

## **Revelation 22:1-5**

### **1. "They will see His Face."**

Today's text tells us of the blessings of heaven that we will enjoy in such a beautiful and glorious reality. Please see verses 1-2 first.

*Revelation 22:1-2, "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."*

**Jesus shows us the reality of the blessed kingdom of heaven in two ways: a river and a tree. The river of the water of life flows in heaven, and you can also see the tree of life.** The reality of this heaven resembles the reality of the Garden of Eden at the time of the first creation. **If you go to Genesis 2, the blessed reality of the Garden of Eden at that time is also shown with a river and trees. However, even though the Garden of Eden and Heaven resemble each other, the Garden of Eden was just a paradise on earth and pointed to Heaven.** It foreshadowed the blessed reality of heaven with rivers and trees from the Garden of Eden.

Then, what was the blessed reality of heaven that the river and the Tree of Life tell us about? **We hopeless sinners, who had to live under curse, death, and judgment because of our sins, now receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, unite with Jesus, enjoy all the grace of salvation achieved by Jesus, and finally live with the Triune God for eternity.** It is to live in the fellowship of the perfect unity with God. John tells us about this blessed reality in detail in verses 3-5.

*Revelation 22:3-5, "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."*

**God's people, who have been renewed by the river of the water of life that flowed from the throne of God and the Lamb, now go to the tree of life and enjoy the fruit of it. This is the reality of the blessing of heaven.** First of all, if you look at verse 3, all of us saints have become holy priests in heaven, and in the reality where there is no curse due to sin again, we come to the throne of God and Jesus, the Lamb, and serve and worship Him there. And if you look at verse 5, all the saints reign forever in the presence of God and the Lamb, who are the true light, with no darkness again. **God seats us with Jesus on the throne of God and we reign as the heavenly priestly king forever with Him. But this is also our present reality now. The Bible declares that we are a royal priesthood who belong to the kingdom of heaven.**

*1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

Since this is the reality of our salvation in heaven that Jesus accomplished, we must worship God as royal priesthood on earth and testify to the glory of Jesus and the kingdom of heaven. However, there is the most blessed reality of heaven that we will look at in more detail today. **The most blessed reality of heavenly life, which we are now enjoying and will fully enjoy in the future, is shown in the first part of verse 4 of today's text. "They will see His face."** Brothers and sisters, this is the most blessed reality of heaven that we may enjoy, the ultimate blessing of our salvation, and the reality that gives us the

greatest joy and satisfaction. We see the face of Jesus and the face of God. In other words, as we see each other face to face, we will live by sharing the closest, completely united fellowship, with Jesus and God. **We sinners, who were the objects of God's wrath and God had to turn His face away, now enjoy the closest face-to-face fellowship in heaven with Him through Jesus' saving grace.**

Dear saints, there is no greater blessing than this. The blessing of Christianity is this. This is why heaven is so blessed. Because you will see the face of Jesus, the face of God. **What does it mean for us to see the face of God? It means knowing God fully, fully enjoying God's love and grace, and having the most intimate and close fellowship with Him.** This is the gospel, and this is the salvation we enjoy. In the fellowship of perfect love with the Triune God and one another, we shall live forever in heaven with eternal joy.

This blessed reality of heaven has already begun in our lives. **Even now, you and I are participating in the fellowship of the Triune God. Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, always shines upon us with the face of boundless love. We are enjoying this reality as one body in this worship service and also at this table of Communion.** But though this blessed reality is upon us, we are not yet fully enjoying it on earth. It is not because the reality of this heaven has not fully come, but it is because we are still living in this sinful world, and we still have sinful natures that prevent us from fully enjoying this blessing. Jesus shines upon us with a face full of love and joy, but we don't fully enjoy it because we still look elsewhere and seek joy and satisfaction in other places.

But He gave us faith. **By faith, if we look more closely at Jesus whom the Gospels testify of, and grow more in fellowship with Jesus, then we will get the strength to overcome all kinds of sins, worldly hardships and trials, and even death. What faith does is for us to look at Jesus. Seeing Jesus brings us joy and satisfaction.** And when we finally reach the glory of the kingdom of heaven, we will live with complete joy and satisfaction in the fellowship of love that we share while looking fully at Jesus.

*1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."*

**So the saints are those who live each day with patience, hoping for the fellowship of eternal love that we will soon share face-to-face with Jesus in heaven. We want Jesus to return soon because we want to see Jesus' face full of love and live a life of loving Him completely.** It's not just because we want to leave this world quickly, but because we are waiting for Jesus, because Jesus is our greatest joy and satisfaction. There is only one thing that makes our life different from the people of this world. It is that we have Jesus. **Because Jesus, who loves us the most, is always with us, and we will soon enter the kingdom of heaven where Jesus dwells, we can endure everything. The endurance of the saints comes from this reality and hope.**

Brothers and sisters, please do not forget the greatest blessing of salvation that God tells us through His Word. **"They will see His face"** This is a blessing that sinners in this world can never know, realize, or taste. But if we do not know this, do not realize it, do not try to taste it, or do not want it, how are we different from the people of the world? The saints are those who want Jesus, look to Jesus, seek and find Jesus, and want to get the greatest joy and satisfaction in Jesus. Truly, by the grace of God, when we look to Jesus, everything else disappears.

