

WE SHALL SEE HIS LOVELY FACE

(What Is Ahead For Us All When There Is No More Curse)

Revelation 22:1-13, especially verses 3-4 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

We have just come through another summer with the joy of summer vacations and the curse, at times of, what we might call, skirmishes in the back seat, and even in the front seat. None of us have as yet been totally preserved from the curse. If you have children or teenagers, those skirmishes may resemble some of these. There are charges and countercharges, weeping and wailing and unhappy voices, sometimes before we've made it 25 miles on our way. "How much farther is it? No, that's mine. You can't have it. Daddy, I have to stop to go to the bathroom. Mom, make her let go of my car. Why can't I sit by the window? You always let him sit there. He touched my elbow. Make him put his shoes back on. His feet stink. She breathed on me." What will it be like when we all get to heaven?

This curse came about in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:1-19. Adam and Eve both suffered the consequences of sin, and we have inherited their same sin nature since our conception, for in sin we all were conceived. When this day arrives when we are totally free of the curse of sin, no longer will animals be 75-80% decimated by long cold winters and deep recurring blizzards. Paul tells us in Romans 8:19-23 all creation is groaning under the curse of sin. To one day be free from the curse of sin is to be free from sin, suffering, pain, and death. None of us will ever age in our bodies or deteriorate in our health. None of us will ever grow tired in heaven. There will be no exhaustion mentally, emotionally, spiritually, or physically. No one will be uninformed or mentally challenged or selfish or sick or weak or guilty, or scarred by sin for life. There will be no more demonic tormenting of our souls, as the devil reminds us of our past and keeps bringing it up. There will be no more sad, tragic memories clouding our minds. The curse of sin will not be in heaven.

Think of it! There will be no more martyrdom of believers. There will be no more teenagers and adults falling into immoral acts. There will be no more endless "after meal" dirty dishes to do. There will be no more addictions, no more disrespect of God's authority, parental authority, or lawful authority. There will be no more tragic accidents, strokes, cancer, heart attacks, and suicides. There will be no more unemployment, no more horrendous allergic reactions, no more church splits, no more freezing cold or sweltering heat, for Revelation 21:4 tells us, "the former things will pass away." It reminds me of the old spiritual, "Soon we'll be done."

Much will not be in heaven. One phrase captivates my soul. Speaking of believers, John on Patmos wrote, "And they will see His face." This phrase explodes with meaning before our eyes. Though the curse is gone, what's there? We shall see Jesus' lovely face. In Revelation 22:3-4, there are four blessings all linked to seeing the face of Jesus. (1) The throne of God will be there. (2) The throne of the Lamb of God will be there. (3) God's servants will worship Him there, and (4) The Name of the Lord will be upon each of our foreheads as Christ's redeemed. What then are these four divine-links in heaven to the beauty of seeing Jesus' face?

WE WILL SEE JESUS' FACE LINKING HIS BEAUTY WITH HIS DIVINE AUTHORITY. (I.) Notice verse 3. “No longer will there be anything accursed, but throne of God will be in it... They will see His face.” The throne of God in all His authority will be there. Put these two facts of heaven together. The throne of God will be in heaven, and we shall see Jesus' face. Most often the beauty of Jesus and His face is divorced completely from His divine authority. The Lordship of Jesus must never be separated from His beautiful face. Jesus' face will be smiling I am sure, for there is no more curse. There at the throne of God, there will be no more evil reports of wheat being infested with weeds. There will be no more briars, thorns, and thistles. Our work will not be challenged so we must eat our bread by the sweat of our brow. Women will no longer have pain and sorrow in childbirth. There be no more challenges to God's authority, parental authority, or any lawful authority. When the curse is gone and we see Jesus' face, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire. Satan will no longer be able to hurt and bruise the seed of woman. In the presence of the beauty of Jesus, all tension, contention, and conflict will be gone. We will be able to rejoice in the smile of God on us His children.

