

We Would See Jesus



Part 4: The Lord in Glory

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

A ReVision Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Welcome to *The Lord in Glory*

Jesus Christ has been exalted in glory, and the Scriptures offer many glimpses and descriptions of Him as He rules from the right hand of God the Father.

Our duty is to set our minds on those images, to see Jesus as He is, where He is, so that He might make us more like Himself.

In this final part of our study, “We Would See Jesus,” we look to the Scriptures to guide us in setting the Lord always before us, exalted in splendor, majesty, glory, and might.

We’re pleased to provide these *ReVision* studies at no cost, to help you in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

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T. M. Moore
Principal

1 Believing is Seeing

...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...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.” 1 Peter 1.7-9, 13-16

The upward call

The Venerable Bede (672-735) concisely captured the focus of our current study, “We Would See Jesus,” in this excerpt from his “A Hymn”:¹

May our affections thither tend,
And thither constantly ascend,
Where, seated on the Father’s throne,
Thee reigning in the heavens we own!

If we want to “own” Jesus as Savior and Lord, we need to see Him. To see Jesus, we’ll have to look, look through the veil that separates the seen and unseen worlds, and look with the eyes of our heart, to see by faith our Lord exalted in glory at the Father’s right hand. We must consider Jesus, taking the time to study relevant texts, meditating deeply and often, and looking to other believers for help.

We want to see Jesus, exalted in glory, to set the Lord always before us, and to fix our eyes on the things that are above, where Christ is seated in heavenly places, so our affections – our love – will always “thither tend”.

This challenge has been faced by Christians in every age. We may expect, as we consider Jesus in this way, that our love for Him will grow, and He will take more shape within us, forming us into His own likeness, increasing in us day by day. This is the life of the “upward call of God” as Paul put it (Phil. 3.14), and if we want to see Jesus, we’ll have to press on, letting our affections soar into the heavenlies as the light of Christ illumines our souls from on high.

We have to believe

Jesus is holy, and He dwells in radiant glory, which will be fully revealed to all the world at His coming. This revelation will be so strong as to raise all who believe to join the Lord as He returns, and to strike such fear in those who do not believe that they would wish the mountains to fall on them, and conceal them from His sight.

We cannot see Him now, not with our physical eyes, though one day we shall, and then we will be like Him (1 Jn. 3.1-3). But we can see Him with the eyes of the heart – the eye of faith – where we see the glory of the Lord in His radiant face (2 Cor. 4.6). By looking to what we know of Him from the Word, and by gathering glimpses of His glory from creation, then combining and clarifying these increasingly as the Spirit enables, we may see Jesus in all His radiance, strength, loving kindness, glory, and power.

What’s even more surprising, we have been seated with Jesus in heavenly places (Eph. 2.6), so that we may not only see Him, but may look with His mind (1 Cor. 2.16) at our lives and times, and drawing on His strength, pursue our callings in His holiness and for His glory.

¹ Bede the Venerable, “A Hymn,” Elizabeth Charles, tr., in James H. Trott, ed., *A Sacrifice of Praise* (Nashville: Cumberland House, 1999), p. 25.

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We want to see Jesus, seated in regal splendor, clothed in light, dazzling in royal colors, speaking the upholding Word of power, His scepter of uprightness on His lap, and a two-edged Sword in His hand. We want to look in His eyes, dark with mystery but warm and illuminating as we see Him looking on us. His hair flares with purest white fire, and under His shining feet a growing pile of enemies grovels. Angels crowd around Him, awaiting His every command, to serve His people and creation according to His will.

He is beautiful beyond description, holy without peer, and stronger than all creation. And He lays on you His strong right hand and says, “Don’t be afraid.” Rejoice and be at peace in Him!

Peter understood that we cannot see Jesus now, not with physical eyes. But he also understood that we can love Him, and that we will love Him more to the extent that we look to the Spirit to open the aperture of our soul and let in the light of glory from the face of Jesus Christ. But we must *believe* we can see Him thusly, or else we will not see Him at all. As Peter might put it, when it comes to seeing Jesus in His glory, believing is seeing, and not the other way around.

The beginning of His glory

The glory that is and that emanates from Jesus began at His ascension. We don’t hear much about the ascension of Jesus. We read of it in Acts 1.9-11, and then we move on to more earth-bound matters.

But the ascension of Jesus teaches us how to see Him in His glory. Scripture contains a rich gallery of images of Jesus, seated on His throne, and doing from heaven all that is necessary for the progress of His Kingdom on earth. But we cannot understand the scope of Jesus’ power, and we cannot fully appreciate the hope and inheritance which are ours in Him, nor the power of mercy and grace available to us daily, until we understand what it means when we confess in the Apostles’ Creed, “He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”

In this part of our study, therefore, we will take a more careful look at the order of events by which Jesus ascended into glory and took His place at the right hand of God. We must believe that what the Scriptures teach about the ascension of our Lord is important for us as His followers. For if we believe what we see in the Scriptures, we will believe in the power of Jesus to make all things new, and, believing, we will realize more of that newness in our own lives day by day.

