyes were like a flame of fire**, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and **His name is called The Word of God**. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now **out of His mouth goes a sharp sword**, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS** (Revelation 19:11-16, emphasis added).*

John saw Jesus Christ coming as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Christ is revealed with eyes as flames of fire like John's first revelation of Christ in His glory. Now His head is adorned with many crowns. His robe is dipped in blood, reminiscent of the prophecy of Isaiah.

Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength? — "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come" (Isaiah 63:1-4).

Christ is coming to judge and make war. He is coming to make war against the nations that have rebelled against Him. He will rule them with a rod of iron. Christ treads the winepress of the wrath of God. Jesus Christ will conquer the nations in the battle of Armageddon. He will judge the nations and rule over the world for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-4). Jesus Christ will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

John saw the beast, the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against Christ and his army. The beast and the false prophet were captured and cast alive into the lake of fire. The rest were killed with the sword that proceeded from the mouth of Christ (Revelation 19:19-21). The destruction of the beast, or antichrist, is described in the coming of the Day of Christ in II Thessalonians.

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God ... For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thessalonians 2:3-12).

The Great White Throne Judgment

Finally, John saw another throne, a great white throne. The dead were standing before God, and it is assumed by many that it is Christ sitting on the throne. It does say one place in the Scripture that God has committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22). This is a judgment of the dead.

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

This is the final judgment and destiny of those who have died without Christ. They are judged by their works and by the book of life. Death and Hades, or Hell, are cast into the lake of fire. Those whose names are not found there are cast into the lake of fire. According to the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the unsaved go to hell (Luke 16:19-24). The believers upon death are present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:6-8).

A Proclamation from Him Who Sat on the Throne The New Jerusalem, the Holy Jerusalem

John also saw a new heaven and a new earth. This had been prophesied by Isaiah. (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22). The first heaven and the first earth will be destroyed by fire (II Peter 3:7). The coming destruction is described in the second book of Peter.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (II Peter 3:10-13).

John also saw a new city, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven. The city is described as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2). Then John heard a loud proclamation from heaven.

...Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:3-4).

Then God, as He sat on the throne, talked to John.

*Then **He who sat on the throne** said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:5-8, emphasis added).*

Once again, for the third time, the proclamation is made that it is done! This time it is made by God Himself. He declares Himself to be the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning

and the End. He promises to give the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He promises to him who overcomes an inheritance, and that He will be his God. Unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

John was again shown the New Jerusalem. The New and Holy Jerusalem has the glory of God and shines like precious gems (Revelation 21:9-14). God Almighty and the Lamb, Jesus Christ, come to dwell in it. John did not see a temple in the city as he saw in heaven.

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:22-27, emphasis added).

The New Jerusalem appears to hover over the new earth, somewhat like the moon. It shines over the nations. Apparently kings and other people travel back and forth between earth and the city.

The Throne of God and of the Lamb

Then John saw a river flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. It was the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal. On each side was the tree of life bearing fruit each month. The leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:1-2).

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:3-5, emphasis added).

His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face! What a glorious day! Moses asked to see God's glory and God said that no one could see His face and live. Now, through Jesus Christ, the believer will see the face of God. Christ has saved us, purified us, and made us holy and acceptable to come into the holy presence of God. Praise His Name!

Nothing more is said to John of heaven, where the cherubim, seraphim, angelic hosts, and the millions live. What about the kingdom of heaven? Will we go there too?

“I am Coming Quickly”

Then the angel said to John, “These words are faithful and true.” He went on to say that the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things that must soon take place. Then he spoke the words of Jesus Christ, “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:7).

The angel told John not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand. Then the angel spoke of the unjust and the filthy, the just and the righteous saying, “He who is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11). The testimony of Jesus to the churches repeats that He is coming quickly.

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:12-17).

Finally, Jesus said once again that He was coming quickly.

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen (Revelation 22:20-21).

Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea;
A great High Priest, whose name is Love,
Whoever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in heav'n He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look, and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.

Behold Him there! The risen Lamb!
My perfect, spotless Righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace!

One with Himself, I cannot die;
My soul is purchased by His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Savior and my God.

Charles Lees Bancroft
Hymns of Truth and Praise #180

16

Bringing Many Sons to Glory

Hebrews 2:10

A blessed and glorious day awaits believers in the Lord Jesus Christ when He brings us as many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). This will be the fulfillment of Christ's promise, made during His early ministry when He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Jesus Christ will, in that day, bring all the souls who have

believed in Him to heaven, before the throne where they will see God. It will be a scene so massive that it is beyond our imagination. The glory of that event, when the great host of the redeemed stand before the throne of God, pales in significance in comparison to seeing the beauty, splendor, glory, and majesty of almighty God.

In ancient times, Roman conquerors often returned in triumph after their victories and conquests, bringing multitudes of captives as trophies to serve as slaves to the citizens of Rome. Christ, as the “Captain of their salvation,” is making a similar triumphal entry, only He is “bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10). His people will be brought, not as miserable slaves, but as sons and daughters, as slaves set free, into the kingdom of heaven where they shall be brought before God and “see His face” (Revelation 22:4).

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save us and to prepare us for that day when we are brought before God. Several processes are described in the Scriptures relative to being prepared to be brought before God, although through faith in Jesus Christ we are born again and assured of heaven and eternal life (John 3:3-16, I John 5:12-13). These processes include realizing the cost of salvation, regeneration, sanctification, transformation, death, being caught up alive, and resurrection. Not all believers will experience all of these processes. Some of them may even be instantaneous, as the thief on the cross who died and went with Jesus to paradise (Luke 23:39-43). For others, as they live out their lives for Christ and seek to grow in Him, the changes will be more extensive. As we believers realize the cost of our salvation and grow in our love for the Lord Jesus, we will desire to be changed by Him and to be prepared as He wishes, to be brought before God.

