

# QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry  
for the Christian community*

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## SEEING JESUS WITH SPIRITUAL EYES

John in particular emphasises the visual impact on the disciples made by their time spent with Jesus. In 1 John 1 v 1 – 4 he mentions five times that Jesus, the Word of life, has appeared and has been seen. It was the strength of that visual experience that he was so eager to testify and proclaim to everyone else. Most famously, and with passion, in John 1 v 14 he declares that they had seen the glory of the One and Only, the Word made flesh, dwelling among them.

Peter also had been transformed by his visual experience of Jesus, not least at the time of His denial (Luke 22 v 61 - 62). He tells those of us who have not been so privileged that, although we have not seen Him [physically], we love Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy (1 Peter 1 v 8). This is a miracle indeed, considering the very natural and essential connection in human instinct between visual impact and emotional response. In fact, Isaiah 53 v 2b is relevant here (“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him”), and Jesus may well have been quite plain looking, possibly to discourage people following Him for the wrong reasons. But then, His resurrection appearance in eternity may be quite a different matter (Revelation 1 v 14 – 17a).

I find a guiding principle in my Bible teaching ministry is the instruction stated seven times in Revelation chapters 2 and 3: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”. Therefore, it is my duty to share with the people of God whatever I feel the Holy Spirit is laying upon my heart and mind. As we see the signs of the times multiplying, it is only to be expected that the Holy Spirit will have something to say that is relevant and important. In Luke 21 v 28 Jesus Himself tells us that under these circumstances we are to lift up our heads, and He doesn’t just mean “cheer up!”. The Holy Spirit is confirming that this ensures we are looking upwards towards Jesus, spiritually now but soon with physical reality. In other words, we should be as keen to see the Lord, in both senses, as John and the others were when Jesus was here.

There are possibly two main reasons for this emphasis on seeing Jesus with spiritual eyes at this point in the divine plan. Firstly, our Father’s certain desire to have that generation of Christians who will be alive at the Rapture (a generation known only to Him) ready and prepared to meet His Son (John 17 v 22 – 24). Jesus will be returning for His Bride and we can be sure He is “excited” at the prospect (John 14 v 2 – 3, Hebrews 12 v 2b). After all, His love is the greatest of all loves (John 15 v 13, Ephesians 5 v 25b – 27), and that moment will be the culmination of the plan of the ages, the purpose of redemption, when the One for whom the whole universe was created receives to Himself the eternal companion and joint heir given to Him by His Father (John 17 v 6, Romans 8 v 17). And she was paid for by the Lord’s own precious blood! Surely the Holy Spirit will encourage the Bride also to grow in excitement as the Day gets ever closer (Revelation 22 v 17)?

Secondly, if it is Father’s plan to move once again with sovereign grace in renewal and revival before the glorious event of Christ’s return, then the Holy Spirit will seek to encourage us to look up from introspectively gazing at our spiritual navels. He will help us to “turn our eyes upon Jesus, to look full in His wonderful face”. The contrast is stark, as it is so easy for our Christian lives to drift into various byways: preoccupation with issues of legalism, ritual, denomination or personality; being self-absorbed with “signs and wonders” experiences; embracing non-scriptural moral and humanistic positions; etc., etc... Rather, our theology, faith, fellowship and witness should be leading us into a deeper relationship with the Saviour. Although we often talk about outpourings of the Holy Spirit, He would never want us to see Him as an end in Himself. Instead, His work is to draw us to experience the reality of Hebrews 2 v 9: “But we see Jesus, ...”.

There are many examples in scripture of what happens when we see the Lord, and now we look at seven of them that apply to ourselves, and one that applies to the whole world.

### 1. Hebrews 12 v 2a. Seeing Jesus in daily life.

Here we are urged to look at Jesus continually; to “fix” our eyes on Him. This verse helps us to understand what spiritual sight really is. The faith that Jesus gave us (“authored”), and is bringing to perfection, is the faculty within us which enables us to see Him clearly *as being present with us at all times*. He becomes the ever-faithful friend, closer than a brother, never leaving or forsaking us, while we abide in Him. As in any love relationship, He should never be far from our thoughts. Indeed, He wants to be the One who renews our mind, checks our emotions, motivates our actions, administers our agenda, empowers our relationships, arranges our “coincidences”, controls our temper, safeguards our spirit, restores our soul. More

than just an unseen guest, we are to see Him with ever-increasing clarity as our indispensable companion. None of this removes our own personal freedom or responsibility, but the more fixed our awareness of His presence becomes, the more we joyfully acquiesce in His will and plan for our lives.

