

Session 4: We shall See his Face

“I shall rise from the dead . . . I shall see the Son of God, the Sun of Glory, and shine myself as that sun shines. I shall be united to the Ancient of Days, to God Himself, who had no morning, never began . . . No man ever saw God and lived. And yet, I shall not live till I see God; and when I have seen him, I shall never die.” — John Donne

Review

Heaven is the dwelling place of _____. It is a real place, with both _____ and _____ aspects. The _____ heaven is wonderful, though not our ultimate hope: God will not abandon the earth, but fully _____ it.

Tonight: heaven’s most important aspect : _____ and our _____ with him.

A Glaring Omission?

Think about the popular presentations of heaven you find in art, books, and culture. Have you ever noticed something (or Someone) important that is usually missing? Why do you think that is? The Bible tells us the truth: the _____ of God is the _____ of heaven.

God’s Presence in Heaven

The claim that God himself is the real prize of heaven is not just the “spiritual” thing to say! We spend our lives desiring many things; can you think of some? The deep Desire _____ all those lesser desires is for God. He put it there! God is both the _____ and the _____ of _____ our longings. C. S. Lewis said: If I find in myself desires that cannot be satisfied in this world, the only reasonable explanation is that I was made for _____ world.” Read these passages:

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Psalms 63:1

Psalms 73:26

Psalms 16:11

Psalms 27:4

Jeremiah 2:13

John 17:3

We may imagine that we desire a thousand different things, but God is what we long for _____. His absence brings thirst and longing; his presence alone satisfies. Augustine’s prayer is exactly right: “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are _____ until they rest in you.”

We will See his Face

Read Matt 5:8, 1 John 3:2, and Rev 22:4. What promise are we made in these verses?

Ancient theologians called this hope of one day “seeing God’s face,” the “_____.” It comes from a Latin term that means “a happy-making sight.”

Let’s consider for a moment how amazing—even shocking —this idea is:

Exodus 33:18–23

John 1:18

1 Timothy 6:15–16

Hebrews 12:14

What can we see from these verses about the experience of seeing God?

Read Job 19:25–27. What did Job yearn for in his most intense suffering?

Seeing God: Our Primary Joy

Jesus said, “This is _____: that they know you, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).” Seeing and knowing God is the essence of eternal life and will be our primary joy in heaven!

So how should we approach “secondary” joys in this life? Is it wrong, unspiritual, or shallow to desire enjoy anything besides God? Does this dull our desire for heaven?

We run into trouble with created things when we try to enjoy them _____, apart from, or _____ of, God the Creator. The Bible calls this _____ (Rom 1:18–31)

But God intends for our enjoyment of his gifts to lead us *to* him, the generous Giver (1 Tim 4:1–5; 1 Tim 6:17). Can you think of some examples from your own life? We will delight in every aspect of life in the New Earth, and will not want for a moment to have them apart from God. He will be glorified as we enjoy his gifts before his face!

The Greatest Gift

Read Psalm 36:8–9.

What have been some of your favorite, most exhilarating experiences on earth?

These are a _____ of the thrilling experience we were made for: seeing God!

Being with God is the heart and soul of Heaven. Every other heavenly pleasure will derive from his presence. God’s greatest gift is, and always will be, himself.