

Message Twelve

**The Vision of God
in a Transparent and Clear Heaven
and
the Heavenly Vision
concerning the Desire of God's Heart
to Have a Dwelling Place with Man on Earth**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 24:9-11, 16-18; 25:1-9;
29:45-46; 33:11a, 18-23; Matt. 5:8; Job 42:5; Rev. 22:4

- I. "They saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was something like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness...And they beheld God"—Exo. 24:10-11:**
- A. Related to the matter of seeing God, especially seeing God's face, there is a theological problem for which there is no solution—John 1:18; 1 John 4:12a; Rev. 22:4a:
1. On the one hand, according to Exodus 33:20 and 23b, Jehovah said to Moses, "You cannot see My face, for no man shall see Me and live...My face shall not be seen"; on the other hand, verse 11a says, "Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion."
 2. In a sense, we can talk to God face to face, but in another sense, we cannot see God's face; this is a matter not of contradiction but of degree or extent—John 1:18; Rev. 22:4a.
 3. Christ is the cleft rock, the everlasting rock cleft for us; only in the crucified Christ can we see God—Exo. 33:21-23; 17:6; cf. Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:4a.
- B. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—Matt. 5:8:
1. God is light; light is the nature of God's expression—1 John 1:5:
 - a. The Triune God, as revealed in the light of the gospel, is light—2 Cor. 4:4, 6.
 - b. To see God is to see light, and to see light is to see God—1 John 1:5; Matt. 5:8; Psa. 36:9b.
 2. The condition for seeing God is having a pure heart—Matt. 5:8; Psa. 36:9b:
 - a. A pure heart desires only God and is focused on God; it is a heart that is for nothing else in the universe except God.

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- b. Those who seek God out of a pure heart have God as their only possession and their unique desire on earth; God is their unique goal—73:25.
 - c. To be pure in heart is to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory—Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9; 1 Cor. 10:31.
 - d. If in seeking God we are pure in heart, single in heart (the ground where Christ as the seed of life grows—Matt. 13:19), we will see God.
- C. "I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You"—Job 42:5:
- 1. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God—Matt. 5:8.
 - 2. To gain God is to receive God in His element, in His life, and in His nature so that we may be constituted with God—Rom. 8:11; Eph. 3:16-17a.
 - 3. All of God's redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified people will see God's face—Rev. 22:4.
 - 4. Seeing God transforms us, because in seeing God we receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged; this metabolic process is transformation—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2; cf. 1 John 3:2.
 - 5. To see God is to be transformed into the glorious image of Christ, the God-man, that we may express God in His life and represent Him in His authority—Gen. 1:26; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4; Col. 1:15; 3:10; Heb. 1:3; Matt. 13:43.
- D. When we come to Exodus 24:1-2 and 9-18, we are at the threshold of the heavenly visions contained in the following chapters; unless we come to this threshold, we will not be able to see the heavenly vision of God's dwelling place:
- 1. Beneath God's feet Moses and the leaders of Israel saw something that had the appearance of a large, transparent stone; Moses could only liken what he saw under God's feet to a transparent sapphire stone, which was like heaven itself for clearness.
 - 2. In our fellowship with the Lord, we may have a clear sky

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and see a work of sapphire stone beneath Him—the vision of God in a transparent and clear heaven.

3. Only when we are in such a clear atmosphere can we receive the heavenly vision of the building of God's dwelling place—vv. 9-11:
 - a. In our fellowship with the Lord, our sky will become clear and transparent, and it will seem that in front of our eyes there is something that resembles the body of heaven itself for clearness—v. 10.
 - b. In such an environment we will see God and the heavenly vision concerning the desire of His heart to have a dwelling place with man on earth—25:8; 29:45-46.
4. Moses was actually the only one to receive the direct vision of the tabernacle; Moses was on the top of the mountain, dwelling with God under His glory and receiving the vision of His dwelling place—25:8; 24:15-18.
5. It took Moses forty days and forty nights to see the revelation of God's dwelling place (v. 18); this indicates that receiving revelation from God requires a long period of time, which is a trial or a test to us.

II. "Let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst"—25:8; cf. 29:45-46:

- A. The book of Exodus reveals that the goal of God's salvation is the building of God's dwelling place on earth—25:8-9; 29:45-46; 40:1-2, 34-38:
 1. At the mountain of God, through Moses God's people saw the revelation of the desire of God's heart—to have a dwelling place on earth—25:8-9; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9b; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16.
 2. The physical tabernacle as God's dwelling place was actually a symbol of a corporate people, the children of Israel as the house of God—Exo. 25:8-9; Heb. 3:6.
- B. In the Bible the word *tabernacle* is used in three ways:
 1. It refers to the tabernacle built at the foot of Mount Sinai.
 2. It denotes the Lord Jesus as God's tabernacle with man; the tabernacle in Exodus is a type of Christ as the tabernacle of God—John 1:14.

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3. It refers to the New Jerusalem—the ultimate, consummate, enlarged tabernacle of God—which includes God’s redeemed people from both the Old Testament and the New Testament—Rev. 21:2-3.
- C. “Tell the children of Israel to take for Me a heave offering. From every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My heave offering”—Exo. 25:2:
1. The heave offering typifies the uplifted Christ, the Christ who was lifted up in His ascension—Acts 1:9.
 2. The fact that the materials for the building of the tabernacle were offered to God by His people as a heave offering signifies that the church is built up not with any natural materials but with the Christ who has been gained, possessed, experienced, and enjoyed by God’s people in resurrection and in the heavenlies—Phil. 3:7-14; Eph. 3:8; 2:5-6; cf. 1 Cor. 3:12.
 3. All the materials for the building of the tabernacle signify the virtues of Christ’s person and work—Exo. 25:3-7:
 - a. Twelve kinds of materials were used, in three categories (vv. 3-7): minerals, signifying Christ’s building life (1 Cor. 3:9-12); plants, signifying Christ’s generating life (John 12:24); and animals, signifying Christ’s redeeming life (1:29).
 - b. The redeeming life is for the generating life, and the generating life is for the building life.
 - c. That the minerals are mentioned as the first category indicates that whatever Christ is and whatever He has done and is doing are all for God’s building—Matt. 16:18.
 - d. In the New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of God’s building, there will be only minerals—gold, pearl, and precious stones; however, in order to arrive at God’s goal, the redeeming life and the generating life are needed—Rev. 21:18-21; John 1:29; 12:24.
- D. “According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, even so shall you make it”—Exo. 25:9:
1. In building the church, God works according to a prescribed and revealed plan—Heb. 8:5; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20:

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- a. The most important thing in our spiritual work is a knowledge of the pattern shown on the mountain—Exo. 25:9; Heb. 8:5.
 - b. The pattern shown on the mountain is the plan; if we do not understand God's plan, it will be impossible for us to do God's work—Eph. 3:4.
2. The pattern of the tabernacle and all its furnishings is a full type of both the individual Christ and the corporate Christ as the Body, the church, including many details of the experience of Christ for the church life and a full picture of the church life with all its details—Heb. 9:4.