The Cost of Bringing Us to God

Jesus is the only way to God and He is the only One who can bring us to God. One day Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for His disciples. He told them to believe in Him and then had the following conversation:

*“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me**” (John 14:2-6, emphasis added).*

Jesus is not only the way to God, but He came specifically to bring us to God. Because of our sins it cost the Lord Jesus Christ His very life. He had to suffer on the cross for our sin in order to bring us to God. The Bible states,

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18, emphasis added).

Jesus came that He might save us from sin and death, and to bring us to God. The book of Hebrews reveals the thoughts of God toward man, whom He had created, and yet had sinned against Him. The Word reveals that it was necessary for Jesus Christ to do this in order to accomplish our salvation and bring us to God.

*...“What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. **But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings** (Hebrews 2:6-10, emphasis added).*

God, amazingly, is mindful of man in spite of his sin. Jesus left heaven’s glory and became a man in order to save us from our sins by suffering, dying, and taking our judgment of death. Jesus became the perfect “captain of our salvation” by His sufferings. Christ, in His victory over sin and death, led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8). We were slaves to sin and death, and Christ set us free (Romans 6:1-23). Jesus is not bringing slaves, but sons, to glory. As sons of God and children of God we have been made partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 2:4). At the cost of Jesus’ suffering and death we have been regenerated as sons of God.

Sons of God through Regeneration

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” He followed this by saying, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:8-9). We do not only need to be pure in heart but we need to become children of God before we can enter into heaven. We become children of God, or sons of God, by regeneration. We need to be regenerated or born again, that is, be born from above in

order to enter heaven. One night a man named Nicodemus came to Jesus to question Him. Beginning with Nicodemus, their conversation was as follows,

*“... Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:2-8, emphasis added).*

Jesus emphasized that it was necessary to be born of the Spirit, to be born of God in order to enter into the kingdom of God. The Bible says, “... you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26). The gospel of John elaborates as follows:

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12).

We are made children of God by the will of God and because of His kindness and love. The book of Titus reminds us of the kindness and love of God in regeneration.

*But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the **washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit**, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7, emphasis added).*

Regeneration is also a cleansing process as we are renewed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is bringing only sons of God to glory, those who have been born again by the Spirit of God. Bringing sons to glory involves many changes. These changes begin as soon as a person is saved, and culminate in resurrection when we see Christ and bear the image of the heavenly Man, Jesus Christ. As sons of God we must be pure in heart. It becomes clear in the Bible that while salvation is assured through simple faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31, Ephesians 2:8-9), some changes are necessary in the life of the believer in preparation for coming before our holy God and seeing Him in glory. The first is the purification, or sanctification, of the heart.

The Pure in Heart

Only the pure in heart will see God. To be pure means to be free from sin. It involves being sanctified and made holy. We need to be sanctified and made holy in order to be brought before a holy God. God is pure and is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Habakkuk 1:13). Man is instructed to pursue peace and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). How can men be holy and pure? Men are wicked sinners (Romans 3:9-23). Purification requires that our sins be washed away. We can only become pure in heart through the Lord Jesus Christ. The book of Revelation tells of God’s grace to us in Christ.

*...Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. **To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood**, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:4-6, emphasis added).*

Jesus came into the world in love to wash us from our sins in His own blood. When we are saved the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and God purifies our heart through faith.

*So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, **purifying their hearts by faith** (Acts 15:8-9, emphasis added).*

The purification of the heart, which comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, causes the believer to be pure and to be obedient through the Holy Spirit.

*Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, **love one another fervently with a pure heart**, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever ... (1 Peter 1:22-23, emphasis added).*

Furthermore, as children of God, knowing that someday we shall be like Him, we have a desire to be pure like Him.

*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And **everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure** (1 John 3:2-3, emphasis added).*

Sanctification or holiness leads to a change in conduct in the believer. Through the Holy Spirit we are taught and enabled to live holy lives, as obedient children, not conforming to our former lusts.

*Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “**Be holy, for I am holy**” (I Peter 1:13-16, emphasis added).*

The Bible warns that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Again, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we have been cleansed and justified, or made righteous.

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were **washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (I Corinthians 6:9-11, emphasis added).*

After we have received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior we are initially purified and sanctified. When a person has been purified in heart through Christ and becomes a child of God, it is necessary that he continues to be pure in preparation for entry into glory and into the presence of God. The pure in heart, as children of God, shall then see God, and they shall be blessed as they gaze before Him in glory. As we need to be pure in heart and sanctified, we also need to be transformed into the image of Christ in order to be accepted before God.

The Transformation of the Children of God

Every believer must also be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ before we can be brought into the presence of our holy God. Unless we are caught up into the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:16-17), this will include passing through death and resurrection. Flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (I Corinthians 15:50). Our transformation begins with regeneration (conversion) and continues through death and resurrection, until we are with Christ (Acts 3:19, Acts 15:3, I Corinthians 15:35-57, I Thessalonians 4:17).

The purpose of God is that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be conformed to the image of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are called, justified, and glorified by the God of heaven..

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He*

predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified (Romans 8:28-30, emphasis added).

Believers are conformed or transformed into the image of Christ that He might be the firstborn of many brethren. As brothers in Christ we will appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

The moment a person believes in Jesus Christ for salvation he becomes a child of God and a transformation begins to take place. The word “transformation” or “metamorphosis” comes from the Greek word *μετάμορφωό*. It means to change in form. As the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly in the cocoon, so the believer is being transformed in this place of death called earth. The process begins with a willingness to be transformed.

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* (Romans 12:1-2, emphasis added).

First, the mind needs to be transformed from a mind that has been conformed to the ways of the world. Then the whole inner being begins to be transformed as the Holy Spirit lives within us.

*Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. **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 by the Spirit of the Lord*** (II Corinthians 3:17-18, emphasis added).

