

Visions of God - Part 1

by David Adams

David Adams explores the theme of seeing God through purity of heart and personal testimonies of faith in his sermon 'Visions of God - Part 1'.

Duration: 30:36

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, 1 Samuel 3:21, Ezekiel 1:1, Matthew 5:8, John 1:18, Revelation 1:1, Revelation 22:4

Topics: "Persecution", "Gods Presence"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story of a man who was persecuted for holding religious gatherings in his home. The man was taken away in the middle of the night, leaving his wife and nine children with very little. He was sentenced to five years of forced labor, during which he had no knowledge of his family's well-being. Despite the hardships, the man remained steadfast in his faith and continued to do God's work. The preacher then discusses the concept of seeing God, both through hearing His voice and through the vision of His person, emphasizing the importance of seeking and experiencing God's presence.

Transcript

Well, good morning to you all. My privilege, as already has been said, to be here for the first time. That is, on the platform for the first time.

My wife and I did visit Park of the Ponds on one occasion, visiting Charlie and Grace Reed when they lived here before they moved up north. But this is the first time, and I'm just wondering how you dug this boy out of Canada, come down to Park of the Ponds to speak for a week. When I looked at the brochure with the picture on it, I hoped nobody would recognize me, but I recognized all the others.

I don't know how I found my place here amongst them. However, my privilege to be here. I suppose for those of you who have had the good fortune of not knowing me in the previous times, some of you do.

A few of you do. Some of I have met in North Carolina in the summertime, and some of you are from Canada, I see. At least you'll know where Canada is.

When we first went to Cuba a number of years ago, the Cubans thought that Canada was a large city in the United States, and of course we were flattered thereby. But I should tell you some of details so that then you won't have to ask me afterwards. The first thing people want to know, how old are you? Well, I

did have my 50th birthday a while ago, and yes, I am married.

Yes, I have two boys. One lives in Tampa, and the other lives in Canada. And yes, I have a mother-in-law, a favorite mother-in-law.

I always introduced her as my favorite mother-in-law, and I got away with it for three or four years, and so one day she finally looked at me and said, By the way, laddie, how many mothers-in-law do you have? And that was the end of my presentation as my favorite mother-in-law. But she's still with me, at least. She lives two blocks from me, and I wondered at times just exactly what that implies when a man is in his 50th year of married life and still has his mother-in-law with him.

Do you think that could be the forerunner of the great tribulation? Perhaps. My mother-in-law lives in Bethany Lodge, just around the corner from where we live. So, of course, we get over to see her, but not too often.

I'm not too happy about going there too often. I'm afraid someday they're going to give me a room number, and I'm not just prepared for that yet. My little grandson, when he was five years old in Tampa, said to me one day we're out walking, and I had been phoned from the north for a funeral, an elderly lady had died, and he looked up to me, we're out walking, and he said to me, you know, Abuelo, you and Abuelo have been around here a long time now.

It'll soon be time for you to go. And I don't know if that's the fulfillment, you know, out of the mouth of faith and suckings or what it was, but I didn't feel too wanted. My little grandson tells me it's time for me to go.

My wife added her word the other day. She said, do you realize we have two grandchildren in university? What are we doing here still? And I said, don't push. I have some work to do yet.

So I think that will satisfy most of the major questions you would like to know up until the present time, and the rest of this will come up during the week. Will you read one portion with me, please, this morning from the Gospel by Matthew, Chapter 5? I have been duly instructed, it has been suggested to me, I have been advised, warned, and otherwise informed that I must stop on time, before the time. Now, I'm not sure if the clock here on the platform, which is just a minute ahead of the one at the back, not two minutes ahead, is meant for the preacher to see this one and not that one.

Probably there's an alarm here will go off at any rate, two minutes to twelve. I shall endeavor to comply, or I will never be back. Matthew, Chapter 5, please, and I want to read one of the Beatitudes with you, verse 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Let me say to you that I propose this week to take up two subjects with you, one morning and one evening, and the subject of the morning I wish to entitle, Visions of God, and the subject of the evening, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Now, most of you who are familiar with your Bibles will know that both those titles are taken from opening words of distinct books.