For reflection

1. Why do we say that “believing is seeing” when it comes to Jesus exalted in glory?
2. What do you understand about Jesus’ ascension? What “order of events” do you see with the eyes of your heart?
3. Why should we expect to have our love for Jesus increase as we see more clearly the events of His ascension?

Next steps – Preparation: Memorize the excerpt from Bede’s “A Hymn” and use it as part of your prayers for the next few days.

2 Christ Ascended

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Acts 1.9

Taken up, but not taken away

During the course of His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke about His ascension into heaven. He told the unbelieving Jews that He would be “going away” and that where He was going, they would not be able to come (Jn. 8.21). He told the disciples He was going to His Father’s house, where He would “prepare a place” for them (Jn. 14.2, 3). “A little while longer,” He explained, “and the world will see Me no more” (Jn. 14.19). Nevertheless, He promised His disciples, “but you will see Me.”

How could they – and how can we – see Jesus, since He is no longer with us, as He was during His sojourn on earth? In his book, *Exalted above the heavens*, Peter C. Orr explains: “The knowledge of God is revealed in the face of Christ. Thus with Christ removed from the earth the availability of this revelation seems compromised. However, through the gospel and the illuminating work of God in the heart, Christ is made manifest, his face can be comprehended, the icon of God grasped and the knowledge of the glory of God attained.”

The Gospel is simply the Good News of God’s Kingdom, of Jesus as its King, and of the salvation and restoration we may know by grace through faith in Him. This Good News is the theme of all Scripture (Jn. 5.39); thus, as we read through the Bible, we expect to discover Jesus, present in every text, so that we may *see Him* with the eyes of our heart, even though He has ascended beyond physical sight and is seated at the right hand of God in heavenly places. As the Spirit of God illuminates the revelation of Jesus Christ, we may form an understanding of Him in our hearts and minds that leads us to love Him more, and to be increasingly transformed into His image. As we *believe* what the Spirit shows us from God’s Word, we may expect to *see* Jesus in His glory.

But we must apply ourselves to the specific revelation of God that can bring the light of Christ into our souls – in prayer, by meditation and patient contemplation – so that we may see, as it were, beyond the veil, into the eternal throne room of the Lord. Then, as we set our minds on the things that are above, we can nurture a vision of Christ enthroned, that we can set before us always, so that we know His Presence with us for hope, power, righteousness, peace, and joy at all times.

The work of nurturing such a vision begins with the ascension of our Lord, as He passed out of physical sight, through the heavens, and returned to His Father’s house, victorious over sin, death, and the devil. It is essential that we *see* this event, and what it leads to, as the Scriptures report. For, as Peter C. Orr explains, “Christian hope, Christian life, Christian faith and Christian theology are all inextricably bound up with the exalted Christ.”

Let’s consider three passages of the Gospel in Scripture that can help us to envision this glorious event.

Acts 1.9

This is the obvious place to begin in following Jesus as He ascended from the earth into the throne room of the Lord. The text is clear. Whatever your vision of Jesus during His earthly sojourn may be – that welcoming, strong, compassionate, patient, healing Poet and Savior – you should not have any difficulty envisioning Him rising from the earth. Jesus “was taken up.” He began to ascend bodily from the presence of His disciples. Then “a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

That’s not too hard to envision, either. Jesus ascended into a cloud, then He “passed through the heavens”

(Heb. 4.14), which, while we cannot see this with the physical eye, we can certainly imagine with a little effort. We don't need to see Jesus moving to the edge of the physical universe, as if heaven existed somewhere beyond the cosmos. Rather, He simply passed out of the seen realm into the unseen realm, which exists all around us all the time (Heb. 12.1).

And this brings us to our second text.

Psalm 47

Psalm 47 may have been written to celebrate the ascension of Solomon to the throne of Israel (since it is a psalm of the sons of Korah, who served during Solomon's day, 1 Chron. 26.19). However, the psalm uses the ascension of Solomon to recall the sovereign rule of God, and to look forward to the ascension of the coming King, not just of Israel, but of all the earth (Ps. 47.3, 9).

The psalmists envision God (Jesus) going up, greeted by a great shout (v. 5). As Jesus entered the unseen realm, having ascended from the earth and passed through the heavens, He was welcomed by a great shout and "the sound of a trumpet" (v. 5), announcing His return as the conquering King. With that, all the assembled hosts of heaven – departed saints and majestic angels – burst into applause (v. 1) and hailed Him with loud voices as the awesome and great "King over all the earth" (vv. 1, 2).