As the face of Moses was transformed in the presence of God, day by day the child of God is being transformed into the image of Christ by the Spirit of God. Like the caterpillar, the transformation is not seen at first but the final result is the glorification of the children of God. The contrast between the transformation of the face of Moses and that of the child of God is beautifully described in the verses following.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us (II Corinthians 4:6-7).

The light penetrates into the heart of the believer. The transformation of the child of God will not be complete until the redemption of the body. This, however, will not take place until the resurrection of the body.

The Transformation of the Body in Resurrection

As children of God grow in their love for God they begin to anticipate seeing the Lord Jesus and God the Father more and more.

*For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has **prepared** us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be **present with the Lord** (II Corinthians 5:4-8, emphasis added).*

When a believer dies his spirit goes to be with the Lord. Evidently he waits in the presence of the Lord for the resurrection and for a new body when the dead in Christ rise.

The Bible describes a time when some believers will be raised from the dead while others who are still alive will be caught up (raptured) to meet the Lord together in the air. Those who have died in Christ will be joined by those who are still alive when He comes.

*But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then **we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:13-17, emphasis added).*

It appears that some believers will not see death. When the dead in Christ are resurrected and the living believers are raptured, their bodies will all be changed.

The resurrection and the change in the body is described in response to the questions, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" (I Corinthians 15:35). The Scriptures respond with a lengthy description of the death and resurrection of the body of the child of God.

*... The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And **as we have borne***

*the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory** (I Corinthians 15: 42-54, emphasis added).*

The resurrection of the body will bring about an instant and more complete transformation in the child of God. We will bear the image of Christ. We will be incorruptible and immortal, because death has been defeated by Christ. The final transformation will occur when we see the Lord Jesus Christ after our resurrection.

Transformation and Glorification When We See Christ

The ultimate transformation will take place when the child of God is glorified together with Christ at His coming. The Scriptures indicate that the whole creation is waiting for the manifestation of the glory of the children of God.

*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be **glorified together**. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of **the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God** (Romans 8:16-19, emphasis added).*

The Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, is presently seated at the right hand of God in heaven, in great glory and majesty (Hebrews 1:1-4). One day Jesus will come again for us and take us to be with Himself in glory (John 14:2-3). We are eagerly waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ, who will complete our transformation as children of God and citizens of heaven, for it is written,

*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, **the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself** (Philippians 3:20-21, emphasis added).*

Our transformation will be so glorious that our bodies will be conformed to the glorious body of Jesus Christ. Through His suffering He is able to bring us to glory and to see His face (Hebrews 2:10, Revelation 22:3-4). The grand finale will be when the children of God see the Lord Jesus and God the Father together in splendor, majesty, and great glory.

Every believer should be anticipating the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ when we see Him and He takes us to glory. The coming of Jesus Christ will be a glorious revelation and although we have not seen Him we love Him (I Peter 1:7-8). The first book of Peter describes our anticipation.

*... Though now you **do not see Him**, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith-- the salvation of your souls. (I Peter 1:8-9, emphasis added).*

Although we do not see Him now, we rejoice beyond expression in the anticipation of that glorious day.

The Children of God Presented before the Throne of God

One day those who believe shall see the Lord Jesus (Mark 14:62) as He brings us to the Father (John 14:6). As He promised, Christ will return and our faith will be sight on that great day of resurrection. We will then be presented in glory.

*And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "**I believed and therefore I spoke,**" we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that **He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.** For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Corinthians 4:13-18, emphasis added).*

Believers are assured of being brought to God because of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. As we see outward things perishing we know that we are being renewed day by day, and we will be presented before God by Christ. We will be brought before God in purity.

Jesus, in bringing many sons to glory, will present believers as holy and without blame before the throne of God. We will no longer be alienated by our sins.

*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet **now he has reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless, and above reproach in his sight** (Colossians 1:21-22, emphasis added).*

The children of God are presented holy and blameless in the sight of God because they have been reconciled through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. All believers will

stand before the judgment seat of Christ where their works will be rewarded or they will suffer loss (Romans 14:10; I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10). The book of Jude teaches that believers will then be presented faultless before the throne of God by Jesus Christ.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen (Jude 24-25, emphasis added).

Christ is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To God be the glory and majesty, dominion and power, forever and ever!

One of the most beautiful teachings about purity and holiness describes believers and the church as being presented as the bride of Christ.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27, emphasis added).

Jesus Christ loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood when He was crucified on the cross of Calvary (Revelation 1:5). At resurrection time Christ will present us a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish, truly pure in heart. The book of Ephesians likens the marriage relationship to the relationship of Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:23-32). Unlike most church weddings, in Jewish weddings the bride waits for the arrival of the bridegroom. In a similar manner believers are waiting for Jesus Christ with great anticipation because of His love for us and our love for Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ sanctifies and cleanses believers in order that they might be a pure, holy, and glorious bride as she is presented to Himself. This should motivate us to live in purity for Him who so loves us. Amazingly, God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world, "... that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love ..." (Ephesians 1:4). The book of Titus describes our anticipation in looking for Christ,

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works (Titus 2:11-14).

As we wait for the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus, realizing that we are His own special people, we serve Him knowing that He is interceding on our behalf.

Jesus Christ is not only able to present us faultless before the throne of God in glory, but also makes us complete in Him (Colossians 2:9-10). Our life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Christ in us is our only hope of glory (Colossians 1:27-28), because God will see us in Christ. Jesus prayed,

***Sanctify them by Your truth.** Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, **I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world** (John 17:20-24, emphasis added).*

Jesus prayed for believers and He prayed for that future time when they would be with Him and behold His glory. In the meantime believers are instructed to set their minds on things above.

*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory** (Colossians 3:1-4, emphasis added).*

Our lives as believers are hidden in Christ, but when He appears, we will appear with Him in glory. In the meantime, we will continue to trust Him, anticipating the day when we will see Him and He brings us to God.