The first expression, Visions of God, comes from the first verse of chapter 1 of the prophecy of Ezekiel, and you will know that the revelation of Jesus Christ comes to us in the first verse of the first chapter of the last book of our Bible. Some time ago, this passage, this word in Matthew, Chapter 5, verse 8, kept ringing in my ears. This often happens, I suppose, to most of us.

We wake in the middle of the night, at least we never used to, but do now, from two o'clock till three thirty, or wherever it may be, or whenever it may be, and some passage of scripture will come into your mind, or perhaps when you're first waking in the morning, and it buzzes there all day, and perhaps all week, and you're turning it over and over and wondering exactly what its meaning is. This is a passage that did that with me a little while ago. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

And the more I thought of it, the more I wondered just exactly what the Lord meant, and so did a little searching to find out. The pure in heart of the pure in heart we know. We are told that frequently from the Psalms right on through to Peter's epistle.

We are constantly reminded that there is a possibility of being pure in heart. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy tabernacle? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. You remember, we read.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews tells us that we are to pursue holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. And our Lord put it that way here. He said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

One of the passages, the words of the master that have troubled me not considerably, rather considerably, is the word of Matthew chapter 11, later on in this book, when he said, Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. You shall find rest to your souls. Most of you will know that that last expression comes from the prophecy of Jeremiah, to find rest to your souls.

But it's the passage, it's the words when he said, Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. It's one to be meek in appearance. It's one thing to be lowly in life.

It's another thing to be meek in heart, and to be lowly of heart. We can feign meekness. We can put on an atmosphere of lowliness, and yet the heart still be proud, self-centered, and self-interested.

So, it's a heart matter, as our Lord said here. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. And this expression, to see God, is the one that kept reverberating in my mind.

What did he mean when he talked about seeing God? Immediately, your mind goes over to John chapter 1. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, he has displayed or declared him. Well, if no man has seen God at any time, what does the Lord mean when he said, The pure in heart shall see God? You remember, perhaps, in John chapter 5, the Master said, speaking to the Jews about their unbelief in him and in his Father, and he's speaking of the Father, he said to them, He that hath sent me, ye believe not.

Ye have never heard his voice at any time, or seen his shape, his form. Another intriguing statement, isn't it? He charges them with two things, not having heard the voice of his Father, and having never seen his shape, his form. You go to chapter 6 in John, you remember the Lord said, He that is from God, none of you have seen the Father, but save he that is from the Father, he has seen the Father.

And so, this business of visualizing or visibly seeing God intrigued me. What did the Master mean when he said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God? The epistle to the Hebrews starts off, as most of you will know, that God, who in sundry times, in a diverse manner, spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets. Oh, he spoke in times past, that takes us back to the Patriarchs.

That's the word we use in our Spanish Bible all the time. He spoke in times past to the Patriarchs by the Prophets. How did he speak to the Prophets? The Prophets were his mouthpiece, the medium by which he spoke to the Patriarchs, the Fathers.

But how did he speak to the Prophets? So, I went searching through the Old Testament, in particular, and of course, later on came into the New, and I discovered, rather intriguingly, that there are a number of individuals who saw God. But then you say, it says, no man has seen God at any time. And you remember when Moses asked the Lord that he would see him, show me thy face, he said, no man can see God and live.

And then when you go over to Numbers chapter 12, in that problem, that family problem between the siblings, when Miriam and Aaron got together and spoke against Moses' wife, you remember the Lord said to them, how is it that you are not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? If I'm going to speak to a Prophet, I'll speak to a Prophet in a dream, or, perchance, a vision of the night. But that's not the way I speak to my servant Moses. You notice he puts the emphasis on the place that Moses occupied with himself.

Actually, the older sister and brother were talking about their younger brother, and as far as they were concerned, he was only their kid brother. When God speaks to them, he speaks to their brother as my servant Moses. Later on, you recall, when the cloud lifted and Miriam was leprous as white as snow, Aaron turns to Moses, his brother, and he says, oh my Lord, let this not be.

