

We Shall See Jesus Face to Face

Many Churches today teach that when Jesus returns, “*every eye shall see him*” and all will see him “*face to face*”. They base this on **Revelation 1:7** and **1 Corinthians 13:12**.

What do these Scriptures say and what do they mean when they say it. When examined in the light of their context, the Scriptures clearly explain their own meaning.

Remember, it is only after all Scripture has been examined on any particular subject or issue can true Bible doctrine be established.

To begin, let's read **Revelation 1:7**. Before we even get to **verse 7**, we can read to whom the Book of Revelation was written, and what the purpose of the Book of Revelation really was.

Notice it says in **Revelation 1:1**, these things must **shortly come to pass**.

Revelation 1:3 tells us that **“the time is at hand”**.

Revelation 1:4 tells us that the Book of Revelation was written to the seven Churches of Asia which existed almost 2,000 years ago.

In **Revelation 1:7**, we read even further proof that those who were alive at the time of the writing of Revelation would see the Return of Jesus.

In **verse 7**, it clearly says that **those who pierced Him would see His return**. This was the same prophecy that Zechariah spoke of in **Zechariah 12:10**. This was fulfilled when Jesus returned in AD 70. We have another study titled – **“Those Who Crucified Jesus Saw His Return”** that gives a more detailed explanation of **Revelation 1:7**.

Zechariah 12:10	Revelation 1:7
¹⁰ “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for <i>his</i> only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.	⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Today, many preachers teach their congregations that when Jesus returns in a secret rapture that everyone will see Him “face to face”. Is this really what the Bible teaches?

Let’s examine the phrase **“face to face”** as it is used in the Scriptures. In **Genesis 3:8**, we can see the word **“presence”** used. The dictionary definition of the word “presence” is: **“the fact or condition of being present, or one that is present, something spiritual, felt or believed to be present.”**

In **Genesis 3:8**, the English word **“presence”** is translated from the Hebrew word **“panim”**. (Strong’s H#6440) This Hebrew word **“panim”** primarily means face, but its meaning extends beyond the literal.

It can also signify presence or nearness of God’s presence and our relationship with Him. Many times, **“panim”** is translated as the word **“face”**.

Often times in Scripture, when the face of the Lord was spoken of, it referenced the presence of God. For example, in **Genesis 19:13**, we read about the judgment of God against Sodom and Gomorrah.

Notice it says here that the wickedness of these two cities waxed great before **the face** or presence of the Lord which brought about their destruction.

In **Genesis 32:24,28**, we read the account of Jacob wrestling with a man all night who then changed his name to Israel. In **verse 30** we read that Jacob called the name of that place **“Peniel”** which means **“face of God”**. (**Strong’s H#6439**)

Here Jacob claims to have seen God face to face. The phrase **“face to face”** that Jacob used denotes an intimate close communication with God which goes beyond the ordinary.

In other words, now Jacob had a personal first-hand experience with God rather than hearing about God through someone else. Jacob definitely had a spiritual encounter with the presence of the Lord that night which changed him forever.

We get further insight into Jacob’s experience with the presence of God when he meets his brother Esau. Notice what Jacob says in **Genesis 33:10**.

Here Jacob compares seeing the face of Esau to seeing the face of the Lord. Jacob realizes that it is God that has given him favor with his brother.

It was the physical face of Esau that Jacob looked upon that day, but it was the presence of God that brought about peace between the two brothers.

Now let’s look at **Exodus 33:20**. Here we read about another reference to the **“face”** of God. When God said, ***“Thou canst not see my face..... no man can see me and live,”*** He meant His divine glory in its fulness is beyond human comprehension.

This statement does not necessarily mean that God has a literal face, but rather, it refers to the full unfiltered essence of God’s being.

Another reference that uses the phrase **“face to face”** is in **Deuteronomy 5:1-4**. The phrase **“face to face”** here denotes that the presence of the Lord was there at the giving of the Old Covenant with Israel.

In **Job 4:15**, we find a recorded instance when a spirit passed before one of Job's friends and the hair of his flesh stood up which is evidence often happening when in the presence of the Lord.