Accepted in the Beloved

Jesus Himself will bring us to God and present us before the throne. At that time our transformation will be complete, and we shall be holy and without blame before God in love (Ephesians 1:3-4). When Jesus presents us to God, He will accept us. God will make us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:5-6). We can then fully say,

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and without blame before Him in love**, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us **accepted in the Beloved**. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- in Him (Ephesians 1:3-10).*

Not only will we as believers be holy and without blame before Him in love but God will make us accepted in the Beloved. We are accepted by God the Father as He accepts His own Son. Believers are accepted “in Christ” because He lives in us and we live in Him (John 17:20-26). Jesus was asking His Father to receive us as He would receive Him.

Regarding that day, as the Captain of our salvation brings believers as many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10), Jesus made a glorious declaration.

*For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” And again: “I will put My trust in Him.” And again: “**Here am I and the children whom God has given Me**” (Hebrews 2:11-13, emphasis added).*

What a glorious day that will be when that spectacular event takes place. It will be a scene so massive that it is beyond our imagination. The Lord Jesus Christ will bring the souls of all who have believed in Him to heaven and present them before God Almighty, His Father, on His throne. This will be the fulfillment of the promise that He made in the beginning of His ministry on earth, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). On that day, standing before the throne of God, Jesus will present believers in glory as His brethren and as His children, sanctified, pure and holy, and they shall see God.

It will be a day in stark contrast to the day when the children of Israel were brought by Moses to Mount Sinai. As the millions stood before the mountain that day when the glory of God appeared to them they were terrorized. The book of Hebrews describes the vast difference.

For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be

stoned or shot with an arrow.” And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:18-24).

There will be no terror on that day for the children of God will be brought to a different mountain, to the city of the living God, to myriads of angels, and as the massive assembly and church, to God and to Jesus.

We Bless Thee, God and Father

We bless Thee, God and Father, We joy before Thy face;
Beyond dark death forever We share Thy Son’s blest place:
He lives a Man before Thee in cloudless light above,
In Thine unbounded favour, Thine everlasting love.

His Father and our Father, His God and ours Thou art;
And He is Thy Beloved, The gladness of Thy heart;
We’re His, in joy **He brings us** To share His part and place,
To know Thy love and favour, **The shining of Thy face.**

Thy love that now enfolds us Can ne’er wax cold or dim;
In Him that love doth center, and we are loved in Him:
In Him Thy love and **glory** Find their eternal rest;
The many sons – His brethren – In Him, how near, how blest!

Alexander Carruthes
Hymns of Truth and Praise Hymn # 92

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen (Jude 24-25).

17

They Shall See His Face

Revelation 22:4

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). Jesus suffered for our sins that He might bring us to God (I Peter 3:18). When we are brought before God, as His children, what can we anticipate seeing? What does God look like? Will we see His face? One day Moses asked to see His glory and God replied, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live” (Exodus 33:20). Will believers see what Moses could not see? The book of Revelation makes it perfectly clear that we shall see the face of God.

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. **They shall see His face**, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:1-5, emphasis added).*

The scene described above is in the New Jerusalem. Only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will enter that city (Revelation 21:2 & 27). The throne of God and the throne of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) will be in the city. God’s servants will serve Him and they shall see His face. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are included in that company and will see His face. What a blessed and glorious day that will be!

God is love (I John 4:8) and loves the world so much that He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for us that we might have eternal life (John 3:16). Not only are we saved from our sins through Christ (I Timothy 1:15), but through faith we become children of God and will some day see Him.

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is**. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (I John 3:1-3, emphasis added).*

When we see God, as His children, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. Does this mean that we shall be like God because we fully see Him? One thing is certain, at that time our transformation will be complete.

The Scriptures in numerous references reveal God through progressive appearances, visions, and revelations, teaching us what we can anticipate seeing when we see the face of God. Some of these descriptions of God would be terrifying if it were not for His love.

Job, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and others wrote of the terrifying terribleness of God. Some translations use the word awesome!

God has a face and form that resemble that of a man. He also has the appearance of fire. God is light and He is beautiful and infinite. He has been revealed by angels, but the greatest and most complete revelation of God was through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Face and Form of God Resemble that of a Man

God has a face and form that resembles a man. When God created man He said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness ...” (Genesis 1:26). The image of God is like the form of man. Man, however, has a form created from the earth while God has a heavenly form. Man is but a shadow of the form of God.

When God appeared to Abraham and others in the Old Testament, He often appeared in a form like that of man. One day Abraham saw three men, one of whom represented God.

*And **Jehovah** appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre. And he sat at the tent-door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, **three men** standing near him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, Lord, if now I have found favour in thine eyes, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant (Genesis 18:1-3 DBY, emphasis added).*

As the Scripture account unfolds, Abraham addressed one of the men as Lord and bowed before Him. The other two men were angels. Jehovah appeared in the form of a man and Abraham recognized Him as God.

When Jacob was returning to Canaan after being with Laban he encountered God and wrestled with a Man throughout the night.

*And Jacob remained alone; and **a man wrestled with him** until the rising of the dawn. And when he saw that he did not prevail against him, he touched the joint of his thigh; and the joint of Jacob's thigh was dislocated as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the dawn ariseth. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he said to him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall not henceforth be called Jacob, but Israel; for **thou hast wrestled with God**, and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, How is it that thou askest after my name? And he blessed him there. And **Jacob called the name of the place Peniel--For I have seen God face to face**, and my life has been preserved (Genesis 32:24-30, DBY, emphasis added).*

Jacob wrestled with a man, but he believed that he wrestled with God and had seen Him face to face. God also appeared to Joshua, Gideon, and Samson's parents in the form of a man or angel (Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 6:11-23; Judges 13:3-22).

Ezekiel, in his visions of God, also saw the glory of Jehovah having the likeness as the appearance of a man upon a throne (Ezekiel 1:26-28 DBY). The Bible in various places describes God as having a head, hair, a face, eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth, a waist, arms, and feet. These are all characteristics of a man's form or shape, but God is not a man. He is God, and His other descriptions, such as fire, show how much greater He is than men.