He changed from being his kid brother to his Lord, very suddenly, didn't he? But God goes on to say, that's the way I'll speak to a Prophet, but that's not the way I speak to my servant Moses, because the similitude of the Lord, he will see. So, how do we balance these things up? At the close of Numbers chapter 7, we speak about the intimacy with which God spoke with Moses. Moses went into the tabernacle, and he stood before the Lord.

I judge he stood in front of the golden altar of incense, over against the Ark of the Covenant, behind the veil, and it says, when Moses went in to speak with God, he spoke with the Lord before the propitiatory, before the mercy seat, the Ark of the Covenant, and he heard a voice, the voice of a man speaking to him from beneath the cherry of Eden. I put those two things together, and I discovered, I think, that there are two, largely two major ways in which God reveals himself to his people. To his people in olden times, to his people in New Testament times, and to his people today.

One was by the hearing, and the other was by the seeing. Now, some of you are going to be a little skeptical about this, but I just ask you to be patient with me until I finish my remarks to you, because for some of us it's very difficult to take this verse, Matthew 5 and 8, and say, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, and then take John 1 and 18, no man hath seen God at any time, and how he is the unapproachable, inaccessible God, the eternal Potentate, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and how can a man who is made of dust stand in the presence of Almighty God? I like the hymn in the Believer's Hymnbook we use in some places. It goes like this, Eternal Light, Eternal Light, how pure the soul must be when placed beneath thy searching sight it shrinks not, but with calm delight can live and look on thee.

The spirits that surround the throne may bear the burning bliss, but this is surely theirs alone, because they've never, never known a fallen world like this. But how can I, whose native sphere is dark, whose mind is dim, before the ineffable appear, and on my naked spirit bear the uncreated being? There's a way for man to rise to those sublime abodes, an offering and a sacrifice, a Holy Spirit's energies, and advocate

with God. These, these prepare us for the sight of holiness above.

The sons of ignorance and night may dwell in the Eternal Light through the Eternal Love. How is it possible for me, how is it possible for us to stand in the presence of that uncreated Light? Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. And I discovered that God is pleased to reveal Himself to His people.

He was always pleased to reveal Himself to His people. Many times have I been impressed, and that's one of the reasons why I like the book of Genesis. You walk through the pages of the book of Genesis, and it seems just so many steps of the way, or of the day, you're listening to the voice of the Lord.

Five times over, the word is said regarding Abraham, that the Lord appeared, He manifested Himself to Abraham, Jehovah that is. Twice He is spoken of as the Angel of the Lord, speaking to Abraham from heaven. You can go back earlier than that.

How has God been pleased to reveal Himself to us? What do we know personally and individually about a person and an individual God? Are there visions of God for His people today? Now, many of us are satisfied with the fact that we have the whole canon of Scripture. It was by the word of the Lord He made Himself known, often in Old Testament times. You recall the incident of Samuel, the youth, the boy, when he awoke at the night and the Lord was calling him, and he didn't understand who it was that was calling him.

Did you ever have an experience like that? You wake up and you could insist that you actually heard someone say something to you? Let me tell you a story. Many of you know that we spent long years in Cuba. In fact, we were the last of the missionaries to leave Cuba and the first to go back.

When we paid a visit back in 1976, my wife and I went back to Cuba. We were amazed at the conditions of the country, how it had changed and the character of the people had been changed. But a year and a half ago, my younger son and I went back on a visit for a conference.

The two boys have been back several times in this last year, even in last month, visiting Cuba frequently now, visiting the assemblies over the Lord's, blessing the people over there, blessing the assemblies. Their conversions are multiplying constantly, their baptisms are multiplying. There's a lot of enthusiasm.

My wife says, they're getting along so much better now without you than they ever did with you. But then wives are gifted that way, you understand. If ever I think that I'm needed, my wife says, well one day I went out in my press shop and on the wall of the press shop I saw a sign written in handwriting I knew very well and it said, if anyone thinks he's indispensable, tell him to put his finger in a bowl of water and notice the size of the hole it leaves when he takes it out.

