

The Throne, Throng and Thrill

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon explores the significance of the throne, throng, and thrill in the book of Revelation, and the ultimate reward of the righteous in beholding God's face.

Duration: 53:53

Scripture: Revelation 22:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Eternal Life", "The Glory of God"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the significance of the throne of God, the throng of believers, and the thrill of seeing Jesus face to face in his sermon 'The Throne, Throng and Thrill.' He reflects on the profound revelation given to John in the book of Revelation, highlighting the beauty of eternal life and the joy of serving God. Ravenhill urges listeners to recognize the urgency of their faith and the nearness of Christ's return, encouraging them to long for the moment when they will behold the face of Jesus. He contrasts the fleeting nature of earthly life with the eternal glory that awaits believers, reminding them of the importance of living in anticipation of that day.

Transcript

Let's run into verse 5. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, they need no need of candle, neither light of sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

There are three things in these verses, really verses three and four, that I think are outstanding, but I want to deal just with one of them. In verse three there is the throne, and in the same verse at the end, his servants shall serve him. I say that's the throng, because it's a multitude, and then they shall see his face.

And I think that's the thrill. The throne, and the throng, and the thrill. Very often the book of the Revelation is called the Revelation of St. John the Divine, when actually the title is the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John.

The Greek scholars usually call this book the Apocalypse, which again means the unveiling. And the whole of this book is really the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ, surrounded of course in many, many different circumstances. There are three things a text like this does for me, when I say they shall see his face.

Number one, I'm very conscious of the frailty of my humanity. Secondly, I'm increasingly conscious of the limitation of my vocabulary. And thirdly, I would have to say that I recognize the awesomeness of preaching.

There's not a task on earth that equals it, certainly none that surpasses it. It actually is a job something like this, that when you've been cluttered up with all the affairs of life, the pressures, and the demands, and the taxes, and the business of running your home, or running a business, that somehow under God the preacher's task is to cut all those threads off, detach you from them all, and and lift you up into heavenly places. In other words, to use the word of Scripture, we ought every time we come to the house of God, to taste the powers of the world to come.

Now here we have a different book. What's the difference between the Bible and every other book? The difference is God wrote it. He didn't write any other.

It's the only book that will endure, and every other book, even mine, believe me or not, every other book will have passed away. But my word, O God, is forever and ever. It's as durable as God himself.

The wonder of the Bible is that it gives us a revelation before the existence of the world, and it gives us the only authentic revelation. And everything happens when, to use the phrase of a hymn, when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done. Have you ever felt like that at the end of a busy day? Well, when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done, and the world is called up yonder.

You know, it's one of the most awesome things we ever sing. Every time I see a U-turn on the road, I say, there's no U-turn in life. If there was, right back I'd go back.

I'd say, Martha, come on, let's go back 25 years, and and start all over again, or do this and the other. Not that life hasn't been exciting and wonderful, but you know, when you get to my age, at least you ought to have a little more sense. I'm not saying we have too much, but, but you can see where this could be improved, and that could have been much better, and so forth and so on.

Now, this, this marvelous book, as you know, it begins with one man in a garden. It ends up with millions of people in a garden. It ends up, it starts with paradise on earth, and one man walking with God.

It ends with a paradise in eternity, where millions of people walk with God. John says, in the beginning of this revelation, I heard a voice. Later he says, he heard the sound of a voice, like the sound of many waters.

And then he says, he heard the voice of a multitude, which no man could number. Unquestionably, this is the most sublime thing, I think, that ever fell from the the pen of any man. Of course, it's not human, it's divine.

It's given to a man, remember, in a slave camp. In one of the most horrible situations any human being ever had. It was the devil's island, the Alcatraz, of the days in which John lived.

And it was there, in that, in that prison house, cut off from fellowship, no Bible to his hand, no radio he could listen to, no one else to commune with him in, in what the poets call splendid isolation, that God suddenly rent the veil. And he gives him the most marvellous revelation of the things that he said would shortly come to pass. Well then, if they were to shortly come to pass 2000 years ago, how much nearer do you think we are today to the coming to pass? Can't be very far away.