God Has the Appearance of Fire

God is revealed throughout the Bible as being like fire. He appeared to Moses as a flame of fire in the midst of a bush (Exodus 3:2-6) and later as a pillar of fire to the children of Israel (Exodus 13:21). God descended on Mount Sinai in fire (Exodus 19:18). The Bible describes this scene in the eyes of the children of Israel, "The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain ..." (Exodus 24:17). God is also described in other Scriptures as a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24, Deuteronomy 9:3, Hebrews 12:29). The Psalmist declared, "A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about" (Psalm 97:3). Ezekiel saw the glory of God as the appearance of a man of fire. He saw this vision repeatedly.

*And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and **upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man** above upon it. And I saw as the look of glowing brass, as the appearance of fire, within it round about; from the appearance of his loins and upward, and from the appearance of his loins and downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah.** And when I saw, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke (Ezekiel 1:26-28 DBY, emphasis added).*

The appearance of the glory of God was glowing like fire all around Him. The form of God, from His loins upward and downward, was the appearance of fire and brightness.

David relates in a Psalm many descriptions and actions of God in response to a time when David called upon Him in distress. Many of these descriptions are likened to fire.

*In my distress I called upon Jehovah, and I cried out to my God; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, into his ears. Then the earth shook and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains trembled and shook, because he was wroth. **There went up a smoke***

out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals burned forth from it. And he bowed the heavens, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, he flew fast upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place, his tent round about him: darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies. From the brightness before him his thick clouds passed forth: hail and coals of fire. And Jehovah thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice: hail and coals of fire. And he sent his arrows, and scattered mine enemies; and he shot forth lightnings, and discomfited them. And the beds of the waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were uncovered at thy rebuke, Jehovah, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils (Psalm 18:6-15 DBY, emphasis added).

David described smoke and fire coming from the nose and mouth of God and the blast of his breath. There was brightness like clouds before God, hail and coals of fire, and lightnings shot forth from Him.

In Flames of Fire, God's Raiment and Hair Were White as Wool

Daniel saw a vision of God as the Ancient of Days seated upon a throne of fire and burning wheels, similar to the vision of Ezekiel.

I beheld till thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was flames of fire, and its wheels burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened (Daniel 7:9-10 DBY, emphasis added).

Daniel's vision showed God in white raiment with white hair on His head. In addition to the flames of fire and burning wheels of fire, a stream of fire came forth from before God as thousands ministered unto Him. Later, he saw one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds to the Ancient of Days, to be given an everlasting kingdom of glory (Daniel 7:13-14).

Moses encountered the Angel of the LORD appearing as a flame of fire in a burning bush (Exodus 3:2). In his first vision of God, Ezekiel describes raging fire and four living creatures with the appearance of burning coals of fire (Ezekiel 1:4-13). There are also various references in the Scriptures indicating that Heaven is a fiery place, inhabited by fiery creatures. Ezekiel mentions the mountain of God and walking in the midst of fiery stones (Ezekiel 28:14-16). A chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared when Elijah was taken to heaven (II Kings 2:1-11). Elisha was surrounded by horses and chariots of fire on one occasion (II Kings 6:17). Angels are described as flames of fire (Psalm 104:4). When Daniel's three friends were cast into the fiery furnace, they were not hurt. As King Nebuchadnezzar said,

...I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God (Daniel 3:25).

Apparently Jesus was in the fire that day. God is fire and dwells in the midst of fire, but He is greater than fire. The fiery form of God radiates light, for God is also light.

God is Light

God is light and He is the source of light. John, in writing about God declared, "... God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). James described God as, "the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

When the children of Israel came out of Egypt they were led by God continually as a pillar of cloud by day and as a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22). On Mount Sinai they witnessed thunderings and lightning flashes (Exodus 20:18). After Moses was in the presence of God on Sinai, his face was shining (Exodus 34:29-30, II Corinthians 3:7). The Psalmist states, "They looked to Him and were **radiant** ..." (Psalm 34:5, emphasis added). The light of God is reflected on others as the moon reflects the sun. David described the light of God as brightness and lightning coming out of darkness.

*He made darkness his secret place, his tent round about him: darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies. **From the brightness before him his thick clouds passed forth: hail and coals of fire. And Jehovah thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice: hail and coals of fire. And he sent his arrows, and scattered mine enemies; and he shot forth lightnings, and discomfited them** (Psalm 18:13-14 DBY, emphasis added).*

God is light, and although there is no darkness in Him, there is darkness about Him. In the study of natural light, it is maintained that light cannot be seen until it is reflected on a surface. Darkness was upon the face of the deep before God created the world (Genesis 1:2). Is reflection a factor in revealing the light of God? Jesus is the light of the world and Christians are the light of the world as they reflect Christ. Sadly, Jesus warned, "If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).

God also abides in His secret place of darkness, darkness of waters, and clouds. Is this another way in which He hides Himself?

Waters were also present before creation (Genesis 1:2). The Bible refers to water in the heavens and water above the heavens (Genesis 1:6-8, Psalm 33:7, Psalm 148:4). Psalm 104:3 states that God He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters.

Brightness, light and lightnings radiate from God. Centuries later Ezekiel saw this light and brightness in his vision of the glory of God.

... I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke (Ezekiel 1:27-28 DBY, emphasis added).

Ezekiel saw brightness or light around the throne of God as a bow or rainbow, as some translations read. In the revelation to John, the throne of God was encircled in an emerald rainbow (Revelation 4:3). Rainbows are colorful, made up of refracted and reflected light. God radiates brightness and light. The prophet Habakkuk, in describing God's brightness, tells how His glory covered the heavens.

*God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. **His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand,** And there His power was hidden. Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet. He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting ... (Habakkuk 3:3-6, emphasis added).*

Habakkuk saw the brightness of God like light with flowing rays flashing from His hands as He stood and measured the earth.