Praise erupted all around (vv. 6, 7), and shouts went up concerning His coming victory over all peoples and all the earth. Praise and shouting continued, and glad declarations of the coming inheritance – He Himself, Who is the "excellence of Jacob" – which Paul prayed that we might see in Ephesians 1.15-23.

Now switch to the vision granted to Daniel.

Daniel 7.9-14

Jesus – "One like the Son of Man" – entered heaven, carried on the clouds that received Him above the earth (Dan. 7.13). As He emerged from those clouds, a great shout, the sound of a trumpet, and an irrepressible uproar of shouting and praise arose throughout the unseen realm. He moved through "thousands and thousands" of those who minister to the Ancient of Days, coming through that clapping, shouting, praise-singing crowd, toward the throne of Him Who is seated in holiness and fire (v. 9). Another throne was made ready (v. 9), and the ascended Jesus made His way there to take His place, in His glorified body, with the trumpets and plaudits resounding from a multitude greater than can be numbered.

The scene recalls the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but multiplied, enlarged, expanded, and made brilliant by a factor beyond anything we can imagine. Jesus continued His victory procession toward the throne of His Father, as the cheering throngs of saints and angels "brought Him near" to the Ancient of Days. Can you see it? Departed saints and holy angels rushed to Jesus' side from the far reaches of the unseen realm. Jesus welcomed them and received their praise, all the while resolutely advancing toward His Father in glory.

Jesus ascended into heaven. He has returned to His Father's house. The place was filled with celebrations of praise and expressions of confidence in what Jesus' return portended. And for very good reason, indeed. For now, with Jesus' return, the promise can begin to be realized of a Kingdom in heaven and on earth which will never end (Is. 9.7).

For reflection

1. Why should you try to envision the ascension of Jesus into heaven?
2. How does seeing Jesus as He ascended improve your ability to fix your mind on the things that are above?

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3. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that faith is the *evidence* of things not seen (Heb. 11.1). How should seeing Jesus in His ascension affect your daily walk with Him? What evidence should you expect to see in your life of the fact that you *see* this unseen scene?

Next steps – Transformation: Fix the vision of Jesus ascending in your mind, and let it call you to prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and anticipation throughout the day.

3 Christ Enthroned

*The LORD said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”
The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Psalm 110.1, 2*

Reenchanted with Christ?

In his book, *Gentle and Lowly*, Dane Ortlund succinctly expressed what we’re trying to accomplish in this study: “Allow yourself to be allured. Why not build in to your life unhurried quiet, where, among other disciplines, you consider the radiance of who [Jesus] actually is, what animates him, what his deepest delight is? Why not give your soul room to be reenchanted with Christ time and again?”

This is the aim of our study, “We Would See Jesus” – to consider Jesus more closely, carefully, and continuously, praying as we do that God would open the eyes of our heart that we might know the hope, inheritance, and power we have in Him; see the glory radiating from the face of Jesus Christ; grow in love for Him; and be transformed increasingly into His likeness.

Having considered Jesus in His incarnation, and found him to be welcoming, strong, compassionate, poetic, and resolute, even in the midst of excruciating suffering, we are now considering Jesus glorified, as He ascended into heaven amid the shouts and praises and trumpets of an innumerable multitude of angels and departed saints. The court of heaven welcomed the returning King like the crowds in Jerusalem hailed Him at the beginning of His passion week. But here the hurrahs and the rejoicing were perfect and infinitely magnified, sustained, and sincere, as we observe this holy congregation thronging around Jesus and ushering Him to the throne of the Ancient of Days.

If you have not yet, stop now to contemplate this scene. I’m only asking you to see, with the eye of your heart, what the Scriptures vividly describe in the passages we have considered thus far. Let the vision of Jesus’ ascension grow in your soul like a flowering plant of revelation, as you let your hope soar, focus on Him Who is your inheritance, and enter with that heavenly multitude into His glory and power. As Ortlund says, “Why not give your soul room to be reenchanted with Christ time and again?”

Believe that you can see Him in this setting, and you will see Him more and more clearly each time you consider Jesus, the Lord in glory.

Silence in heaven

As Christ arrived at the throne of God, we can imagine that a great silence fell upon the multitudes of heaven, as is sometimes the case (cf. Rev. 8.1). The eternal God was about to speak, and His speech has been recorded for us (Ps. 110.1, 4):

“Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool...
You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Whereupon Jesus received the crown of glory which He earned by His obedience to the Father, a crown which is actually many crowns (Rev. 19.12), since He was given rule not only over the Kingdom of David but over “all peoples, nations, and languages”, that “they should serve Him” for “His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom *the one* which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7. 14, 15;

Rev. 11.15). At that, the multitudes in heaven, led by the saints of God, could no longer restrain themselves (Rev. 11.17, 18):

“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.
The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

God spoke again: “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.” And now Jesus is given the Name above all names – the Name, which is also His title: Lord. And the hosts of heaven fall to their knees in joyful celebration, and confess, as one day all will, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2.9-11).