The epistle to the Hebrews talks about God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, 2000 years ago were the last days, where are we now? Surely, if you and I knew God's calendar, I'm sure we'd be desperately startled if we knew what time it is on God's clock. Maybe the, the thing is just about one minute away from the midnight hour, again, when all of life will be over, when God blows the lights out and says, finish! Now John has this revelation, he saw the holy city. Have you noticed how many times in this writing he says, I think it's 30 times at least, I saw, I saw, I saw.

And sometimes he says, I heard. Oh, he saw so many wonderful things. He saw the heavens open.

He saw thrones and those that sat upon them. He saw those, the angel proclaiming with a loud voice. He saw a new heaven and a new earth.

Nobody ever saw as much in so short a time. I don't know how long he took to get this revelation, but nobody ever saw so much. Nobody ever recorded it, obviously, so faithfully as this man.

He's writing not just about something given privately to him, but something that's going to last right through the ages. He says, I saw the streets of gold, but more than that, he not only saw the streets of gold, he saw God. He saw the streets, but he saw the Savior.

He says, I heard the song of the redeemed, but I saw the Redeemer. I suggest to you something, a part of this revelation has been given to men, when they were burning at the stake, or, or in some other situation, maybe in a hellhole like Gulag archipelago this afternoon. There are men who believe that this is really true.

The one who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. You see, if you search this book through very carefully, you can divide it up this way. That in chapters 1 to 5, you have an enthroned Christ.

He's there in the throne of authority in eternity, working through his church in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Chapters 1 to 5, chapter 6 to 11, you see Jesus Christ as the sole emperor of the universe. Wouldn't that be a day in the millennial age, when, when he rules with a rod of iron.

You talk about Hitler's and Stalin's and Mussolini's. They were boy scouts compared to Jesus, ruling in righteousness, ruling with authority. He's going to sit as on a throne that, and a kingdom that covers the whole earth.

And the final enthronement is there, where he says, I saw a great white throne and him that sat upon it. I think the most awesome revelation maybe that he had. Again, I charge myself, you can do as you like, with too glibly thinking about eternity.

With too glibly thinking of when all of life is over, and the book is closed. There'll be people who would say one day, Lord I'll give you every dime I ever left. I left a thousand million dollars, but give me that book of remembrance.

And God says, no. Every sin that you ever committed, if you're unsaved, is going to be read out before a vast multitude, which no man can number. But John says, I, not only did he see a great white throne, but he says also, that he saw, pardon me, he changes here from saying that what I saw, to he talks about the redeemed company.

And it says in verse 4 here again, and they shall see his face. The theologians call this the beatific vision. The most gorgeous vision is possible to conceive, they shall see his face.

Spurgeon said, this is the heaven of heavens, to see him. So the scholars say this is the beatific vision, Spurgeon says, this is the heaven of heavens, and my little contribution is this, this is the reward of the righteous. They shall see his face.

Do you remember in the Old Testament that God said to Moses that no man can see my face, and if, how could he? How can corruption look on incorruption? How can sinfulness gaze on the deity of God? We do have one picture in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, where Isaiah says that he saw him high and lifted up. I don't think he mentions the face, but he saw the awesome majesty. And it says in the twelfth chapter of the gospels recorded by John there, that John, that Isaiah saw Jesus sitting there upon his throne.

As I thought about this, and I thought much about it during the past week, it seemed to me the Bible says really so little about the face of Jesus, and yet this is all we want to see. John saw the city, it must have been breathless. You know, I never thought of this before, maybe you have, but one of the latest things in designing in the last 25 years or 30 years have been the high rises, or the skyscrapers.

Well, the city of God is what, 1,500 miles long, that's about from here to the uh, to the boundary of Canada, and 1,500 miles across, it's a cube. It's 15 miles by, 1,500 miles by, 1,500 miles, and 1,500 miles high. John you couldn't build that.

That's some building, that's some city. Can you think of the millions of people that can be housed in it? What a city, and he saw the four and twenty elders, and he must have gasped when he walked on pure gold, and he must have stood in amazement, he saw the gates of the city made of one pearl, and the walls were flashing with jasper, and all those other marvelous stones, but it wasn't until he saw him that he fell at his feet and worshiped. He didn't worship the God, he didn't worship the streets, he didn't worship the majesty and the splendor of the city that superseded every other city that the world ever known.