The apostle John, in his vision on the Island of Patmos, described lightnings from the throne of God in the book of Revelation.

*Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a **rainbow** around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded **lightnings, thunderings, and voices** (Revelation 4:2-5, emphasis added).*

John saw a rainbow and lightnings around the throne of God as Ezekiel had seen in his vision by the river Chebar. He also heard thundering and voices from the throne.

The Face of God Radiates Light

The face or countenance of God radiates light. Several Psalms refer to the light of the countenance of God (Psalm 4:6, 44:3, 89:15, 90:8). The countenance of God is not elaborated on in the Scriptures, but that of Jesus provides a more vivid description. The face of Jesus is like that of His Father, for it says of Him:

... who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high ... (Hebrews 1:3, emphasis added).

The book of Hebrews describes the face of Christ as “the sun shining in its strength” (Revelation 1:16). If the face of Jesus radiates light, so does the face of His Father. When Jesus showed His glory to three of His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration “... His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as the light” (Matthew 17:2). Daniel saw a vision of a man clothed in linen whose body, face, and eyes were described.

*I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! **His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.** (Daniel 10:5-6, emphasis added).*

Daniel fell on his face before Him and addressed Him as his lord (Daniel 10:9, 16, 19). It appears that Daniel was seeing a vision of Christ, as the description is very similar to that of Christ in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:13-17) As the face of Christ radiates light, likewise the face of God the Father no doubt radiates light.

God Covers Himself with Light

Not only does His face radiate light, God also covers Himself with light. When speaking to Job after his dialog with his friends, God challenged him, asking him if he could be like God.

*And Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Gird up now thy loins like a man: I will demand of thee, and inform thou me. Wilt thou also annul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now **with glory and excellency, and clothe thyself with majesty and splendour** (Job 40:6-10, DBY, emphasis added).*

A psalmist, in describing the majesty and splendor of God, described Him as covered with light as a garment.

*Bless Jehovah, O my soul! **Jehovah my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with majesty and splendour; Covering thyself with light as with a garment ...** (Psalm 104:1-2 DBY, emphasis added).*

God also dwells in brilliant light. When Daniel blessed God after the secret of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was revealed to him he spoke of light dwelling with God.

*He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And **light dwells with Him** (Daniel 2:22, emphasis added).*

Paul, in writing to Timothy, described God and the Lord Jesus Christ as dwelling in unapproachable light.

*I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, **dwelling in unapproachable light**, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen (I Timothy 6:13-16, emphasis added).*

Finally, in the description of the New Jerusalem, the glory of God and the Lamb provide the light.

*But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the **glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light**. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its **light**, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it (Revelation 21:22-24, emphasis added).*

As the earth receives light from the sun and fire, the light of God radiates from His fire-like form, within the New Jerusalem and upon the new earth. Isaiah the prophet spoke of a day in which God will be our everlasting light.

*The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But **the LORD will be to you an everlasting light**, And your God your glory. our sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For **the LORD will be your everlasting light**, And the days of your mourning shall be ended. (Isaiah 60:19-20, emphasis added).*

The descriptions of God resembling a man, having the appearance of fire, His face radiating light, covering Himself with light, dwelling in light, and shining as everlasting light over the new world are awesome. God is indeed glorious, and He is beautiful!

God is Beautiful

God must be beautiful beyond description. His throne is surrounded by the colors of the rainbow, amber, sapphire, emerald, in appearance like a jasper and a sardius stone. Job anticipated seeing God, and David longed to see His beauty.

*One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to **behold the beauty of Jehovah**, and to inquire of him in his temple. (Psalm 27:4 DBY, emphasis added).*

David also longed to dwell in the house of Jehovah, and expressed his desire to behold His beauty. Moses spoke of the beauty of God as recorded in a Psalm.

*And let the **beauty of Jehovah** our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it. (Psalm 90:17 DBY, emphasis added).*

Moses prayed that the beauty of God would be upon His people Israel and that God would establish their work. Isaiah prophesied that His people would see God in His beauty when he wrote, “**Your eyes will see the King in His beauty**. They will see the land that is far off” (Isaiah 33:17, emphasis added). In speaking of the land far off, he was no doubt speaking of heaven. Zechariah, in prophesying about the salvation of God, spoke of His goodness and beauty.

*And Jehovah their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up upon his land. For how great is his goodness, and **how great is his beauty!** (Zechariah 9:16-17 DBY, emphasis added).*

God is as beautiful as His goodness and glory. We can only imagine how beautiful He will be when we see God face to face. God is infinitely beautiful, visually, in His character, and in all of His attributes.

God is Infinite

God has been described variously as omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing), and omnipresent (everywhere present). These characteristics are described by David in Psalm 139. In the Psalm David wonders about the omnipresence of God. These characteristics serve to further illustrate that God is infinite.

*Where can I go from Your Spirit? **Or where can I flee from Your presence?** If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me (Psalm 139:7-10, emphasis added).*

God is not limited in knowledge, power, or presence. He can be in more than one specific place and everywhere at the same time. His form and place are unlimited. Solomon, in his prayer of dedication of the temple, asked about the dwelling of God.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! (I Kings 8:27).

Solomon understood that God was larger than the heaven of heavens so he wondered how He could dwell in a temple. God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, asked about the place of His rest.

Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? (Isaiah 66:1).

When speaking of heaven as His throne and earth as His footstool, God was indicating the tremendous immensity of His personal size and space. Nevertheless, the throne of God is in heaven, and is described this way throughout the Scriptures.

Jehovah is in the temple of his holiness; Jehovah – his throne is in the heavens; his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men (Psalm 11:4 DBY).

God sits on a throne in heaven and at the same time He fills the universe with His presence. In a coming day God will also dwell among His people.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).

God also lives in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:21, II Corinthians 5:19). He lives in many places at the same time. Nevertheless, God has a form, just as His Son has a form, and is also omnipresent. Before they see God, believers will see Christ, who will then bring them to God.