Now King Jesus speaks, showing that He clearly understands and embraces His charge: “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give *You* the nations *for* Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Ps. 2.7, 8).

The eternal decrees of God are placed in the hands of King Jesus, a scroll and scepter of uprightness (Ps. 45.6), symbolizing Jesus’ authority to administer the divine economy through glorious seasons of refreshing unto the restoration of all things (Rev. 5.1-8; Acts 3.19-21; cf. Eccl. 7.29). Then, “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,
10 And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5.8-10)

Beautiful Savior

Jesus took His seat at the right hand of God the Father – the fairest of all the sons of men, our beautiful Savior and Lord and King (Ps. 45.2; Ps. 27.4). Beautiful music – strings and horns (Pss. 45.8 NASB; Ps. 47) and glorious praise pour from every sector of the heavenly realm as the hosts of heaven rejoice and give praise. The sweet smells of myrrh and aloes and cassia emanate from Jesus’ royal robe as the celebration continues (Ps. 45.8). Our beautiful Savior has taken His throne; He has received the government upon His worthy shoulders, and He has begun to reign as the wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace, for justice and righteousness over a Kingdom which will know no end (Is. 9.6, 7).

In the midst of the celebration, the Ancient of Days speaks unto the ages:

“Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
Worship the LORD with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.
Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,

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For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” (Ps. 2.10-12 NASB)

We do not have to imagine this scene; it has been revealed for us. But we must believe that God wants us to glimpse this glorious coronation, indeed, to contemplate it frequently, and to enter it by faith, survey it with the eye of our heart, and let it become firmly and ever more clearly incised on our heart, mind, and conscience.

For now we begin to consider Jesus in His glory, that we may be transformed, from glory to glory, to be more and more like Him.

For reflection

1. Have you taken the time to meditate thoroughly on this scene? How does it appear to you?
2. What does it mean to “take refuge” in Jesus as Lord? Does it include considering Him in His glory? Explain.
3. How would you expect regularly revisiting this scene to affect your daily walk with the Lord?

Next steps – Transformation: Take time today to review the scene of Christ’s enthronement several times. Do you find it becomes clearer and more “enchanting” each time you consider it?

4 Lord of the Spirit World

But to which of the angels has He ever said:

“Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Hebrews 1.13, 14

Things hoped for, things unseen

True saving and sanctifying faith takes as its object things inaccessible to our physical eyes, but visible through the eyes of the heart (Eph. 1.15-23). As the writer of Hebrews defines such faith, “Now faith is the *assurance of things hoped for* and the *evidence of things not seen*” (Heb. 11.1 my translation, emphasis added). It behooves us, for the sake of increasing in faith, to become familiar with those unseen, hoped-for things. Or, as Jonathan Edwards put it in his sermon, “Praise, One of the Chief Employments of Heaven”, “Labour after more and more of those principles from whence the praise of the saints in heaven doth arise. You have already heard that the saints in heaven do praise the Lord so fervently, because they see Him; labour therefore that you, though you have not an immediate vision of God, as they have, may yet have a clear spiritual sight of Him, and that you may know more of God, and have frequent discoveries of Him made to you.”

Seeing Jesus, exalted in glory, depends, in the first place, on seeing Him clearly as He is revealed in the gospels, when He walked among us. Seeing that same Jesus, now glorified, exalted, and enthroned in majesty on high, requires some effort, an effort which will seem strange, unfamiliar, or perhaps even unwise to some.

But Paul exhorts us to such efforts when he writes, “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” (Col. 3.1, 2). It is our duty and privilege to increase in “clear spiritual sight” of Jesus and the glory that surrounds Him in heavenly places. This is the burden of our study overall, and particularly in this part of our study, as we focus on what Scripture reveals about Jesus, exalted, enthroned, and ruling in majesty at the right hand of God.

Let’s consider yet one more facet of the ascension and exaltation of Jesus, to see why it is so important that we understand this.

Subjection of angels

Daniel showed us that, in the throne room of the ancient of days, a “thousand thousands ministered to Him” (Dan. 7.10). These were both angels and departed saints, each with their own specific calling in relation to the glory of God. The saints who have preceded us to glory, principally serve God in two ways, as is revealed in Revelation 4 and 5. First, as Edwards explained, they sing His praises; second, they bear our prayers before Him as if our prayers were bowls of incense. I do not presume to know all of what that means; at the very least, however, the saints in glory seem to have some role in making our prayers presentable to God. We have no instruction from Scripture directing us to pray to saints. But Scripture does reveal the saints functioning in somewhat of an intercessory role for us. Presumably, that role continues to this day.