So I'm constantly being trained, you understand. So at any rate, we went back, the younger boy and I, a year and a half ago. We were at a conference and while we were at this conference, an older man came to me, a white-haired man, and he said to me, he said, do you recognize him? I looked at him and I said, I think I should, but no, I can't, I can't place for sure.

He said, well I'm Angel Cueto. And right away I knew who he was. We'd start a new work away down the west end of the island and he had a little old car, used to pick people up and drive them 10, 15 miles to the meetings.

And he was a very solid, steady Christian. We had a little assembly down there, but we lost it after communism took so many things over. And he stood that day, a year and a half ago, and he looked at me and he said, do you know what happened to us after you left? And I said, no, I know something, but I don't know everything.

Angel Cueto wasn't the man to write us letters. Some of the folks did. He said, well, let me tell you a story.

He said, you know that was prohibited for us to have Bible readings or prayer meetings in our homes. And I said, yes, I knew that. If you had an established building, the assemblies could carry on in a registered building, providing the government didn't need the building.

And they did on some occasions. We lost our buildings, therefore the assembly disbanded because we weren't allowed to meet in private homes. But in our assembly buildings, we were allowed to carry on.

So he said to me, well, after we lost the assembly down there and you folks had gone, he said, I start having prayer meetings just in private homes and Bible studies. I said, I know that was against communism, but I had it anyway. And I went on for some time.

And then one day, two o'clock in the morning, this is how it always happens. Two o'clock in the morning, there's a knock at the door. I went to the door.

The man said, you're Angel Cueto? And he said, yes. He said, you're the man that's been having these religious gatherings in private homes? And he said, yes. He said, well, you've So he said, they took me away in the middle of the night, left my wife and nine children with nine dollars.

They confiscated my little farm. They confiscated our house. And I went away.

I had a court case. They asked for 12 years prison sentence for him for doing this. They gave him five years of forced labor.

And he said, in that time, I never knew what had happened to my wife or the children. I had no news whatsoever. They sent them away down the island.

And he said, you might not believe this, but every night for those for those years, he said, I cried myself to sleep. And he said, finally, after post on five years, I said to the Lord one night. You said in First Corinthians, Chapter 10, you would not suffer any one of your children, did not allow them to suffer more than they were able to bear.

And he said, Lord, I can't bear this any longer. Can't bear it any longer. So he said, I cried myself to sleep as I'd always done.

Never thought that man would cry himself to sleep every night. You don't know what's behind a man's face. And he said to me, I woke up in the middle of the night and he said, there was somebody standing at the foot of my bed.

He put his hand out on my bare foot and he said, Angel, it's enough. You're not going to suffer anymore. And he disappeared.

And I said, I don't know what you think, but I know that was the Lord. So I said, well, Angel, what happened? He said, it wasn't, but a few days after it came to me and said, you can go home. Now I looked

at him.

He's standing there straight tall. He said, I'm not finished yet. I said, Angel, what did you do after you got home? He said, I started having prayer meetings and Bible studies in my home and other homes.

And you know what my main ambition is? And I said, no. He said, my main ambition is to be able to buy enough wood. They can't buy wood.

That's another story for another time. You can't buy materials, building materials. He said, I'd like to be able to get enough wood to build a little hall and to start another assembly right alongside my house.

I said, I don't know how I'm going to be able to do it, but that's my main ambition. I want to start all over again, start another assembly. And I looked at him and I said, Angel, how old are you? He said, I'm 81.

I want to start all over again. Why is my wife asking me now why we're still here? I said, they should have called him Caleb and given him a mountain. The reason I told you that story is particularly for this.

Here is a man who is very down to earth, very realistic, all a man. And he put God to the test that night on his own words. And he said, Lord, I can't stand it anymore.

And you said, you wouldn't make me suffer any more than I could stand. He said, that's what happens. Well, I have my own thoughts about that, you understand.

And I really believe too that God is not beyond accommodating himself to our condition, physically, temporally, economically and mentally. For the Lord has done that. And this is what my study has produced as far as I'm concerned.