In **Psalm 34:16**, the Scripture said this; **the face (presence)** of the Lord is against them that do evil. Other similar references are **Jeremiah 21:10** and **Jeremiah 44:11**. As we read in **Exodus 33:20**, no man can see the Lord, but what the presence of the Lord does can be seen. (**Exodus 19:4-5, Deuteronomy 4:3**)

Many people, because of what their preachers tell them, believe that they are going to physically see Jesus when He returns to the world. They believe this because of what they perceive in **Matthew 24:30**, in **Mark 13:26**, and in **Luke 21:27**.

These Scriptures all reference Jesus coming in the clouds with power and great glory. Nothing is ever said about anyone ever seeing a physical Jesus.

Let's read **Matthew 26:64**. Here, Jesus was taken away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where they asked Him if He was the Son of God. When Jesus gave His response, the high priest accused Jesus of speaking blasphemy. The high priest knew that only God came in the clouds with power and great glory. (**Isaiah 19:1, Jeremiah 4:13, Daniel 7:13**)

As it was 2,000 years ago, so it is today. Jesus said there are many false prophets then as there are many false teachers today. There is no secret future rapture getting ready to take place. (**Matthew 24:26**)

Many preachers are telling their congregations that Jesus is about to come and that every eye in all the world will see Him face to face. Just as the word "**face**" meant "**presence**" in the Old Covenant, the word "**face**" means "**presence**" in the New Covenant also.

There never was and never will be a literal reality of someone's physical face seeing God's physical face but rather being in the presence of the Lord.

The word "**face**" in the Greek is "**prosopon**" which means presence. (**Strong's G#4383**)

In the New Testament, **“prosopon”** is sometimes translated as **“face”** (**1 Peter 3:12, Revelation 6:16, 20:11**) and sometimes it is translated as **“presence”**. (**Acts 3:19, 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Hebrews 9:24**)

In **Matthew 24:3**, the disciples asked Jesus what the sign shall be of His coming and the end of the world (age)?

The word **“coming”** in this verse is translated from the Greek word **“Parousia”** (Strong’s G#3952).

This is a word today that not many church people are familiar with.

Students of the Bible, who know about end-time prophecies, know that this word is a reference to the return of Jesus. It refers to the presence of someone who has arrived.

This Greek word **“parousia”** appears twenty-seven times in the New Testament. It is translated as **“coming”**, **“arrival”**, or **“presence”**. The most common usage of **“Parousia”** is in reference to the return of Jesus.

Some examples of verses that use **“Parousia”** are: **Matthew 24:27, 37, 39, 1 Corinthians 1:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, James 5:8** and many more.

Past fulfillment is another expression many church people are unfamiliar with.

It involves the belief that all prophecies of the Bible were completely fulfilled by AD 70 of the first century. This includes the whole Book of Revelation.

Jesus and the Apostles repeatedly made time restricted predictions about the return of Jesus in AD 70. (**Matthew 10:23, 16:27-28, John 14:3**)

Christianity is totally discredited if those predictions failed to materialize exactly as they were prophesied. Past fulfillment texts have **audience relevance** written all over them.

The primary task of understanding the Word of God is to discover what the inspired writers meant to communicate to their original audience, and not just what it could mean to us today.

Conclusion

We have examined the use of the word **“face”** in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We can see by many Biblical examples that the phrase **“face of God”** meant **“the presence of God”**.

We have arrived at this conclusion by the many Scriptural examples that we cited and also by taking a closer look at the Hebrew and at the Greek.

After all Scripture is examined in light of Biblical context, it is validated and verified that Jesus did return in AD 70 and is here with us today reigning in the Spiritual Kingdom of God.

Because Jesus has already returned and is with us today, we see Him **“face to face”** because we, who have been born again, live in His presence every day. **Revelation 21:3** sums it all up.

The same message that Jesus and the Apostles preached 2,000 years ago has never changed nor will it ever change. Today, the Lord is seeking to save whosoever will believe and obey the message of the Everlasting Gospel.

Jesus did what He said He was going to do, and He did it when He said He was going to do it

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