Thus, the more we pray, the more the court of heaven fills with the fragrance of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and our prayers already begin to bring glory to God *in heaven* through the work of the saints above.

But there is more.

Prior to Jesus’ exaltation, all angelic beings were subject to God the Father. We know that God sent angels from time to time as messengers or as helpers for His people. Jesus acknowledged that the angels were subject to the Father, Who could dispatch them to His aid, if Jesus so chose (cf. Matt. 27.53). Angels are

frightening and powerful spiritual beings. When angels appear to human beings in Scripture, the people immediately fall down in terror. In fact, a common greeting of angels to humans is, “Fear not.” Angels are so powerful that, as Jerome once observed, a single one of them struck down 185,000 Assyrians in one night! They are so strong, that they can hold back and direct the winds of the earth (Rev. 7.1).

Peter tells us that, as Jesus assumed His throne in heaven, God the Father put the angels under His command. Jesus, he wrote, “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” (1 Pet. 3.22). The millions of angels are now available to Jesus to serve us as He pleases, to go where He sends them, to use them *to serve those who believe*, that we might fulfill our callings to be witnesses to Jesus, make disciples, build His Church, advance His Kingdom, and live to the glory of God.

We do not expect to see angels as we go about our daily tasks in pursuit of our calling to the Kingdom and glory of God (Heb. 13.1, 2). But can we see them, at the ready before Jesus, awaiting His orders to rush to our aid, in unseen and largely unacknowledged ways, to help and enable us to realize more of our Kingdom-and-glory calling from the Lord? The book of Acts gives us just enough of a glimpse at the workings of angels that we should be encouraged to believe that they are attending to and serving us; and that as long as it is the will of the Lord, we will have all their strength and power available for our every need.

And still there is more.

Fall guy

From the Old Testament, it seems that, although Satan’s rebellion against God was foiled early on, yet the deceiver and his ilk still had access to the heavenly realms, for accountability to God for their doings. This seems clear from Job 1 and 2. They were still under the power and authority of God the Father; but they had some, if only minimal access, to the heavenly realm.

With the ascension and exaltation of Jesus, all that changed. Jesus charged the great angel Michael to cast the devil and all his henchmen from out of the heavenly realm, once and for all, so that there was no longer “a place found for them in heaven” (Rev. 12.5-8). Satan and his angels were cast to the earth, where they wage a ferocious spiritual warfare against the saints of God.

A warfare that they might ultimately prevail in, were it not for one thing: Jesus has bound them in spiritual chains of restriction, preventing them from promulgating their lies to all people, and preserving His saints from their worst ravages (Matt. 12.22-29). Satan’s punishment now is to watch helplessly as Jesus plunders his holdings, winning souls for salvation, restoring the creation to its beauty, causing His goodness to abound in all kinds of cultural forms, and shrinking the bounds of Satan’s dominion day by day.

We are the beneficiaries of Satan’s fall. We have the Spirit of God, sent from Jesus and the Father. Angels are at work throughout the world.

And all this is orchestrated, directed, and sustained by the watchful eyes and powerful Word of our glorious and exalted King. The more “frequent discoveries” we make of Jesus, exalted in glory, the more our hope, our confidence, and our power to follow Him will increase as well.

For reflection

1. How should we expect angels to help us in our walk with and work for the Lord?
2. What must we do to prevail in the spiritual warfare that Satan inflicts on us?
3. How can we glorify God through our prayers?

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Next steps – Transformation: Thank God for angels and departed saints, ever before Him in glory, and ever at work for His glory through your life.

5 Lord of All Creation

*The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty;
The LORD is clothed,
He has girded Himself with strength.
Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved.
Your throne is established from of old;
You are from everlasting.* Psalm 93.1, 2

Enthroned and reigning

Jesus – our welcoming, strong, compassionate, patient, poetic, and triumphant Savior – has been enthroned in glory, radiant as the sun, seated at the Father’s right hand, surrounded by the unceasing worship of departed saints, and attended to by myriads of myriads of angels.

Can you see Him there? Does your heart take joy to consider such a glorious scene? John Calvin (1509-1564) offers helpful insights to the meaning of Jesus’ exaltation and reign, and of what this means for our ability to see Him. Calvin’s comments on select passages of Scripture can help us consider Jesus and see Him with greater love and obedience.

The Son of God, Calvin wrote, has been placed “in the Highest seat of honor, that He may have pre-eminence over angels as well as men, and may bring under control all creatures in heaven and in earth” (*Commentary on Colossians 1.17*). “In this then,” Calvin continued elsewhere, “consists the glory of God, that He governs mankind according to His will. It is said that He clothes Himself with majesty and strength...to show His wisdom and righteousness in the government of mankind” (*Commentary on Psalm 93.1*).