## 2. Job 42 v 5. Seeing Jesus for understanding.

After Job's most severe trial, and his deep anguish in trying to make sense of what was happening in his life, God speaks (chapters 38 – 41) and Job sees the totality of His providence in all things. Job now realises even Satan himself is unable to get the better of God's purposes: "I know that you can do all things, no plan of yours can be thwarted" (42 v 2). Paul understands the same great truth in Romans 8 vv 28 and 31. Job's earlier spiritual exercises, as good as they were, were no more than a religious "hearing" about God's sovereignty. Now he could appreciate that God always has an ultimate plan, based on a personal relationship, and therefore he could see and understand God with far greater acceptance and assurance.

## 3. Isaiah 6 v 1. Seeing Jesus for anointing.

Isaiah had already begun his ministry as a prophet, but this was the moment of a much more powerful commissioning (v 8), with the appropriate anointing (v 6 – 7). It happened at a turning point in the life of the nation (v 1), when the Lord was getting ready to do a new thing (e.g., Isaiah 43 v 18 – 19). Firstly, the sight of the Lord led Isaiah to acknowledge his own uncleanness (v 5), and then God was ready to prepare him for even greater service. As we are told in John 12 v 41, Isaiah saw Jesus, for this was an example of a theophany – the appearance of the pre-incarnate Son of God (e.g., John 1 v 18, Matthew 11 v 27b, Hebrews 1 v 3, 1 Timothy 6 v 15b – 16). If we are privileged to see the Lord in order to receive a new anointing for a fresh challenge, it will not be an occasion orchestrated by our own will and design. It's a gifting by sovereign grace, accompanied by deep and genuine soul-searching, and then afterwards we are never the same again.

## 4. 2 Chronicles 20 v 12. Seeing Jesus for spiritual warfare.

Judah was threatened with attack from a much more powerful enemy and the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, called the nation together for prayer. At the conclusion of his prayer the king utters these vital words: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you". When we are under spiritual attack it is all too easy to pray and then try to wage battle according to our own will, feelings, thoughts and actions. God spoke to Jehoshaphat and all the people to tell them clearly that the battle was His (v 15). They were to make the appropriate preparations, go to the place of warfare, and then watch the Lord do the rest. Paul tells us exactly the same in Ephesians 6 v 11 – 13, where after due preparation by taking on the spiritual armour, we have to simply "stand", and keep on standing. Our only weapon is the Word; the battle is spiritual (2 Corinthians 10 v 4). So, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus at all times through anointed prayer (Ephesians 6 v 18 – 20).

## 5. John 20 v 25. Seeing Jesus in our fellowship.

Following the disciples' thrilling meeting with Jesus on the evening following the resurrection, they were able to say with conviction to Thomas: "We have seen the Lord". This raises the question whether in our meetings we can say honestly afterwards: "We have seen the Lord". The gatherings may be happy times of fellowship with each other, or times of orthodox and accurate exegesis of the scripture, or times of rather excited waiting for the Spirit, or times of traditional and faithful spiritual routine, but have we "seen the Lord"? If we have really had an overwhelming sense of the Lord's presence and seen Him with fresh clarity and power in our meetings, then surely our clocks would become irrelevant and our carefully arranged schedules would become redundant! Whatever, we would be very changed people.

## 6. John 12 v 21. Other people who would like to see Jesus.

With the Lord's reputation so widespread, especially after the raising of Lazarus and later His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, even the Greeks at the feast (probably Hellenistic Jews) wanted to see Him. Evangelism can often be very hard and seemingly unrewarding work. As the Lord's people, maybe the effect upon us of seeing Jesus in a continuous and meaningful way would result in others wanting to see the One who has made such an impact on our lives and gatherings.

## 7. Acts 7 v 56. Seeing Jesus at our departure.

Stephen was a wonderful young and gifted member of the early church, and gave an amazing defence of Christian truth before the Sanhedrin. Just before his tragic death through stoning he looked up and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The Lord's usual position is described as seated (e.g., Ephesians 1 v 20, Colossians 3 v 1), but it seems more than likely that Jesus rose to His feet in order to greet Stephen home. What a wonderful prospect for any faithful child of God, and it raises the question: "Would He choose to get up to welcome me?"

And, for the whole world, Revelation 1 v 7. One day everyone will see Jesus.

A glorious day is coming when every eye will see Him, but not everyone will be happy about it. They will certainly acknowledge His lordship (Philippians 2 v 10 – 11), but those who in life have rejected His gracious invitation, offered either through the Word or through conscience (Romans 2 v 14 – 15), will mourn bitterly at His appearing.