

“But only the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year. And he always offered blood for his own sins and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the entrance to the Most Holy Place was not freely open as long as the Tabernacle and the system it represented were still in use.” Hebrews 9:7-8 NLT

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For most of human history, we did NOT have direct access to God - period. Adam and Eve at one point walked with God, in person so to speak, and saw him face to face without dying. But after sin and being banished from the tree and the garden, that no longer happened. Their last conversation, after trying to hide FROM God, was about being naked and afraid. Even when God spoke directly to someone, like Noah, Abraham or Moses, he did not show his face. God put Ab in a twilight sleep as he saw the backside of God pass through the blood of divided animals. And God shielded Moses with his hand as he passed by him, again Moses only seeing God's backside. The other instances were from an Angel of the Lord, which was understood to be Jesus in human form, but not actually a human - as with Abraham as they negotiated over Sodom and Gomorrah. This mention here of the high priest going into the Holy of Holy place was just to be near the presence of God, but not face to face at all. Why does the author of Hebrews give us this backstory to being with God or seeing God? Drumroll...because with Jesus, it was the first time humans could see God, face to face, without dying! It is really quite a paradox and a mystery to see God as a man but not recognize him as such. Jesus physical appearance, his character and demeanor did not readily reveal himself as the God no human had EVER seen (sans Adam & Eve) face to face. When Father God watched his own son, God and man combined, dying, there was a moment of crushing abandonment and spectacular beauty at the same time - Father God could not look on his own son's face because of the sin he became as a man. And Jesus had a moment of utter aloneness, never having been apart from the Father (and the Spirit?). But that moment of sin, death and later resurrection means that we can now see him. If God the father were to show up, face to face, today - we would not die, we look like Adam and Eve looked before the sin! This is the most credible, amazing news ever!

Dad,

“O how marvelous! O how wonderful! And my song shall ever be: O how marvelous! O how wonderful! Is my Savior's love for me!” 🎵 The mystery and the wonder of seeing you face to face - oh how I long for that day!

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root