But he said, when I saw him, I like that hymn that says, face to face with Christ my Savior, face to face what will it be, when with the rapture I behold him Jesus Christ who died for me. There's not much said about the face of Jesus, but let's let's think of a few, shall we say, facets of that face, or stages in that face of the Lord Jesus Christ. After all he was a baby once, we have a baby at our house right now, most perfect baby in the world.

That's what the rabbis thought she's just beautiful. But didn't every mother say that when she got a baby? Every mother's baby is the most beautiful in the world. Have you ever tried to visualize Mary when when first she saw the baby and something in her sprang up? Charles Wesley hits the nail on the head so many times in his wonderful hymn, Jesus you lover of my soul, he says this, spring thou up within my heart and rise to all eternity.

I get a thrill when I think about that. The living Christ within me says, he wants to spring up within me, possess my thoughts, my emotion, my being in every sense of the word. And I imagine when when Mary

took that baby in her arms, no wonder she burst out in a doxology of magnifica.

Magnify the Lord, why? I can almost hear her saying, Lord why didn't you let an archangel bring him to birth? That would have been worthy of him. Why didn't you let the cherubim bring him to birth? Why didn't you bring him down from heaven, out of the ivory palaces into the world, without any human creation? But oh you love me so much that you let me bring forth your son. And she looked at him.

One of the poets says that Israel and all the rest, they were looking for a king to bring salvation nigh. He came a little infant thing, that made a woman cry. She'd all the birth pangs to bring forth the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you know God had whispered into her something. Isn't it nice when God whispers a secret to you? You know nobody else knows, you say the Lord told me that. Well don't shout it from the housetops if he did, because he won't talk to you again if you give his secrets away.

He's very careful. And I can imagine she nursed that thing in her heart. Maybe she saw Joseph looking at her and Joseph saying to himself, I don't understand it.

She's obviously very pregnant but she's saying nothing about it. Isn't it awful when God lays a burden on you, won't make you share it. Something he's going to do and you can't tell anybody else.

And they misunderstand and maybe they'd ridicule. And the Lord says, this is just where my confidence is in you. Supposing he says to David, David five years from now I'm going to do this through you in New Zealand.

Well I know David well enough to know he'd keep a secret for sure. And his wife too I believe. And you know God does things like that sometimes.

He'll tell you in your spirit and he won't let you share it. And you get birth pangs over it and it hurts you sometimes when you say Lord, would it be alright if I just told something. You don't tell anybody.

But she brought forth her firstborn son and she looked at him. And she said you know what, he's going to be the savior of the world. I can't tell anybody about it right now.

Do you think when she looked at him she saw a nail print in his hand? I don't think so. Did she understand it all together? I don't think so. But she knew the secret had been given.

And she was going to bring forth her, and she did bring forth her firstborn son. And Mary's secret is kept close and tight. And there's nothing that Mary can do about it.

She's just going to keep this secret and she kept it. But first of all, this is the first time we see his face. We see the face of the babe and I guess like every other babe, a dimpled face and a beard.

To other people he looked very much the ordinary baby and yet he was the Christ of God. As Wesley put it, here is God contracted to a span incomprehensibly made man. It's a mystery.

The heavens of heavens cannot contain God and yet he's compressed into the of the Virgin Mary. And here for the first time we see her face. All right, the promise is they shall see his face.

She has seen his face. She has seen his face as a babe. She saw his face as a youth.

I'm not sure how handsome Jesus was. I've seen pictures depicting his babyhood and youth and manhood. I'm not sure how accurate they are.

But you see, there are some pictures that are given to us which have some detail in them. I'd like to see his face as a babe. Maybe he had dimples.

Maybe he had curly hair. Maybe there's something unusually beautiful about him. I don't know that.

I think as a young man he was strong and healthy. He was the last Adam. I figured Jesus was about six feet or more in height and he was strong and healthy and ruddy.

Because if the first Adam was a perfect figure, I think the last Adam was. So we see his face as a babe. Very beautiful.