Seeing Christ in Glory

The Lord Jesus Christ is bringing us as many sons to glory. Before we are brought before the throne to see God the Father we will see the Lord Jesus in glory. At that time He will transform our lowly bodies to be conformed to His glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

One day as Jesus was praying, He prayed for those who had believed in Him (John 17:20-26). He also prayed for future believers. He indicated that He had given them glory that they might be one as the Father and Son are one. Then Jesus expressed His desire that those who believed in Him might be with Him and see His glory.

*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. **Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me;** for You loved Me before the foundation of the world (John 17:20-24, emphasis added).*

During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain one day and was transfigured before them.

*Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. **His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.** And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.” (Matthew 17:1-9, emphasis added).*

John later wrote that they “beheld His glory” (John 1:14), and Peter wrote that they were “eye witnesses of His majesty” (II Peter 1:16). Jesus also promised that He would come again “with the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30).

On the Isle of Patmos John saw two revelations of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first was in the center of seven golden lampstands, and the second was on a white horse.

*Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands **One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.** And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death (Revelation 1:12-18, emphasis added).*

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. **His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.** And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS** (Revelation 19:11-16, emphasis added).*

The first revelation of Christ was in the midst of His church. John saw Him clothed with a golden band around His garment. His head and hair were white as snow and His eyes as a flame of fire. In the second revelation His eyes again were like a flame of fire and He had many crowns on His head.

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; **who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,** and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-4, emphasis added).*

The Lord Jesus Christ is not only taking us to glory but He has revealed in Himself the greatest and fullest manifestation of the glory of God. He is Himself the brightness of His Father's glory. He is the express image of the visual glory of God. The glorious Lord Jesus will bring us before the throne of God.

Daniel had a vision of a glorious man clothed in linen and girded in pure gold. His appearance was like that of John's first revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ when he was on the Island of Patmos.

*...I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold, **a certain man clothed in linen,** and his loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz; and his body was like a chrysolite, and his **face as the appearance of lightning,** and his eyes as torches of fire, and his arms and his feet as the look of burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude ... And I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; and my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. And I heard the voice of his words; and when I heard the voice of his words, I fell into a deep stupor on my face, and my face to the ground. And behold, **a hand touched me,** which set me upon my knees and the palms of my hands. (Daniel 10:5-10 DBY, emphasis added).*

Daniel saw a Man with a face as lightning and eyes as torches of fire. As the Man talked, Daniel turned his face to the ground and became speechless. Then the Man touched his lips.

*And behold, one after **the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips**; and I opened my mouth and spoke, and said unto him that stood before me, **My lord**, by reason of the vision my pains are turned upon me, and I retain no strength. And **how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord?** for as for me, straightway there remaineth no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there **touched me again one like the appearance of a man**, and he strengthened me; and he said, *Fear not, man greatly beloved; peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And as he was speaking with me I was strengthened, and I said, **Let my lord speak**; for thou hast strengthened me.* (Daniel 10:16-19 DBY, emphasis added).*

Daniel addressed the Man as his Lord. Truly He was a glorious man. It appears that Daniel saw a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ that day. Since the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, we can anticipate what God will look like. When the Lord Jesus brings us to the Father, we shall see the glory of God.

Seeing the Glory of God

The Lord Jesus Christ will be “bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10). He is the only one who can bring us as believers to the glory of heaven and to His Father. He is not only our Savior but He is the only one who is worthy to ascend to God. David identified Him as the King of glory and spoke of those who seek the face of God.

The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters. Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face. Selah. Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah (Psalm 24:1-10).

In David's psalm he asks who may ascend to the hill of the LORD or stand in His holy place? The Lord Jesus Christ is the only worthy one with a pure heart. He is the one who enters the everlasting doors. He is the King of glory, who will lead many sons to glory, where they will see God. The Apostle Paul writes of the coming of Christ and describes the glory of God in a letter challenging Timothy.

*I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord **Jesus Christ's appearing**, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, **dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see**, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen (I Timothy 6:13-16, emphasis added).*

Christ dwells in unapproachable light, which no man has seen or can see. He dwells with His Father and sits in glory at the right hand of the Majesty on High. Some day, He will bring us as “many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10) when we will see God.

The last full revelation of the glory of God was seen by John on the Island of Patmos. He saw an awesome sight of God upon a throne in heaven.

*After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” Immediately **I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald** (Revelation 4:1-3, emphasis added).*

The One who sat on the throne was God the Father. His appearance was like beautiful jasper stones, which come in a variety of colors, and sardius stones, which are orange or red in color. God evidently shines like precious jewels. An emerald rainbow shines around the throne. What a beautiful and glorious sight! How beautiful God must be!

The throne of God is also surrounded by twenty-four elders, sitting on thrones, wearing white robes, and wearing gold crowns on their heads. Lightnings, thunderings, and voices proceed from the throne (Revelation 4:4-5). Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which we are told are the seven Spirits of God. Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. Four living creatures, having six wings and full of eyes and differing faces, were around the throne giving glory, honor, and thanks to God. They are evidently seraphim, and never rest day or night, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come!” (Revelation 4:5-8). The elders also fall before God and worship Him, casting their crowns before the throne and acknowledging His worthiness as their creator (Revelation 4:10-11). Some day we as believers will join the host of heaven in worshipping God.

John saw a scroll in the hand of God on the throne. It was sealed and no one was found worthy to open the scroll and he wept. One of the elders said to him,

... *“Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” And I looked, and behold, **in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne**”* (Revelation 5:5-7, emphasis added).

The Lamb in the midst of the throne of God is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was slain at Calvary. He boldly came and took the scroll out of the hand of God. When He had done so, the four creatures and the elders fell down and worshipped Him.

*Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: **“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”** Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: **“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”*** (Revelation 5:8-12, emphasis added).