**If you go to Philippians 3, Apostle Paul confesses that because he gained Jesus, he regards everything else as rubbish. It means that because of gaining Jesus, looking to Jesus, and having fellowship with Jesus, everything else is nothing to him, everything can be thrown away, and it is**

okay to lose everything. He is confessing that Jesus is his greatest joy and satisfaction. And hoping for the fellowship of perfect love, which will soon be shared face to face in heaven, the apostle Paul joyfully testified the gospel, strengthened the church and the saints amid any hardships and persecution, and ran the race of faith to the end. And now, as he wanted, he is living with Jesus face-to-face in heaven, sharing endless love and joy. Stephen also witnessed Jesus until he was stoned to death, looking at the face of Jesus' love shining towards him in heaven.

Brothers and sisters, no matter how blessed and good the other realities we will enjoy in heaven, is there anything more blessed and better than seeing the face of Jesus who loved us and gave his life for us without sparing? That's sufficient. **If the Lord shines the face of love upon us who deserve judgment and the face of wrath, if we look at the face of Jesus' forgiving love, isn't that more than enough?** What more could we want from him? What kind of lust, complaint, resentment, and hatred could you bear before him? However, even though you can't see His face with your eyes, even now, the face of that love is shining on every one of you. And always, not even for a moment, he does not turn his face to another place, and always shines the face of unchanging love in the closest place to you. **Because we do not look at this Jesus but look elsewhere, we cannot enjoy this blessed reality.**

**So, at least once a week through the Lord's Day worship and once a month through Communion, we should participate with a desire for fellowship with Jesus because it is the blessed time of looking at the face of Jesus. When Israel's worship was corrupt, even the priests did not look to God in the Holy of Holies and did not find joy and satisfaction in God. There was only the form of worship, but the heart was away from God.** How are we? Are we looking for joy and satisfaction in Jesus by looking at His face when we come to worship and participate in the Lord's Supper?

Saints, I always tell you, but there is no Christianity without Jesus. Christianity is nothing but Jesus. Isn't Jesus enough? Shouldn't we worship God with joy and gratitude, confessing that I am sufficient with Jesus? That is why even in the book of Revelation, the blessed reality of heaven is not described as something else, but as seeing Jesus. Do we understand this? Even now, we are enjoying this blessing. **No matter how our lives are in the world, the Holy Spirit allows us to see the face of Jesus shining with the face of love through the Word and is leading us to heaven where we will fully see the face of Jesus.** So, until that day, the confession we must make in faith is this.

*Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you."*

**Saints, this is the confession of the saints who desire to see the face of Jesus.** You and I are the ones who live and die confessing this confession on earth, and who will live forever confessing this confession in heaven as well. We must realize how blessed we have become just by being able to make this confession. Before, we were hopeless sinners who couldn't even make this kind of confession. All of us sinners were the objects of God's wrath and were to be forsaken and cut off from God, and God had to hide and cover his face.

## **2. The Reality of Sinners and the Blessing of Heaven**

*Psalm 10:11, "He says in his heart, "God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it.""*

*Psalm 27:9, "Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!"*

**For sinners to see the face of God is the reality of death and eternal judgment.** That is why even the first Adam, after sinning, hid himself from the face of God, and on the final day of judgment, the sinners of the world will cry out to hide themselves from the face of the wrath of God and the Lamb.

*Revelation 6:16-17, "Calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

The Day of seeing the face of Jesus for sinners will be the terrifying day of judgment. This was our reality before we were saved. So, we are the ones who never wanted the face of God or the face of Jesus. If we do not realize this first, we will not be able to know how blessed it is to have fellowship with God and Jesus while seeing their faces of love.

But God had mercy on these hopeless sinners and promised salvation. **Looking at the history of salvation, God continued to promise the Savior, Christ, and let people know the reality of the eternal salvation that Christ would accomplish in the future, allowing us to see God and enjoy perfect fellowship.** However, the saints of the Old Testament did not fully enjoy the reality of seeing the face of God as we enjoy now. The glory of God was with them, but they had to be content with just gazing at it from afar. Even Moses, who had the most face-to-face encounter with God in the Old Testament, was unable to see the face of God directly. In Exodus 33, what did God say when Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord?