To see Jesus as glorified, given the Name which is above every name, and the glory of God shining from His face (2 Cor. 4.6; Rev. 1.16), is to see the Ruler of the vast cosmos, the One Who “preserves the whole world” (*Commentary on Hebrews 1.3*), and maintains the heavens and the earth by His mighty ruling power. To see Him in this place, in this power, in this majesty, strength, righteousness, wisdom, and beauty, is to love Him with greater love and to be transformed increasingly into His likeness (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

To see Jesus in this capacity and setting is the great privilege of those who have had the eyes of their heart opened for the light of divine revelation to enter, bathe, refresh, and transform their souls in line with that glorious vision of unseen things (Eph. 1.15ff). If once we fix our minds on these things that are above, where Christ is seated in the heavenly places, and see ourselves as seated with Him there (Eph. 3.6), we will swell with thanksgiving and longing for richer and fuller exposures to this beatific vision, that we may set the Lord always before us, and thus dwell in fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16.8, 11).

To fill all things

We have seen that the purpose of Jesus’ rule over the vast cosmos is to fill all things in all things with Himself; and He does this by gathering and building His Church (Eph. 1.22, 23; 4.8-10). The rule of King Jesus embraces all created things. Nothing exists on its own power; nothing continues to exist by any inherent properties or powers. Everything exists and does what it does because Jesus rules it to be as it is: “The heavens revolve daily, and, immense as is their fabric, and inconceivable the rapidity of their revolutions, we experience no concussion — no disturbance in the harmony of their motion. The sun, though varying its course every diurnal revolution, returns annually to the same point. The planets, in all their wanderings, maintain their respective positions. How could the earth hang suspended in the air were it not upheld by God’s hand? By what means could it maintain itself unmoved, while the heavens above are in constant rapid motion, did not its Divine Maker fix and establish it?” (Calvin, *Commentary on Psalm 93.1*)

In his commentary on Hebrews 1.3, Calvin puts it this way: “To uphold or to bear here means to preserve or to continue all that is created in its own state; for he intimates that all things would instantly come to nothing, were they not sustained by His power.... Hence the ‘word’ here means simply a nod; and the sense is, that Christ Who preserves the whole world by a nod only, did not yet refuse the office of effecting our purgation.” As each new day dawns for each creature, each particle, and each galaxy, Jesus simply nods toward it as if to say, “Do that again.”

All the focus of Jesus’ rule is on the wellbeing of the Church and the progress of Christ’s Kingdom on earth. He has purged our sins, and now He intends to build His Church to be a thing of beauty and joy and praise in the earth: “Christ left the world and ascended to the Father; first, to subdue all powers to Himself, and to render angels obedient; next, to restrain the devil, and to protect and preserve the Church by His help, as well as all the elect of God the Father” (Calvin, *Commentary on Daniel 7.14*).

It is “for the Church” (Eph. 1.22) – for its advantage, edification, growth, and the progress of the Kingdom through it – that Christ the majestic and strong King of nations rules all things “by a nod.” As we see Jesus, ruling in glory, let our hearts be filled with rejoicing, and let us resolve to serve Him for the glory of God in everything we do.

See Jesus in the ruled creation

We should expect to see Jesus in all the works of His hands. In his commentary on Psalm 19.1, Calvin wrote “There is certainly nothing so obscure or contemptible, even in the smallest corners of the earth, in which some marks of the power and wisdom of God may not be seen...” Wherever we turn, whatever part of life in this world we observe or join, the rule of King Jesus is active in it. In the wonders of creation, His beauty is revealed. In the blessing of work, His provision is made known. In the pleasure and complexity of relationships, His Presence is known, His features can be glimpsed, and His Word comes to lived expression.

Calvin says we are remiss if we fail to seek the glory of Jesus in the multitude of His works in creation: “...it becomes us to begin the study of his works with reverence, that we may take delight in them, contemptible though they be in the estimation of the reprobate, who treat them with impious scorn” because “every act of God is replete with glorious splendor” (*Commentary on Psalm 19.2, 3*). The praise of Jesus can be discerned in all the works of creation, and it is our duty, as His royal priesthood, to search out and declare His glory for all to see (Prov. 25.2). Calvin concurs: “Though many would suppress God’s praises, observing a wicked silence regarding them, David declares that they shine forth everywhere, appear of themselves, and are sounded, as it were, by the very dumb creatures. He then assigns the special work of declaring them to believers, who have eyes to perceive God’s works, and know that they cannot be employed better than in celebrating his mercies” (*Commentary on Psalm 145.10*).

We may see the glory of Jesus by seeing Him in His providential work throughout creation. He is making Himself known in all the things that He rules and sustains, and we, if we are willing, can see Him there, and delight in Him more.