We see his face as a youth. Very attractive. But you see, there are little pen sketches here and there of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For instance, I'd like to have seen Jesus in prayer. Would you? It must have been very interesting. You know, I grew up to be quite smart when I was a little fellow.

If there was anything wrong and I could sense an attitude between my mother and myself, I used to open the door and look in. And if she wasn't singing, for one thing, I knew everything. My mother sang.

She sang over that back-breaking washboard and she kept rhythm. That was the only way you could be happy washing in those days. No press buttons like you ladies get tired of doing.

She rubbed and she scrubbed and she toiled and she boiled the water and she carried it. But you know, she had a wonderful voice. And always when there was a super abundance of ecstasy and joy, she would sing with great, great feeling.

I got to understand when there was a shadow on her face or when there was anything difficult, it put the song out somehow. I got sensitive to read my mother's face. I can see it even now.

I'd like to have seen the face of Jesus in prayer. Particularly there in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the shadows, when he said, all thy billows have gone over me. When he was being battered and the storm was breaking on him.

And he's going to have to triumph in this. Because as I've said before, I don't think he died on the cross. He died in the Garden of Gethsemane.

If he hadn't have died there, he wouldn't have died on the cross. It was the battle of the will. And there he faces the sin of the world and the cup of iniquity.

And I believe if I could have seen the face of Jesus there, I would have been profoundly disturbed. Isn't it amazing that in the crisis moments, in the life of Jesus, the men who swore allegiance fell asleep. They slept in the Garden of Gethsemane.

I can understand that it was dark and they were weary and they'd been through the trial. But they slept also on the Mount of Transfiguration. You remember the psalmist says, I shall not be afraid for the terror by night nor for the arrow that flyeth by day.

Because midday can be as dangerous as midnight in the Christian life. Very often the easiest street is our peril. Adversity very often is the rod of correction that keeps us awake, it stirs us.

I'd like to have seen Jesus in prayer. I don't say I would have enjoyed it, but I'd like to have seen that face that was running with sweat and as it were, great drops of blood and agony. It was very different from the face on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Some people say it was the glory of God inside of him that came out. I don't put it that way, I don't think it was his deity shining out. I think it was his complete obedience to God.

I think it was the perfection of his spiritual life and it radiated from him. You remember later in the book of the Revelation, it says that there's no need of sun in heaven. You see, Jesus is so wonderful that God won't let anything that's old become his.

He's going to make a new heaven and a new earth. He's going to purge this earth with fire. It's going to be a new heaven, it's going to be a new earth.

He won't let them sing any old hymns even, because they're going to sing a new song. They're going to have a new name in his forehead, in their foreheads. Everything is new, he said, behold I make all things new.

And so God is so excited about the accomplishment, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, he says everything that has any sense of the curse about it, I'm going to put it away. And everything shall be made new. But again I say I would like to have seen him there on the Mount of Transfiguration.

I would like to have seen him at the crucifixion, deserted by men, deserted by God. In the moment of his grief when he cried, Eloi, Eloi, lama, say back to me, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? The blackness of despair upon him. Now when you've seen his face as a babe, his face as a youth, his face in prayer, his face in transfiguration, his face in crucifixion, and now we come to this picture of Jesus, where John has it in the book of the Revelation, and I saw a throne, there's the throne, and a multitude singing and worshiping, there's the throng, and they shall see his face, and there's the thrill, the excitement of seeing him face to face.

No, the Bible doesn't say much about the face of Jesus. I missed one face, did you, did you, did you think of it? Oh, I'd like to have seen the face of Jesus, when he reached his hands out in mercy, and he touched somebody, and he felt the thrill of restoring somebody's hearing, touching somebody's eyes who were blind, touching somebody who was dead, and they came to life. I suggest that face had a beatific vision in it at that time, he must have been radiant with power and glory, he was undoing the curse.

He was trying to let that dumb multitude of people see he was the fulfillment of Isaiah 35, that when he is come, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the lame shall leap as a heart, and they were slow to understand, they didn't perceive. Yes, I can see those eyes of love, when he went to a little girl who was dead, and touched her, and she rose up, a little girl about 12 years of age. I can see his face light up, when a man came back and said, Sir, I want to thank you, I was going down the road, and I just looked at my poor leprous hands, and oh, I've got beautiful, I'd better find him.

