

Meeting Jesus Face To Face

Introduction. None of us have met Jesus face to face, but we have met Him by faith. Paul pointed out that at this time “we walk by faith and not by sight” but that the time would come for the faithful to go home to be “with the Lord” and that one day all of us “will appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:7-10). Jesus referred to our present situation when He told Thomas, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

What will Jesus look like? We do not know, but we do “know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). Certainly seeing Jesus for the first time as He is now, in His glorified state, will be a tremendously awe-inspiring and moving experience, unlike anything else we have ever known.

The last man to see Jesus was the apostle John, approximately 60 years after Jesus’ ascension into heaven. In highly symbolic language (the type of language in which the book of Revelation is written) John describes what he saw when Jesus appeared to him and commanded that he record what is now the final book in the Bible (Revelation 1:12-18). Keeping in mind the figurative nature of the words, as John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes concerning what he saw that day, note especially his description of Jesus, the same Jesus who had walked and talked with John on earth, but is now glorified. The message of the book is an assurance of victory and triumph of good over evil.

I. ***Jesus’ Clothing***

- A. The lampstands formed a circle, with the glorified Christ in the center. The churches are inseparable from their head; He moves among them as their king and high priest, beholding and knowing every fact of their life and conduct, giving counsel and leadership in time of need and comfort in affliction.
- B. The clothing Jesus wore was significant. It was not something He had “just pulled out of His heavenly closet.” The long robe signifies honor and dignity. In the Oriental world, long robes were signs of high rank and office. Isaiah’s vision of the Lord seven centuries before also mentioned the long, flowing robe (Isaiah 6:1-3).
- C. The golden girdle spoke of Jesus’ righteous priesthood (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:1-3). It should not be thought that Jesus chose to appear like the Old Testament priests, but rather, that God, centuries before, had given instruction to the priests of Israel regarding their dress so that they might appear similar to how Jesus appears in heaven (Exodus 39:5). The human priests of the old law were a mere shadow,

or copy, of Christ Jesus (Hebrews 8:1-6). He is the eternal One; they were temporary.

II. ***Jesus' Head***

- A. The whiteness of Jesus' head is described both "as wool" and "as snow." The gray head was worthy of honor and conveyed wisdom and dignity (Proverbs 16:31). This description also reminds us of Jesus' purity and holiness. This corresponds to Daniel's description of the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9), and shows Christ's equality with God (John 1:1-3).
- B. In addition to the whiteness, the face of Jesus shone as bright as the sun in its full strength. He is the source of light (John 8:12). We should also recall that the righteous will become like Him, shining forth as the sun in their eternal home (Matthew 13:43).
- C. His eyes are like a "flame of fire" which suggests their penetrating quality, which could burn deeply into the heart and soul of every congregation and member thereof, discerning the thoughts and intents of each. These eyes can flash with righteous indignation (Mark 3:5), but also they can glow with love (Mark 10:21) and compassion (Matthew 9:36).
- D. The "sword" issuing from His mouth suggests the truthfulness and accuracy of His words and judgments (Hebrews 4:12). The two-edged sword is also indicative of the Lord's readiness to judge and do battle, to declare and wage war. His word will prevail and judge (John 12:48).

III. ***Jesus' Feet***

- A. When we read this description, we think of power and strength (Daniel 10:5-6). When the Lord comes in judgment with feet glowing as though fired in a furnace, aglow as if still in the crucible, He is able to tread underfoot and turn to ashes all that His feet touch (Malachi 4:1-3).
- B. The Lord is on His feet; He is active and powerful. Later in the book of Revelation, both the sword from His mouth and the treading of His feet will be used to symbolize divine judgment being dispensed in the world (Revelation 19:15).

IV. ***Jesus' Voice***

- A. We should think of the roar of a mighty waterfall, or the crashing of powerful waves along a rocky shore, when we think of His voice. His voice is powerful, strong and resolute and yet at the same time can be comforting and tender. He can speak as the Lion of Judah or He can speak as the Lamb of God.

- B. The voice of God is described as being as the sound of many wings, and as the sound of abundant waters elsewhere (Ezekiel 1:24; 43:2; Daniel 10:6). It is the voice by which the universe was spoken into existence. On the day of judgment, we will hear that voice say either "I never knew you: depart from me" or "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 7:23; 25:21).

V. ***John's Reaction***

- A. Seeing Jesus in His glorified state had such an awe-inspiring effect on John that all his muscles lost their strength, his knees buckled, and he fell limply to the ground. Some of us have probably felt similar physical reactions during times of great emotion.
- B. John's emotion, upon seeing Jesus, was holy fear. John had spent three years with Jesus in the flesh, and once had even seen Jesus glorified when He had been "transfigured" on the mountain, but even that had not prepared him to see Jesus as He was on this day.
- C. One day we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Do you think your reaction on that occasion will be different? "Every eye will see Him" and it is God's plan that "every knee should bow" and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Revelation 1:7; Philippians 2:9-11).

VI. ***Jesus' Assurance***

- A. There was no reason for John to be afraid. He was not in danger. Far from it. In fact, he had never been in less danger. With His right hand, He assures John that all is well, and it was time for John's instinctive fear to give way to his reason. After so many years, He was once again in the presence of Jesus.
- B. The One who had caused such awe in John was John's friend. He had died for John, but was now alive, and would be forevermore. He had the keys of death and Hades. He had met man's worst enemy and had overcome it. From the day He came into the world death had ever been before Him; now that He had been offered in death, and had proven His claim to be "the life" by His resurrection from the dead, death no more had dominion over Him (Romans 6:9; Hebrews 2:14-15).

Conclusion. It is obvious that these images are meant to impress us with the sovereignty and majesty of our Lord. Meeting Jesus face to face in the judgment will be a terrifying experience if we are unprepared. If we are prepared, heaven will be a place of ultimate glory.