In ancient times, criminals upon conviction, were banished from the realm so that they never again could see the face of the king. In the amazing book of Esther, when the plot of Haman was uncovered, he fell on the couch where Esther sat. The king said in Esther 7:8, “Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?” It was all over for Haman. No, he wasn't hanging yet from the gallows he built to hang Mordecai on, but he was as good as dead already. Why? Because we read, “As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. He would never again see the light of day, the king's face, and soon he and his sons were hanged. He was discovered as opposing the king on his throne, Think of it! Every last one of us are opposers to God's authority and His throne. We deserve to have our face covered, and to never see the face of our Savior. Just carry us over to the brink of hell and throw us in. But Jesus will have none of it. What does He do when we sin against His throne. Luke 22:61 tells us after Peter denied Jesus three times, the Lord turned and tenderly looked at Peter.

There was still hope. Peter's face would not be covered forever. Jesus forgave him at the beach. In glory, every redeemed man, woman, boy, and girl has no right to see God's face, to look into the Father's eyes as He judges from the throne. But in glory, because of the shed blood of Jesus, we will stand before the Father' throne with Jesus there as our Advocate. We will see Jesus' face, and there we will forever link the beauty of Jesus with His face of divine authority. There on the throne we will see His authoritative eyes of mercy. We will hear Him say, “Welcome Home, my redeemed child. That's why we call the throne of God in Glory, the throne of mercy. Somehow God has helped us link the beauty of Jesus with God's righteous throne, where we will stand forgiven, unafraid. He will hold out His golden scepter to us, though we deserve to die. We deserve to hear Him say, “Depart from me, you worker of iniquity; I never knew you.” But God the Father will look into our eyes as redeemed sinners and say, “Because of Jesus, welcome Home My child.” Then afresh, God's authority and the beauty of Jesus will be linked, wed forever, and

no one will be able to separate the authority of God's throne from the beauty of Jesus' face. God's wrath upon sin fell on the face and back and hands and feet and side of Jesus, the Man of Sorrows. His face was more marred than that of any man. There is no beauty we should desire of Him, but when we see God's throne and Jesus' face, we will never ever again chafe at God's authority forever for on the authority of Christ's finished work, we will stand before God redeemed by the blood of His Son, our Savior. Secondly,

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SACRIFICE FOR US. (II.) Notice verse 3. "And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it...They will see His face." The throne of the Lamb will be there. What a picture of Jesus, to see His face, but somehow His face is the face of the Lamb—the Lamb of God, the Lamb of glory. Only those washed in the blood of the Lamb will be in Glory. Matthew 5:8 tells us, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This privilege coming for us all as born-again believers was denied to Moses. Moses said to God, "Show me Your glory! (Exodus 33:18-23) But God said, "You cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live...I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." As glorified saints, we will see Jesus' face as revealed in His being the Lamb of God. We will look into the eyes of the One who was crucified for us, the spotless Lamb.

John the Baptist told the crowds, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." When Jesus was crucified, Mark 15:39, the Roman centurion looked at Jesus face, after being brutally beaten, His beard plucked out, and His visage marred beyond human resemblance, could not be fooled. He cried out, "Truly this man was the Son of God." In Glory, there will be no face like the face of the Lamb, the Son of God, God's best saved for last, the best wine for the climax of all things. There will be nothing greater in glory than when we will look upon the face of the One from whom the lost will try to escape, and cry to hide their face from the One whom they have pierced. Revelation 1:7 tells us every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him." To see the face of the Lamb of Glory will be to know we can never eternally ever divorce the beauty of Jesus' face from His sacrifice for us as the Lamb. His face in Glory will forever be for us the face of the Lamb. Thirdly,

