

## **Beholding Jesus**

*The Process and Isolation of Beholding Jesus*

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**Beholding** is allowing the eyes of our heart to be enlightened and focused on Jesus—who he is (God incarnate and the Christ) and what he has done (attributes, signs, wonders, death on the cross, and his bodily resurrection).

### **Acts 8:1-3**

*1 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.*

**Cf. Philippians 3:4-11**

### **Acts 9:1-19**

*1 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8 Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

*10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened.*

**Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:32-33**

### **Galatians 1:13-24**

13 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. 14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. 20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they glorified God because of me.

- Paul spent 3 years in Arabia to behold Jesus after his conversion.
- It was about 11 years before his first missionary journey to Cyprus and Galatia. Cf. **Acts 13:1-14:28**
- **Beholding Jesus is a prolonged process, meant to draw you in deeper connection with the Lord.**

Abraham waited 25 years before Issac was born; Joseph waited 13 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit; Israel waited 40 years in the wilderness; and Jesus' earthy ministry doesn't begin until he is about 30 years. None of this is wasted with God! Cf. **1 Corinthians 15:58; Romans 8:28**

**Hebrews 12:2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**The more you explore the beauty and revelation of Christ, it will draw your affections to love and desire communion with him.**

The apostle John was exiled to isle of Patmos by the Roman government because of his proclamation of the gospel. Cf. **Revelation 1:9**

### **Revelation 4:1-11**

1 After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. 3 And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. 5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, 6 and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.

*And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: 7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" 9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

- John spent many years in isolation and under great persecution but got to behold Jesus.
- **Beholding Jesus is viewing isolation as an opportunity for intimacy with the Lord.**

Isolated dark places can be God-ordained and give platform to draw close to him. In Genesis 26:4 Abraham looks at the stars in the dark sky to imagine what the Lord could do; In Genesis 32:24-28 Jacob wrestled into the night with an angel; In Exodus 14:26-30 Israel leaves Egypt in the night; Jesus would many times meet the Father in the dark; In Luke 22:43 Jesus prayed alone through the night before his death and angels strengthened him.

## **2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

*12 Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, 13 not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. 14 But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

**You become what you behold.**

### **Discipleship Homework:**

Use the questions and statements below to help you apply the teaching into your life. This season we invite you to encounter the beauty of our God and celebrate the incarnation of Christ.

- Spend time this week journaling or meditating on where the Lord has brought you. What areas of your life have been transformed by him? In what ways do you need to mature in your relationship with him? Thank Jesus for his pursuit of us in the process and isolation.
- Read **Ephesians 1:17-23** and **Revelation 4-5**.
- Find a place of solitude and practice reciting this prayer of Ephesians 1:17-23.
- Now envision the portrayal of Revelation chapters 4 and 5 in your prayer time.
- Have questions about the message or need help with the homework? Please email Pastor Jarrod at [jarrod@1116.church](mailto:jarrod@1116.church).