I don't know where the other nine are, but I came back to thank you, and Jesus says, well that's wonderful, thank you so much too. A face illuminated with gratitude, but a face to also fill with anger. We talk so much about pollution, and Jesus went into the sanctuary, you remember that he saw them there selling pigeons

and doves, and they'd made it a house of merchandise.

I can see that face now, livid with anger. They've desecrated the sanctuary, they perverted holy things. A text I've never preached on in the Old Testament, and it talks there about the iniquity of holy things.

There's a text for you to work on David. The iniquity of holy things, the perversion and corruption of the highest and holiest things, like selling the forgiveness of sins through the Roman church, and so forth and so on. And the pollution in the sanctuary, that we have it even today.

But listen, there's another face. Oh, when I look in the book of the Revelation, I feel I, I feel that Jesus stands, as we say, ten feet tall. He has everything under his feet.

All dominions and kingdoms have perished. Listen to this please. I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she's shaken at a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a straw, when it is rolled together. Every island and every mountain were moved out of their places.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in dens and caves, and rocks in the mountains, and said to the rocks and mountains, fall on us and hide us. Hide us from what? An earthquake? No, from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day is come. I'm going to suggest to you, because God said it to me, I didn't dig it out of a book.

As I was reading this, that here are the mighty men, here are the captains of industry, here are your Rockefellers, your DuPonts, the men who run governments. Not for one day, but right back there through eternity. And Jesus sees the aggregate iniquity of all men of all time.

Every bloody war, every devastation, the corrupt work of the Mafia, every unclean, anti-God thing, whether it be the Mafia or anything else, in one moment of time, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sees it, I believe, at this point. And I see his face livid with anger. And the captains of the earth, and the kings of the earth, and the rich men, oh, it's all disappeared now.

I don't hear much being said these days about the situation in which we're living. A brother called me last night. He lives about a thousand miles away from here, at least the way I drive it, maybe more.

And in the course of conversation he said, you know, David Wilkerson has written another book. As a matter of fact, I think he's written two more. And he says in them, David says this, listen, God is through with America.

God is through with this generation. It's judgment, judgment, judgment, no more mercy. Ah, we'll hear a great deal today about our greatness, and thank God for everything that's great about the nation.

There have been many great things, but you know, I thought of this, that when Jesus came down to the Jews, he didn't say, remember that you've been the custodians of the Ten Commandments. Remember you had the greatest prophets in your ranks. He didn't say, remember that you've been the most wonderful people on earth.

He did not say that. He charged them with deception. He charged them with failure.

He charged them with unbelief. Is anybody saying much these days about that 18th chapter in the book of the Revelation, where it says the systems of this world will give way in one hour? Why, there'll be parties all over. And rightly so, in one sense, this weekend, celebrating this, that, but they'll be very elite.

You see, you'll find certain people and they would only invite people like Mr. Kissinger and others. Another will invite a group of wealthy people on their lap. Another will invite a group of people who are just intellectuals and they can talk philosophically.

They'll all have their different categories. Do you think they ever dip into the Word of God and find there that God is saying this, come fowls of the air and eat the flesh of the captains and the kings and the multimillionaires and the leaders of governments and the leaders of science and all these people. Do you think that anybody ever reads that and gets startled about it? John does say something about the face of Jesus.

In fact, it's one of the impressive things, though he doesn't even mention it, there in that first chapter. He heard a voice, in his loneliness on Patmos, he heard a voice and he said, I turned to see the voice and he saw someone there. It doesn't say he saw his face, it just says certain things about that face.

His hair and his head were white as snow, his feet were like burnished brass, his face as the sun in its strength, his eyes living coals of fire. Oh, I wish he described a little more about Jesus. Look at his hair as white as snow, symbolic of what? His eternity.

People that go to Washington these days may go into the Mount Vernon, to Mount Vernon, to the House of Washington if you should go. As you come round the back through the kitchen and you start going upstairs, just look to the right and there's a model in clay of the Bastille in France. The walls were 30 feet thick, this is what, 22 or 23, I don't know, and so wider than this, 30 feet thick.

