



I Want to See You # 4

Hello everybody. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” This is article four on the story of my journey into the seeing world. For the next two articles, we will be talking about the revelation John the apostle was given on this subject.

I believe that God intended for us to more than just hear about, or merely read about Him. I am not downplaying the importance of the Word of God, but I am saying that if this Word doesn't lead to an encounter with Jesus, we are involved in nothing but a religious exercise. Jesus Himself cautioned us on this fact.

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.” (John 5:39–40)

Here is another verse in the Old Testament:

“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:5–6)

Hearing about God is one thing, but seeing Him changes us forever. This concept is part of the reason we will be instantly changed into His image at His reappearing. Consider this verse:

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” (John 3:2)

Here we find one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith. When we look at Jesus, we become like Him. I have heard many sermons preached, songs sung, and poems

penned on the idea of becoming more like Jesus. However, this verse tells us succinctly that if we want to be like Jesus, we need do nothing but “see Him.”

After a period of time, all of the scriptures, thoughts, and questions I have been posing up until now in this blog-series, began to stir an unquenchable hunger in me. I longed to be able to see and encounter the One I love more than life itself. I came to a place where nothing else occupied my mind. I was desperate. I somehow knew it must be possible, but I had no idea how to "enter the land and possess it." In this state of mind and heart, one day I found myself meditating in the book of Revelation on a portion of scripture written by John to a group of seven churches scattered across Asia.

There have been many volumes written on the book of Revelation, most of them focusing on end time events. However, the first three chapters contain exhortations written to a church that was alive and well nearly 2000 years ago. There are several prophetic interpretations of this passage. The first is that this narrative was written to the seven churches alive at that time, each one of them representing a different expression, culture, and demographic of the body of Christ. A second interpretation focuses on the fact that although it was written to the churches of the day, it is also a historical picture of the state of the church down through the ages culminating in the time in which we now live. By this, I mean that each church talked about represents a specific chronological period of church history with the last church mentioned, Laodicea, occupying the time frame just before Jesus’ return. The third interpretation is simply that all seven churches are alive and functioning at all points in the time span of church history. I personally believe all three of these interpretations are accurate. They dovetail on top of each other creating a stunning four-dimensional (the fourth being “time”) picture of the church from its humble beginnings until Jesus returns. With this context in place, let us now look at the dissertation given to the last church, Laodicea; the one existing at the time of Jesus’ return. Most would agree, at least in part, that this church represents the body of Christ alive on planet Earth right now. I believe we are the end time Church.

"I know your deeds, that you are neither hot nor cold; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see." (Revelation 3:15–18)

Here we find a significant description. This passage is all about a church that can't see. They are also wretched, miserable, poor, and naked; however, all of these conditions would have come upon a person (in the time in which this was written) if they were blind. It is remarkable that this segment of Scripture would be prophetically referring to the church in our day and age. To a large degree, we have built a church culture around concept rather than encounter. I love to hear the word of God preached and so I beg you to not take me wrong with these next words. A few years ago I tried to calculate how many sermons I had heard in my lifetime. To this point in time, to the best of my knowledge, it would range somewhere between 9000 and 10,000. I then tried to pinpoint how many of these sermons I could actually remember and I was only able to count between 25 and 30. What I am trying to say here is this: there is much knowledge out there, but life is hard to find. When we start talking about such things as "seeing" and "encountering" Jesus, those with a pure knowledge base will often ridicule. Knowledge can be proclaimed without a relationship with Jesus, seeing God cannot be done without that same relationship.

I might remind you that in the Old Testament there were no such things as sermons. Instead, the priest would often times read the Scriptures to the people. The New Testament Church of Acts did not have the Bible as we know it because it was still being written. They only had the Old Testament law and prophets, however they turned the "then known world" upside down with little else than the help of the Holy Spirit. We, instead, have made an art form out of preaching and it has become the mainstay of our gatherings. I watch in awe as some of the great Christian orators of our time bring forth their take on the gospel and the Scriptures. The best preachers can draw great crowds and build large churches. With these thoughts in mind, I have a provocative question. Why then are we blind? I believe there is a reason for this quandary and it lies in the fact that knowledge does not, in itself, induce sight. If it did, then with the amount of Christian knowledge and proclamation available right now on the earth, the entire world would have turned to Christ decades ago. We, as the last day church, have largely substituted hearing about God for seeing Him. As a result, we have become, for the most part, irrelevant, wretched, miserable, poor, naked, and blind. At the end of His admonition, Jesus advised the church to buy from Him gold, white garments, and eye salve.

In the next article, I will continue to discuss the revelation John was given into the seeing realm.

Thanks for reading. Jesus is real – and His mouth is like a sharp sword!