

# How To See God And Not Die

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[ 0 : 00 ]     What do you think it would be like to see God? Think about that. What would it be like to see God? How would you feel if you saw Him?

The God who made the universe. The God who made all that is good. What would that feel like? What would it be like? Well, if we take our cue from some popular worship songs, we would burst into dance in front of Him.

And we'd have this feeling of intense joy. And you can understand that. This intense delight at being able to see the God who made all good things, all things we enjoy.

Of course, surely it would be an amazing experience, wouldn't it? To see God. And yet when we read in the Bible the actual accounts of people who saw God, and there have been a few over history, God has revealed Himself to certain people through the ages, prophets, apostles, things like that, when we read these accounts, we see that the reaction to seeing God is quite different to what we expect.

It is sheer terror. And the feeling that they need to die. Listen, for example, to when Isaiah, the prophet, saw God, and he was probably the most holy person in Israel at the time, and yet this is his response to seeing God just in a vision.

[ 1 : 27 ]     He said, Woe is me! I am ruined, for I have seen God. And then the apostle John couldn't even look at God when God revealed Himself to him because he said his face was like the sun shining at full strength, and he fell on the ground as a dead man.

And that is the normal response when humans see God. And it makes the story we read in Exodus 24 this morning so surprising.

Did you notice what happened? The Israelite leaders went up Mount Sinai, and they actually met with God. They saw God. Humans, there was a time in history, there was this moment that is recorded for us where humans, the created beings, and the Creator met together, and they saw God, and they survived.

Look at verse 11, or listen to it again from Exodus 24. God did not harm the Israelite nobles. They saw Him, and they ate and drank.

You can almost hear the surprise in the voice of the narrator here. They saw Him. And he mentions that more than once. They actually saw God, and He did not kill them.

[ 2 : 48 ]     And that is actually quite an amazing thing. Now, the reason that I chose this passage to preach on on Good Friday is because it's only when we understand why these people could see God and not die that you'll really understand what happened on Good Friday and why it's so important for you.

But first, we've got to understand the problem. There is a problem with seeing God. Because to see God, you need to come close to God. But coming close to God is going to kill you.

Because of what happens when sin comes into contact with a holy God. So the Bible, you'll know, describes God as the source of life and good things.

All the good things you enjoy in life actually come from God. But the Bible also describes God as very holy and so good that it is dangerous if you come too close to Him as a sinner.

Kind of like the sun, right? Okay, you're familiar with the sun. It's what gives us life. It's what gives us warmth. It's what makes plants grow. And we need the sun for life.

[ 4 : 07 ] But what if you got into a spaceship? Boys and girls, who would like to go flying in a spaceship? Put up your hand. There's a few. I don't know what the rest of you would like to do. But I would like to go flying in a spaceship, hey?

But what happens? Maybe one of the boys and girls can tell me. What would happen if you flew your spaceship close to the sun? Anyone? Yeah? It would burn.

It would blow up, right? Because even though the sun is good and it gives us life and warmth, if you get too close to it, it's going to destroy you. That is how the Bible describes God.

Did you know that? The Bible describes God in the same way. He is the source of good. But that good, that is the essence of who God is, is so intensely good that it will destroy anything that comes close to it that is not perfectly good.

And that's why what happens in this story is such a surprise. Let me read it to you again. Exodus 24, verse 11. God did not harm the Israelite nobles. They saw him and they ate and drank.

[ 5 : 16 ] It's a shock. They should have died. But they didn't. Why? That is the big question in this passage, in this story where people met with God and didn't die.

Why didn't they die? That's the question we should be asking. And to find out, we actually need to look a few verses before and see what happened. Something very strange happened just before.

Let me read it to you from verse 5. Then Moses sent out the young Israelite men and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed bulls as a fellowship offering to the Lord.

Moses, now it gets weird. Moses took half the blood, the blood that came from these sacrifices, and set it in basins. And the other half of the blood he splattered on the altar.

And you think that's weird. Verse 8. Then Moses took the blood and splattered it on the people and said, This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.

[ 6 : 25 ] Okay, now this was pretty strange. Nothing like this had quite happened in the Bible yet. Nothing like this with splattering blood quite happened like this.

So the people, they knew about the sacrifices. So Moses tells the Israelites to go make sacrifices and the people are standing there and they go, Okay, yeah, sacrifices. We know about sacrifices.