And Mary Antoinette was reputedly the most beautiful woman that ever lived, she had a flawless complexion, she was about 22, she wrapped the king around her finger, she was the idol, he took her around like a show horse or something. But one day she grieved him and they put her in the Bastille and said she was to die. Do you think she slept that night? Don't you think she heard every time the bells of Notre Dame rang the hour? An hour less to live, an hour less to live.

When she went in she was queenly and gorgeous. Men used to take their coats and put them on the floor so the carriages were another, and they carried the dust from a chariot as though it were the dust of gold. Do you think she was happy and saying, I signed autographs and I'm the world's most wonderful woman? As she listened to the tolling of the bell, judgment and death are coming to her.

Why she was 22 years of age about when she went into that death cell, she was 122 when she came out the next morning, her face was all wrinkled, her eyes were sunk, she was terrified. And in one night her hair had turned as white as snow. The hymn writer says concerning Jesus, lo the tokens of his passion though in glory still he bears, a cause of endless exultation to his ransom worshippers.

His hair is as white as snow, why? Because of his passion, his death, the agony of Gethsemane and the cross. And his feet like burnished brass, and the face like the sun in its strength, and his eyes like living coals of fire, and his tongue as sharp to edge and sword. The most stupid thing this idiotic world has forgotten is the fact it still has to meet him.

The game isn't over, at the end of the line he waits for all, great or small it makes no difference. And John has a beautiful picture of Jesus, and there he stands and John says hey, and Jesus says listen, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. And no wonder he fell at his feet, I fell at his feet as dead, why? Because he says I have on my girdle here the keys of death and of hell.

And every grave in the world from Adam's, wherever he's buried, to a final grave, Jesus has the key for it. And he has the key of hell, and when he locks up nations and individuals in that pit of hell, there's not one chance any one of them will ever escape. He's the Lord of life, he is the Lord of death.

And John says when I saw him I, I fell at his feet as dead. Oh I think that's a sublime phrase. Why did he do that? I suggest because number one, Jesus was the perfection of manhood.

Everything that was lost in Adam, was regained in the last Adam in the Lord Jesus Christ. He succeeded in everything that Adam failed in. Adam got put out of the garden, he got us put out of the garden.

Jesus was entered to go through the garden we sang about, let him lead me through the garden. And he comes to the garden, the paradise of God, and he says we're going to walk with him in white. We're going to reign with him forever and ever, as the King of kings and as the Lord of lords.

And he says not only we shall see him, but we should be like him. Wouldn't that be wonderful? When we see him we should be like him. We're going to have a body like unto his glorious body.

A resurrection body. An unlimited mind. No distortions in our personality.

None of those things we have to fight against so often. We're going to have a body like unto his glorious body. We're going to have a mind like unto his mind.

We're going to have a spirit that's capable of worshipping God forever and ever. Worshipping him in spirit, and worshipping him in truth, and worshipping him in the very beauty of holiness. In the fourth chapter I guess it is, it says that those four and twenty elders, when they saw him in his majesty, they cast their crowns before him.

John does better than that. He doesn't throw his crown before him, he throws himself before him. He falls in total adoration because he sees here the perfection of manhood, and he sees here the purity of God himself all embodied in one.

And when he sees that matchless combination, when he sees that face that had been more than all the faces of any men that ever had, when he sees the Son of God who saw the whole program of human sin, when he sees the one who had glory with the Father before the world was, the one who came and divided time by his presence, and now he sees him there in eternity, and he lays at his feet. This is the very John as you know, who had already laid his head on the bosom of the Lord Jesus and heard that divine heartbeat, but now he sees him glorified, he sees him in his majesty. He sees everything that has to do with the curse, it's gone forever and ever, it's all forgotten, there should be no more curse.

You see Christ is the center and the circumference, he's the beginning and the end of everything that has to do with your faith and with mine. Yeah, it's going to be a new heaven and a new earth. Usually if you're, it used to be in the old days anyhow, if you went to a country and the ship started coming in the harbor, your first thing you saw was the spire and you'd say well that's St. Paul's Cathedral or that's something.