*Exodus 33:20-23, "But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." 21 And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."*

God said to Moses, I will reveal my glory to you, but you will not see my face. So, when the glory of God passed by, God covered Moses with His hand so that he could not see God's face and only see God's back. We must understand these words well. God, who is the Spirit, does not have a face and a back. In the Old Testament, this was the level at which people could come close to God and have fellowship. **Even Moses could not fully see the glory of God from the nearest place and still had to share fellowship with the reality of being far away and limited.**

**Not only that, but after, God commanded to build the Tabernacle and the temple to dwell among His people and share fellowship, but no one could come close to the Holy of Holies where God's throne was.** Only the high priest could represent all the Israelites and come to the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement, wearing holy robes with the blood of the lamb. After covering his face, he was able to have fellowship with God. All the rest of the people had to be content with gazing at the glory of God from afar. **This was the limitation of the Old Testament because the full glory of God was not revealed yet in the redemptive history. However, God promised that when the time comes, He will reveal His glory fully, and His people will enjoy complete and eternal blessings in the eternal kingdom of God.** That blessing is the blessing of fellowship, in which God shines the light of His face from the closest and His people see and share the face of God from the closest like face to face. This blessing was proclaimed to the priests of the Old Testament.

*Numbers 6:22-27, "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, 24 The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. 27 "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."*

If you look at the contents of God's blessings promised in these words, what word is at the center? It is the face of the Lord. The Lord shines his face upon His people and shares the closest fellowship of love. This is the ultimate blessing of God's kingdom. How blessed and glorious is this fellowship? We may not understand it fully, but there is one thing we can know. Originally, this fellowship was the fellowship that God the Father and God the Son had shared from eternity. God the Father and God the Son always look at each other face to face, and the Father enjoys the greatest love, joy, and satisfaction from the Son and the Son from the Father. Now, we are called to participate in this fellowship of God and the Son. Today's text tells us of this reality.

*Revelation 22:3-5, "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."*

**God and Jesus, the Lamb, sit on one throne and share eternal and perfect fellowship, and God seats us together on that throne so that we can have eternal and perfect fellowship while looking closely at the faces of God and the Lamb, Jesus Christ.** Saints enjoy and hope for this blessed reality of heaven by faith even now. Even in the Old Testament, this was the most earnest desire of the saints. What was Job's greatest hope in unspeakable suffering? Even if he suffered and died, he wanted to fully see God, the Redeemer.

*Job 19:25-27, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, 27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!"*

*Psalms 42:2, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"*

**Job and the psalmist overcame every trial by faith and hope, to see God even in extreme suffering. Jesus, too, longed for the reality of fellowship in heaven, where he would soon share face-to-face with God his Father and us whom He saved, and overcame all the pain and death of the cross.** Then shouldn't we live with the same desire and overcome this world? We should remember that this amazing heavenly blessing was achieved through the cross of Jesus.

Jesus bore our sins, in our place, received all the judgments of God's wrath we had to receive instead of us, and was forsaken by God. **At that time, God hid his face from Jesus and poured out the judgment of infinite wrath toward his beloved Son, as if he were dealing with the worst sinner. This was the greatest suffering Jesus suffered. God the Father, who had shone the light of love and joy toward him from eternity, turned his face and forsook him. This was also God the Father's greatest pain. He had to turn his face away from His beloved Son, the object of His boundless love and joy, and forsake him in the pouring out of his wrath.** So Jesus had to cry out, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

**Why did our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have to suffer this? It was to lift the face of perfect love and joy toward you and me forever and shine on us. And now He poured the Holy Spirit on us and let us live by looking at the face of God and Jesus who shines on us through the Word by faith.** Can we live without looking at the face of Jesus, the face of God's love, shining on us with great love and grace? When we look at the face of Jesus who shines on us by faith, there is another blessing that comes along in our lives.

He makes us reflect the light of His face. We can live by reflecting the face of Jesus to our brothers and sisters when He shines upon us. After Moses saw the glory of God and fellowshiped with him, although

he did not see God's face, Moses' face shone reflecting the glory of God. Stephen looked at the face of Jesus and his face also shone with a light that reflected the glory of Jesus. **The more we look at the face of Jesus, the more we will live with the face that reflects the glory of Jesus. Now the face of Jesus is shining towards us. Let us turn our faces to Jesus and share fellowship with Him.** Although we may not see fully now, when we fully see the face of Jesus in heaven, we will fully resemble Jesus and live a life of reflecting the full light of the face of Jesus.

*2 Corinthians 3:18, "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."*

Dear saints, I hope you enjoy the heavenly blessings that have come into our lives. Don't ask for other blessings, but ask for this blessing that God has blessed. Please don't look elsewhere for your restoration. Our restoration begins with enjoying what God has restored. It is to enjoy the blessings of Heaven that Jesus fulfilled even until his death. I hope you live under the light of Jesus' face. **Look at Jesus through the Word, find joy and satisfaction with Jesus, and look at your brothers as Jesus sees us. Today, Jesus is here with us, shining the face of perfect love and sharing heavenly fellowship with us.** I hope we look at the face of Jesus' love shining brightly toward you. Isn't that enough? Jesus does not leave us from now on to eternity, but always shines the light of His face of love and walks with us. **With the strength gained from looking at the face of Jesus, we may overcome any hardships, trials, or even death in this world, and persevere until the end with hope for the day when we will soon see the face of Jesus in its entirety.**