Good, yeah. It was part of ancient religion to make sacrifices. But then they see Moses taking the blood and they're like, Okay, it's pretty gross, but whatever. And then Moses separates the blood into two basins.

And then he takes probably a hyssop branch, like a big paintbrush, And he takes the blood and he starts splattering it on the altar with all the people watching. And they're probably thinking, Okay, okay, that's pretty weird.

But, you know, Moses knows what he's doing. He's just met with God. Whatever floats his boat. Okay. And then he splatters it. But then, then you know what he does. Then he turns around and he comes to the people.

[ 7 : 23 ] And you know what he does next? He takes this blood and he goes, On all of them. What do you think their reaction is? Nothing like this has quite happened. He doesn't explain what he's doing. Well, I imagine it was something like, What did you do that for?

I mean, maybe they didn't say that to him. They had respect for Moses. But I imagine they thought that. What is he doing? Why does he do this? Why are things like this in the Bible? It's so weird, isn't it?

To take blood and splatter it on people. You know how hard blood is to get out of your clothes. What's going on here? Well, the people didn't quite know what was going on.

But Moses knew what he was doing. You see, he knew something that they didn't know. He knew what was about to happen. He knew that they were about to see God.

And if they were going to survive that encounter, they needed to be covered in blood. Somehow, that was going to be their access pass into God's presence.

[ 8 : 30 ] Blood. Very weird. But it's something that, from this moment, throughout the Old Testament, you see repeated over and over again how people could only access God through blood.

But not just any blood. Have a look at verse 8 again. Look what Moses said when he took this big paintbrush and he splattered the people with blood. Verse 8. And he said, This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.

Now, that's a very important thing that he said. We need to understand it. This is the blood of the covenant. What does that mean? It sounds like something from Indiana Jones, doesn't it? The blood of the covenant. And it's a very biblically phrased.

But it has an important meaning. See, a covenant is a special relationship with a very important person who will allow you to have a relationship with them and come close to them, but only on certain terms that they set.

And even with important human figures, that's typically the case, right? Think of some important political figures. A president. A president of a country.

[ 9 : 45 ] You can't just come up to a president just out of the blue, right? And talk to them. You can't approach them in your own way. What's going to happen if you do that? What's going to happen if you saw the president of America, maybe he's doing a state visit and he gets out of his Marine One helicopter and he's surrounded by these Marines or these bodyguards and you just come up to him and want to shake his hand.

What's going to happen? You're going to get taken out, right? By his security. You can't just do that. You need to approach him in the way that he's allowed people to approach him.

You need to approach him in the way he says. And it's with most sort of important figures. It's the same. Now, if that's true of human figures, how much more true is it of God?

See, the Bible makes it quite clear. You can't approach God on your own terms. You've got to approach him on his terms and not yours.

And his terms, apparently, according to this chapter, are that you've got to be covered in blood to do that. According to him, that is the only way humans can approach him and not be taken out because to approach him means death for a sinner.

[ 10 : 58 ] But somehow, God has made a way that if you approach him covered in the death of another, you can live. That is something that is established right here early on in the Bible.

And it is true every time God deals with humans. The only way humans are ever able to approach him throughout the story of his dealings with humanity is if they are covered in death.

If they are covered in the death of another so that they don't have to die when coming into his presence. And so I want to ask you this morning, do you see now how this story, thousands of years old in Exodus, connects with what happened on Good Friday?

Do you see the connection? Well, if you don't yet, let me read to you what happens the night before Jesus dies. The Thursday night.

He knows what's going to happen the next day. Jesus knew for a long time what he was going to and he didn't divert his course. He didn't run away from it. He headed knowingly into it.

[ 12 : 05 ] His disciples didn't know yet. And then he's having this meal with them, this very significant meal on Thursday night, the Last Supper. And they're chatting and they're eating.

And then he starts talking about his blood. Okay, that is a very weird dinner conversation topic, right? I mean, that's very awkward. If you go to someone's dinner and they say, hey, you know what?

I really want to tell you about my blood. And maybe we can drink some. I mean, that's not going to go down well.

But this is what Jesus was saying. And his disciples were probably as confused as you and me are as we read it for the first time. But it was vital for his disciples to understand something.

Let me read to you from Mark 14, from verse 23. Then he took a cup and after giving thanks, he gave it to them and they all drank from it.

[ 13 : 08 ] And he said to them, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many. Jesus knew what was about to happen the next day.