But isn't it wonderful, there's no church in heaven. I saw no temple therein. Why not? Because the whole city is a temple.

There's no priest there, why? Because he is the perfect priest, he is the perfect offering, he is the perfect Savior, he is the perfect King. Somehow I think this broke like the dawn breaks sometimes and suddenly the skies illuminated. I think if John, I'm near John, Charles Wesley, when I get up there and there's a revelation like this, I'll hear Charles singing his wonderful hymn, Thou O Christ art all I want and more than all in thee I find.

You see, because of our limited understanding, because of so many things that we go so far with God and somehow we get turned out of the way, or not necessarily into sinfulness, but that something just stops us in the way when God is going to give us a greater revelation. Well that's all going to be over then. The psalmist says here, and I think it's one of the most beautiful verses he wrote, ask for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.

Isn't that beautiful? Of all the things he ever wrote, this is a king, this is a man who has lived higher than anybody else, this man has heard people singing his praises in the streets, saw all through his thousands, gave in his tens of thousands. He has written majestic stories, hymns. He has shown us how to dwell in the secret place of the most high, but he says I'm still panting, I'm still longing, I'm still yearning for him, I want to see his face.

We used to sing a chorus a few years ago, didn't we? Oh I want to see him look upon his face. I forget the rest of it, but it's certainly very, very beautiful. Off the coast of Scotland, there's a big old rock, it's called the Bass Rock.

It has what looks like a great big smokestack on it. And they put an old saint there by the name of Samuel Rutherford. He wrote a lot of letters, spiritual love letters to people he liked, and they were much like sermons more than letters.

But he had a phrase he kept using in all those different letters, and one day a lady got them all together, a lady called Mrs. Cousins if I remember right, she's no cousin but that was her name. And she took those hymns, those letters, and she began to take a slice out here, and a slice out there, and a piece out there, and she put them all together like some giant crossword puzzle. And she gave us a hymn that's called, the sands of time are sinking, the dawn of heaven breaks, that summer morn I've sighed for, that fair sweet dawn awakes.

Dark, dark hath been the midnight, but day spring is at hand, and glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. Oh I can't recite all the stanzas you wouldn't want me to, there are 27 of them. Got them all at home somewhere, it's a gorgeous hymn.

She says in it, the bride eyes not her garments, but her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze on glory, not at the flashing stones of the city, not at the gates of pearl, not at the gold, not even when they cast their crowns down. I will not gaze on glory, it will be breathless.

But I will not gaze at glory, but on the King of grace, not at the crown he giveth, but on his pierced hand. Do you think we really will? Man it seems to me some Christians, he'll hardly get it out of his hands, they'll snatch it away and say, you know I deserved this all my life, ain't he, I knew it was coming. But Rutherford in his humility, and his servitude, and his worship says, I'll gaze not at the crown he giveth, but on his

pierced hand, when thrown where glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's hand.

He preached in a little town called Anworth. I don't think he'd more of a congregation than I have. I don't think he loved them more than I love you anyhow, but let's pass that up.

But he says later in the hymn, Ian Anworth was not heaven, Ian preaching was not Christ, and in my sea beat prison, my Lord and I held Christ. And he goes on to say this, I've wrestled on toward heaven, against wind and storm and tide, now like a weary traveler that leans upon his guide, I bless the hand, I bless the hand, I bless the hand that giveth, I bless the heart that planned, when thrown where glory dwelleth, in Emmanuel's land. And a little later he says, you know, it's been a tough fight, sure I've been in prison, yes I've had hardship, yeah I've been defrocked, yes I've been cast out, but I want to tell you something, he says, it were a well-spent journey, those seven deaths lay between.

The Lamb with all his glory doth on Mount Zion stand, and glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. John saw the city, but he saw the Savior. John was separated, but he says no more, no more.

There's a hymn in our book, we'll learn it sometime, I hope. It says this, loved with everlasting love, led by grace that love to know, spirit breathing from above thou hast taught me it is so, all this full and perfect peace, all this transport, all divine, in a love which cannot cease, I am his and he is mine. A love which cannot cease, I am his and he is mine.