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DESIRED DESTINY FOR US TO SERVE AND WORSHIP HIM. (III.) Notice verse 3. "And His servants will worship Him...They will see His face." This word for servants is the word for God's bondservants or love slaves. For all eternity, we will serve our Master and Lord, looking into the face of Jesus. This word for servants is **latreuo**. This word means to serve God in the service of a priest, by worshipping Him. Our service in Glory will be unhindered by any curse. We will gladly look into the face of Jesus and do all that He commands without anything or any impulse to cease or stop. Oh yes, we will be God's sons and daughters and His divine Bride, but we will gladly also be His love slaves. Serving Jesus our King

will be an eternal blessing, without the accompanying curse of backbreaking toil or hard work. We will worship and serve Jesus with total and complete devotion with unwavering constancy of resolution, and with unflagging, unwearied zeal. But we who will serve Jesus in Glory will be those who have served Him here on earth, who have learned to serve Jesus here on earth. In heaven, we will be enabled to serve Jesus with perfect love and perfect devotion. Paradise is not only the absence of evil, but the glorious privilege of serving God in His presence, before His face forever. Reigning with Jesus, He will be watching us, and His smile will be upon us, with His approving and beautiful face. That will be complete exaltation. That will be fullness in Glory, serving before His watching face and eyes, just as a parent, watches with pride and joy as we perform our tasks well, and to His liking. What will it be like to serve Him as He watches. We shall see His lovely face without any cause for fear. Fourthly,

WE WILL SEE JESUS' FACE LINKING HIS BEAUTY WITH HIS DEAR NAME ON OUR FOREHEADS. Notice verse 4. "They will see His face, and His Name will be on their foreheads." Years ago, Dr. Herman Hoyt, the President of Grace Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, said of this verse, "The face of the Lamb glows in brilliance surpassing the brightness of the sun. The very glimpse of Jesus' face will imprint His Name upon the foreheads of all the redeemed. The dignity, the splendor, the preeminence, and the grace of that face will make man stand in awe and wonder and gratitude.

How many of you remember first falling in love? Do you remember the day you were married, if that experience has happened to you? Do you remember, husbands, when the pastor raised his hands and said, "All rise!" The back doors of the church came open, and your beloved bride walked in hand in hand with her father. There at the back of the church, you saw her for the first time, in her wedding gown, but the glory of that moment was seeing her eyes meet yours, as you looked upon her face. Is there anything on earth that is sweeter than looking into the eyes and face of the one we love? Count on it; heaven will be sweeter still, with an eternal unbroken extension of nth degree of that sweetest joy forever.

The hymnwriter wrote the words, "Oh, 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." And somehow, that I cannot fully fathom, more certainly than unbelievers who take the 666 and identify with the beast, antichrist, we will be forever identified with Jesus and wear His name on our foreheads. It will not be some brand or some tattoo, but it will be something beautiful that God will give us that doesn't disfigure or take away from our own beauty as His Bride. His Name on our foreheads will be Christ's visual reminder as we see His reflection in the mirror of the sea of glass like unto crystal that is before God's throne—Revelation 4:6. Jesus will forever see His own Name on our foreheads proclaiming to us and to each other that we are forever His. Our very brow will bear our Master's Name.

As we render service to Jesus in the light of His countenance, and before His face, we will know we are forever connected for all eternity to Jesus who gives us His name even as a husband gives his wife his own last name. We will rule with Jesus and convey the fame and glory of Him everywhere. We will never weary in serving Him as we sometimes do get weary in well doing here on earth. There in glory, wearing His identity, we will serve Him and worship Jesus perfectly. What a blessed fellowship with Jesus we will have and what a joint fellowship we will share with each other. His Name will be our name and His face will always be turned toward us because we will never again be separated from Him by distance or by our own sin.

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” That will be glory for us all, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And the beauty of Jesus will forever be linked to the authority of God’s throne, with the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, with joy of serving Jesus as His love slaves, His priests, His bondservants, and with the very Name of God on our foreheads.

As I close today, a song written in 1943, and the tune written in 1945 by the same music writer, Norman J. Clayton is on my mind. The words I love. “We shall see His lovely face Some bright golden morning, When the clouds have rifted, And the shades have flown; Sorrow will be turned to joy, Heartaches gone forever, No more night, only light, When we see His face. God shall wipe away all tears, Some bright golden morning, When the journey’s ended, and the course is run: No more crying, pain, or death, In that home of gladness, Trials cease, all is peace, When we see His face. We shall meet to part no more, Some bright golden morning, At the gates of Glory, Where our loved ones stand; Songs of victory fill the skies, In that hour of greeting, Endless days, endless praise, When we see His face.” Amen.