For reflection

1. Can you think of some examples of how you see the glory of Jesus in the works of creation?
2. How might becoming more attentive to creation help you to keep the vision of Jesus more constantly before your eyes?
3. What can you do to begin seeing Jesus more consistently in His works of providence and rule?

Next steps – Preparation: Sing the hymn, [“This is My Father’s World”](#) throughout the day as you take note of the Lord’s Presence in the works of His hands.

6 The Lord in His Coming Again

If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come! 1 Corinthians 16.22

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...He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Revelation 22.17, 20

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

Jesus in His return

In every age, the saints of God have longed for the promised return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Paul and John, they have prayed that Jesus might come soon, come now, come in all His glory to illuminate every soul, living and dead, raise the justified to life, dispatch the unrepentant to their chosen eternal destiny, and remake heaven and earth into one glorious, sinless, blessed, eternal and righteous dwelling place for all who believe.

Everything about the return of our Lord Jesus is glorious; and every believer who longs for His coming has some sense or vision or image in mind of the cracking open of the heavens, the shout of the archangel, the resounding of the trumpet of God, and the sudden and radiant appearance of Jesus, "clothed with a robe dipped in blood", brandishing the sharp Sword of the Spirit, and announcing Himself by the Name, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19.13-16).

We pray with Horatio Spafford and the multitudes who have sung his great hymn of longing over the years,

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

We see Jesus in His return, and with Him, "the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean," and following Jesus "on white horses" (Rev. 19.14). We see the graves opening, the dead rising, and the saints who have been sleeping in the earth ascending to meet and join the Lord in His return (1 Thess. 4.16, 17).

Seeing and longing

We see this, at least to some extent. But do we *long* for it? Do we pray earnestly for Jesus to return, and to come and take us unto Himself? It's not likely that we long or will pray for Jesus to return, if we do not now see Him, with the eyes of our heart, in all His majestic splendor, glory, power, and beauty.

If we were more devoted to seeing Jesus as He *was* in His incarnation, and as He now *is* in His exaltation and reign; if the eyes of our heart were truly set for seeing into the heavenly realm and contemplating the unutterable beauty of the Lord Jesus; we would certainly be more eager for Him to come and make us just like He is (1 Jn. 3.1)

The early Church leader Origen (ca. 185-254) urged his readers to seek that heavenly vision, lest they desire more the things of the flesh than those of our returning King and Lord: "I think that heaven has been closed to those who are impious and who bear 'the image of the earthly', but opened to those who are just and who have been adorned with 'the image of the heavenly.' For the higher things have been closed to the impious, inasmuch as they are below and are still in the flesh. They cannot understand them or their beauty. They do

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not wish to perceive them, in that they are stooped over and do not devote themselves to lifting up their heads. But he opened the heavenly places with the key of David to be contemplated by the just, inasmuch as they have citizenship in heaven (*Commentary on the Gospel of John 2:47-54*).

Jesus has opened the heavenly places for all whose citizenship is in heaven, that we might consider Him and those “higher things” and learn to desire them above all else. Through His apostles, He commands us to set our minds there, take our seat there, “come up here” (Rev. 4.1), and see our lives and this world from the vantage point of the world to come. As Origen wrote, surely we would be less than pious and true followers of Jesus if we allowed our minds to be filled with images of earthly things rather than the higher and heavenly things that are shortly to be revealed in glory.

Are we “below” and “still in the flesh” that we find the prospect of considering Jesus in His glory to be unprofitable for us? And if we will not consider Him now, for love of other visions, what hope will we have when He comes storming through the clouds to gather all those who have longed for His coming to His eternal home in glory?

To see Him as He is

Our longing for Jesus to return, and the soul-strengthening hope and anticipation of unending joy that comes with that, can be daily enhanced by looking to see Jesus as He is. No, of course we can’t see Him perfectly. We see Him as He is revealed to the eyes of our heart in His Word and His world. We see Him by faith, faith which is daily exercised to consider Jesus and to meditate on His beauty.

But the day is coming when we will see Him face to face, as He is in all His beauty; and the excitement and uninterrupted blessedness and delight of that day can be experienced here and now, if we will consider Jesus, look to Him, set our minds on Him, and set Him always before as He *was* and *is* and *is to come*.

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

For reflection

1. As you think of Jesus coming again, what is the most thrilling aspect of that vision?
2. Do you think if you spent more time considering Jesus you might look forward with greater hope and anticipation to His coming again? Explain.
3. What will you do today to set the Lord always before you?

Next steps – Transformation: Pray through your vision of the coming of the Lord – everything you think of or “see” as you consider Jesus in His return. Give Him praise and call upon Him to come soon.