That horrific torture, pain and death that he would go through. And he didn't run away from it because he knew it had to happen.

He had to go through with it. Why did he have to go through with that? Because he knew that his blood was the blood of the covenant. That's what he says.

It's literally what he says about his blood. He's saying, my blood is the blood of the covenant. In other words, he's saying to his disciples, my blood is the only terms that God will accept for humans to ever approach him.

And you know what? It always was his blood, even in the Old Testament. This is the blood that Moses was talking about all those thousands of years before.

[ 14 : 12 ] This was the blood of the covenant that the prophets had spoken about. And the blood in the Old Testament of those animals that they slayed, there was no power in the animals themselves or their blood.

That only worked in so far as it pointed to this blood that Jesus was talking about the night before he died. This has always been the only thing that gives humans access to God. The blood of God's Son who came to us as a human and ate and drank with us and then he gave us of his blood so that we can come to God and eat and drink with him one day.

Just like the Israelites did on that mountain temporarily and in a small way, Jesus is going to allow his people to do for eternity.

That is what God made us for. To eat and to drink with him. To not just enjoy his gifts temporarily and in a broken body and in a flawed way but to enjoy his gifts in the context of enjoying him for eternity.

That is what God made us for. He made us to live and enjoy him and his gifts forever. He did not make us to die. We die because of sin. God made us to know him intimately and to enjoy him and his gifts without limit.

[ 15 : 33 ] That is what God has always wanted. But Jesus knew the night before he died that for us to have any hope of ever having that we would first need his blood.

Jesus knew that for you whether you believe it or not Jesus who rose from the dead three days later believed it he believed and he knew that you needed his blood if you're going to have any hope of seeing God and enjoying him and his gifts forever.

we all need that because the moment we come near to God in our sin we will die. But because Jesus' death could uniquely pay for our sins no other death in history could do that only Jesus' death could do that because of who he was.

Because Jesus' death could pay for our sin he could take for us the death that we would have if we went into God's presence in our sins so that if you approach God covered in his blood in his death you don't have to die because that death has already happened on the cross on Good Friday.

That is the blood that was made available to you on Good Friday. That blood of the covenant was made available to you when Jesus died on the cross.

[ 16 : 57 ] So the most important question I can ask you this morning is are you covered in it yet? Have you put your faith in who Jesus is and what he did?

Will you be covered in that blood when you die and face God? How do you know? Well to know whether you'll be covered in his blood in death is seen whether you were covered in his blood in life in how you live in following him?

Have you received his promise in baptism to wash you clean of your sins and do you have the confidence that comes with it? And maybe you were baptized as a child but you didn't quite know what was going on you didn't know what it meant you weren't taught what it meant and so I'm asking you do you actually have the confidence that goes with your confession?

Do you have the confidence that comes with the gospel that the sins you commit have been justly paid for? Not just swept under the carpet or ignored a holy God will not do that but your sins have been paid for in blood.

Do you have that confidence? Do you know that for sure? So that when you see God one day those sins will not condemn you that is the most important question I can ask you do you have that confidence?

[ 18 : 23 ] Are you covered in that blood today? Because one day here's the thing one day everyone will see God make no mistake one day we will die one day you will die one day I will die but that won't be the end of your consciousness the next thing you will know is standing in front of your creator and giving an account for your life that is the next thing that will happen after you die the next thing you will be aware of and your entire life will come down to that moment and Jesus says that moment will go one of two ways some will go to eternal destruction and others will go to eternal life Jesus says that for sure that's what's going to happen and the only factor that will decide the difference and decide which one of those two you are is not how many good works you did in your life or which religion you followed or what creeds you held but only whether or not you are covered in the blood of Christ the only blood that can pay for your sin and the blood that he willingly gave on the cross on Good

Friday to bring you to God let me pray oh Lord we approach you now in humility realizing that to approach you is no small thing and Lord we live in a life that is a world that is cut off from you and we realize that is a mercy because if we saw you in our sin we would be destroyed Lord we thank you that Jesus came and fulfilled the age old plan to give us access to you through his blood Lord we thank you Lord Jesus we thank you that you became flesh you ate and drank with us with humans and you gave your own blood so that we can eat and drink with God in eternity in the new restored creation that he has always planned

Lord help us not to forget what you have done help us to put our trust in it and help us to follow you from this day forward in Jesus name Amen