The Lord Jesus Christ is worthy to be worshipped because He has redeemed His people to God by His blood. He rightfully is the center of glory as we stand before the face of God.

The face and form of God are not described in the book of Revelation. The vision of Ezekiel, described earlier in this chapter, is very similar to that of John, except that the form of God is shown as having the form of a man, and His form having the appearance of fire. Ezekiel is the only writer who gives a description of the form of God. The vision of Daniel, also described earlier in the chapter, revealed the Ancient of Days, or God the Father, as having white hair and wearing a white garment, very much like the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the first chapter of Revelation. The mention of the white hair of God is the closest to any reference in the Scriptures giving a description of the face of God.

The face of God is mentioned numerous times throughout the Bible, as well as the brightness of His countenance. Many times His face is said to be hidden. Moses asked to see the glory of God and God told him that no man could see His face and live (Exodus 33:18-20). God’s answer indicates that He has a face. Since His Son, the Lord Jesus, is the “brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:1-

2), as He looks like His Father, God will look like Him. John described Jesus as the Son of Man in the glory of heaven.

*Then I turned to see ... One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. **His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire ... and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.** And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead (Revelation 1:12-16, emphasis added).*

God will look like His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When John saw Jesus he fell at His feet as dead. When Moses was in the presence of God, his face shone (Exodus 34:29-35). Will we, as David, look upon God, with faces radiant and unashamed? (Psalm 34:5). Will we be as ecstatic as Stephen, who while he was being martyred, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God?

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts 7:55-56).

As believers our blessedness is that we will someday fall on our faces before the throne of God, with the Lord Jesus Christ at His right hand. How we are yearning more and more to see the Father and Son in glory.

Yearning to See God

As men learned about God and believed in Him, they longed to see Him. Long ago Job expressed his desire to see God.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27).

Job looked for his redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ and he understood that after he died he would be raised again to see God. His anticipation was expressed in a great yearning within his heart to see God. Centuries later, when Moses was on the mountain of Sinai talking with God, he asked to see His glory. God answered Moses by saying,

... Thou canst not see my face; for Man shall not see me, and live. And Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me: there shalt thou stand on the rock. And it shall come to pass, when my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand, until I have passed by. And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see me from behind; but my face shall not be seen (Exodus 33:20-23 DBY).

God allowed Moses to see Him from behind. Moses saw the form of God but did not see His face. Some day, believers will see what Moses did not see, the face of God. David, in speaking of the men of this world, expected to see God and said to God,

... O Jehovah, from men of this age: their portion is in this life, and their belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure; they have their fill of sons, and leave the rest of their substance to their children. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness (Psalm 17:14-15 DBY).

David not only expected to see God but anticipated awaking with His likeness. One of David's prayers was that he might dwell in the house of God, see His beauty, and ask Him questions.

*One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to **behold the beauty of Jehovah**, and to inquire of him in his temple (Psalm 27:4 DBY, emphasis added).*

Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). This promised is repeated in the last chapter of the Bible, "They shall see His face ..." (Revelation 22:4). What a blessed day that will be when as purified sons of God we shall see the face of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but as He promised, we shall see the face the face of our heavenly Father. We shall join the host of heaven praising, thanking, and worshipping God for His wonderful love and glorious salvation through His Son. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. **They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.** There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:3-4, emphasis added).*

A Glorious Morrow

When we reach our peaceful dwelling On the strong eternal hills,
And our praise to Him is swelling, Who the vast creation fills –
When the paths of prayer and duty And affliction all are trod,
And we wake and see the beauty Of our Savior and our God:
Oh! 'twill be a glorious morrow To a dark and stormy day,
When we smile upon our sorrow, And the storms have passed away.

With the light of resurrection, When our changed bodies glow,
And we gain the full perfection Of the bliss begun below –
When the life the flesh obscureth In each radiant form shall shine,
And the joy that aye endureth Flashes forth in beams divine:
Oh! 'twill be a glorious morrow To a dark and stormy day,
When we smile upon our sorrow, And the storms have passed away.

Shall the memory be banished Of His kindness and His care,
When the wants and woes are vanished, Which He loved to soothe and share?
All the way by which He led us, All the grievings which He bore,
And the patient love He taught us, Shall we think of them no more?
Oh! 'twill be a glorious morrow To a dark and stormy day,
When we smile upon our sorrow, And the storms have passed away.

We shall read the tender meaning Of the sorrows and alarms,
As we trod the desert leaning, On His everlasting arms;
And His rest will be the dearer When we think of weary ways.
And His light will shine the clearer As we muse on cloudy days.
Oh! 'twill be a glorious morrow To a dark and stormy day,
When we smile upon our sorrow, And the storms have passed away.

W.P. Mackay
Hymns of Truth and Praise #623

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*But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known **the Holy Scriptures**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work** (II Timothy 3:14-17, emphasis added).*

*And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, **that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit** (II Peter:19-21, emphasis added).*

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About the Author

Allen Hanson has been an elder and Bible teacher at Zion Christian Assembly in Sheboygan, Wisconsin for nearly forty years.

He attended Oklahoma Baptist University and received a B.A. degree from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, majoring in philosophy and art. He also earned an M.A. degree from the University of Iowa, and a Specialist Certification from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. He became a Christian during his senior year in college.

Allen has been a Bible teacher for over fifty years, reading through the Scriptures regularly, in a wide variety of translations, and is an avid student of the Bible. He researches Bible doctrines, searching for the truths of the Word of God and is a student of Hebrew and Greek. He has written numerous outlines and Bible studies in conjunction with congregational teaching. He has also written several guides for high school students in Sunday school and for new Christians on major doctrines of the Bible. He is also a student of Biblical archeology.

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Allen and his wife Esther are parents of five children, twenty-two grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren. All of their children are believers. Their oldest son Joel is an elder and Bible teacher and their youngest son Dane is a missionary with Operation Mobilization in central Europe.