7 With Him in Glory

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

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless... 2 Peter 3.13, 14

To be like Jesus

We want to see Jesus; and the Scriptures promise that a day is coming when we shall see Him as He is. We will see Him with our eyes, and not just with the eyes of our hearts. We will see Him enthroned in glory, radiant in righteousness, beaming in welcoming love, overflowing toward us with compassion, and emanating power for making all things new. And when we see Him, we will be made like Him. We, too, will be glorified in our bodies. They will be our bodies, and we will certainly recognize them as such. But they will glow with the righteous radiance of Jesus; and our souls will be pure throughout, so that all our delight will be in the Lord, and in knowing and worshiping Him.

All around us on that day, righteousness will abound. All our fellow believers will be like Jesus, and His righteousness, peace, and joy will fill every nook and cranny of the new heavens and new earth. Wherever we look, therefore, we will see Jesus, refracted through the new creation and the glorified bodies of the holy multitude with whom we are assembled unto the Lord. The beauty of Jesus will pervade the new heavens and new earth, and everything we do and everywhere we are will provoke us to joyous worship and celebration.

Then we will see Jesus continuously, for we will know then that seeing Jesus in His glory works transforming power in us, filling us with holy satisfaction and delight, and impelling us to rejoice with thanksgiving and unceasing worship. Then it will be true, as we so long for it to be true now, that we will sing with confidence, in the words of the old spiritual:

In the morning, when I rise,
In the morning, when I rise,
In the morning, when I rise,
Give me Jesus!
Give me Jesus!
Give me Jesus!
You can have all this world;
Give me Jesus!

Jesus in His glory

But what will we see? We will see then, with our glorified physical eyes, what the Scriptures present to the eyes of our hearts even now: Jesus in all His glory. We will see Him as John did in Revelation 1, “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...having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle” (Rev. 1.13-16; 14.14).

We will see Him as the psalmists glimpsed Him, clothed with majesty and strength (Ps. 93.1); awesome in greatness, with all the shields and emblems of the nations of the world gathered at His feet (Ps. 47.1, 9);

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glorious in splendor, holding a scepter of uprightness (Ps. 45.6); great and greatly to be praised in honor and majesty and strength and beauty (Ps. 96.4-6); great with unsearchable greatness, and full of splendor and majesty, goodness and righteousness (Ps. 145.3, 5, 7).

We will see Him as the prophets did, exalted in glory and served by fearsome angels (Is. 6.1-6); surrounded by myriads of myriads of adoring and rejoicing hosts (Dan. 7.9, 10, 13); breathtakingly beautiful on His throne of light and holiness and power, radiant with fire and the colors of a rainbow (Ezek. 1.4-28).

We will see Him in glory, and we will be like Him; and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ will forever give light and life in the new heavens and new earth. And from His throne a river of living water will forever nurture and bring forth in us the fruit of righteousness and Christlikeness, so that all the new world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of our Lord Jesus, and with His Presence in every place (Rev. 22.1-5).

Looking forward to these things

And what we hope to see clearly and unmistakably then, we may – indeed, *must* – see now, if only as in a glass, dimly (1 Cor. 13.12).

For unless we see Jesus now, unless we daily seek His face and the glory that is known there (2 Cor. 4.6), unless we plead with God to open the eyes of our heart so that we contemplate His beauty, and gaze full at His glorious face – unless considering Jesus and looking to Him is our daily practice now, why should we think that such activity would ever enthrall us? And why should we think that Jesus would reveal Himself to us then, if we will not seek to behold Him now?

The apostles have told us things to come, things more glorious and beautiful and life-giving than we can ever know here and now. And they have called us to look forward to these things now, to set our minds on them, to consider them, to look to them, to contemplate them in God’s Word and by His Spirit, so that we may be daily made more like that which we see.

Let our prayer to the Father be, every day and all day long, “Sir, we would see Jesus.”

For reflection or discussion

1. Why would anyone *not* want to contemplate Jesus as the Scriptures reveal Him?
2. If we’re not enthralled by the vision of Jesus now, why should we expect to be enthralled with Him in glory? What keeps us from considering Jesus and looking to Him?
3. How would you explain the importance of considering Jesus to a new believer?

Next steps – Transformation: How has your desire to see Jesus been changed by this study? What are you doing now to consider Jesus more consistently? How are you benefiting from this discipline in your walk with and work for the Lord?

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Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Though we “see in a glass, dimly” we really can *see* Jesus. Explain.
2. What do you find to be most helpful in meditating on the beauty of Jesus in glory?
3. Does the prospect of being like Jesus *in that day* excite you now? Does the prospect of becoming more like Him *each and every day* equally excite you? Explain.
4. What should expect to gain from more consistently looking to and considering Jesus?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this final part of our study, *We Would See Jesus*?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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