Heaven above is softer blue, earth around is sweeter green, but something lives in every hue, that Christless eyes have never seen. Birds with gladder songs o'erflow, and flowers with deeper beauty shine, but in a love which cannot cease, I am his and he is mine. His forever only his, who the Lord and me shall part, ah with what a rest of bliss Christ can fill, or cheer the loving heart.

Heaven and earth may fade and flee, firstborn light in gloom decline, but while God and I shall be, I am his and he is mine. I think that one thing that kept many men on course in hardship, or when they were dragged to the gallows, or in other circumstances, such as some dear Christian people have in the world today, was the promise, all the promises that are given us here in the Word of God. You know when I get to heaven I want to see my dear old mother, she's a lovely old saint.

I want to see my father, I sure want to see some of the saints and some of the apostles, and who knows I might be looking around for you as well, sure somewhere in eternity. But you know the supreme thing is, and it's yours I'm sure, I want to see his face. That visage that was marred more than the sons of men.

That face that shed great tears there in the garden of Gethsemane. That one who in his loneliness cried out my God, my God. You see actually all it means, really what it means there when he said why hast thou forsaken me? He's saying this, I tasted of separation from God for a little while, so that you wouldn't taste separation from God for eternity.

And in that awesome moment when God forsook him, maybe the tears were streaming down his face too. He was bearing the brunt of our sin, and yet he triumphed over it. He rose, he ascended, he sits at the right hand of the Father.

And today he's out of reach of the wicked hands of men. David reminded me of a thing today, as we were praying together, a situation in the life of Joseph. Some have said he's the most perfect character in the Old Testament.

Well I think it's a competition between Joseph and Daniel anyhow. But you know when he'd been messing around with that corn and all that other stuff, and one final day he said to these men, these brothers that had come along, look the next time you come you bring your brother with you. If you don't, if all the family isn't here, you're not going to see my face.

You're not going to see my face if the whole family isn't there. And you know when we see his face, there'll be everybody in heaven that God wants there. There'll be nobody missing.

He may have to resurrect them out of an old wreck at the bottom of the ocean. He may have to find Mallory up there on the mountain, 1932 expedition trying to get to the top of Mount Everest. Won't make any difference.

You know some preachers have had it difficult. I haven't had it as bad as this. But one man had to preach in a boneyard.

That's all there was, just skeleton. But he did as God told him and the bones came together. And instead of a mountain of bones, you've got a valley full of skeleton.

Then he spoke again and flesh came on the skeletons. Then he spoke again and skin came on the flesh. So instead of having a boneyard like an old yard full of wrecked cars, he had a boneyard and then he had all the skeletons laid out look very charming.

And the next thing they're all laid out as corpses and they were no good. But he spoke again and breath came. And those eyes could see and those feet could walk and those hands could serve and those ears could hear.

Breath came. Life came. And they stood up an exceeding great army.

One day the trumpets going to blast and every corpse. My dear old precious mother must be a skeleton. Now it's about 30 years since we buried her.

There'll be no flesh on it. It'd just be a, I would like to open a casket. Couldn't identify them anyhow.

Just, just bones. And yet at the trumpet blast, that final trumpet blast, everyone is going to leap up. They're going to be quickened.

He's going to breathe again. We're going to stand before him an exceeding great army, a multitude which no man can number. You see everything in Revelation is so vast, I think we ought to live there a little, don't you? Oh, things are not just winding up on earth here.

They're rushing to the wind up. We're hastening to it. It's nearer than we could think.

In every human system. Read Revelation 18. It's something when all the kingdoms can perish in an hour.

Miserable kingdom, money systems, the whole works from the senators of conference. Everything that has anything that's finite about it, anything of man about it. It's going to wither.

It's going to perish. It's going to be like Isaiah says that man, the grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but not so with God. I'm glad I have a home eternal in the heavens.

I'm glad this afternoon that even before we see him, we can, by faith, we can see him. And as that lovely hymn says, yet just a smile from my Savior I know, will through the ages, be glory for me. When we see him, we realize again, it's better to be the least in the kingdom of God, than the greatest in the kingdom of Satan.

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