I am amazed to see the willingness of the Almighty, the great God, the heir of the universe, the architect of the world, accommodating himself to the personal private needs of his people. And to the extent that he comes and he speaks with them. Have you noticed what the Lord said to Moses in Exodus chapter three, when he's calling on the burning bush? And do you know who it was that was in the burning bush? It was the angel of the covenant.

It was the I am. The Jews of our Lord's day knew what that meant when he used that over 15 times in the gospel by John and said he was the I am. You remember their violent reaction when he said at the close of chapter eight before Abraham was, I am.

And Moses is looking at the I am. He's talking with the I am as he looks at the burning bush. You remember what God said? I have visited, go back into Egypt and tell the elders of Israel that I have visited them in the land of Egypt.

That's the first thing. Nobody knew it, but he'd been there. Then he said, I have seen their affliction.

I have heard their cry, and I know their sorrows. And they had no knowledge or consciousness whatsoever of these things. God had visited them, and they knew it not.

God had seen them, and they knew it not. God had heard them, and they knew it not. God says, and come down to deliver them.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. God, my friends, is pleased to reveal himself to us personally, individually, collectively. And he does it so often in a distinct way.

He does it in these two major forms, and one is by the hearing of his voice, and the other is by the vision of his person. Now that's what I want to talk to you about these mornings, visions of God. The boy Samuel, let me come back to the boy Samuel.

When the Lord spoke to him that night, you remember what it says later on? The Lord, the last verse of the chapter, the Lord revealed him unto Samuel, revealed himself unto Samuel by the word of the Lord. Now that's the first way in which God is pleased to reveal himself. There are other ways, but he does it by the word of the Lord.

He's delighted to reveal himself. He wants to make himself known. I know the Bible begins with the revelation of God.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and I know that the Bible closes with the revelation of God. They shall see his face, his name shall be in their foreheads, and his servant shall serve him. I know that, my friends, but all through the context and the content of the Bible, we have these various revelations, various visions of God.

Tell me, when Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord, where was the Lord? That's the first question. And the second question is this. Not only where was the Lord, because later on it says Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.

He went out from the presence of the Lord. The second question is this. Why did Cain and Abel bring gift offerings to the Lord? Because that's what they were.

Abel has the land, the person of his flock. Cain has the produce of his land, the work of his hands. These were not burnt offerings.

These were not sin offerings. These were not trespass offerings. For if you look up the Hebrew word, these were gift offerings.

Who instructed Cain and Abel to bring gift offerings to the Lord? Where did that knowledge come from? How did they know that they were indebted to God so that they could bring to the Lord gift offerings? And where was the presence of the Lord? Because they brought their offerings unto the Lord, it says. Well, they weren't in the garden, as you know. They were outside the garden.

But they were where the presence of God was. And where was the presence of God outside the garden? May I suggest to you? On the east. It's where the light always comes from, doesn't it? Right through.

Where do the wise men come from? Where does the angel of the sea of the living God come from? He comes from the east. The light comes from the east. On the east of the garden, what was there? Terubim.

Terubim. And what are the cherubim? They're the representatives of the presence of God, of the God of Israel. Though there is no Israel at this time.

That's where they brought their offerings, and that's where the presence of the Lord was, and that's where God revealed himself. And how he revealed himself, you know very well, even as far as gift offerings were concerned, the work of Cain's hands was not acceptable. It had to be the first thing in the flock.

So, God has been pleased to come near, to reveal himself constantly, from the earliest days to the closing days. And today, blessed are the pure in heart, for they, they shall see God. And that's going to be the subject of our consideration.

How and who and where and when did various individuals see God? And I close this morning by reminding you of the opening words of the epistle to the Hebrews. God, who at sundry times, in diverse manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and in him we have seen everything.

Shall we pray? Our Father, we thank thee for thy word. Give unto us an understanding by thy Spirit of what we read. Lead us into a fuller knowledge of thyself.

For as the Apostle could pray unto the full knowledge of God, that we might grow. That thy blessing be with thy people today and all their activities be commended to thee in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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