

# The Glory of God

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By Laurence A. Justice

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*And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen. Exodus 33:18-23*

God's word speaks again and again of the glory of God. What does God's word mean by the glory of God? Psalm 29:9 says that "In his temple doth everyone speak of his glory." What is this glory that David says everyone speaks of in the temple? Isaiah 6:3 says, "The whole earth is full of his **glory**." What is this glory that the earth is said to be full of here? When Stephen had preached to the Sanhedrin and they gnashed their teeth in reaction to his sermon, Acts 7:55 says that Stephen "...looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the **glory of God**..." What was it that Stephen saw here? We often pray in our services as well as in private that God will get all the glory. What is it that we wish God to get when we pray thus? In verse 18 of our text Moses prayed to God, "show me thy **glory**." What exactly was it that Moses was praying for God to show him here?

## What Is God's Glory?

God's glory is the manifestation of his excellencies. God's glory is his perfections made known. God's glory is what he is in himself, the sum total of his

home? And what about your dress? Does the modesty and sobriety and cleanliness and good taste of your dress bring the attention of others to the purity and holiness of God and the difference that God makes in one's values? Does it bring praise and honor to the glory of God? Does your smoking hinder your reception by others to whom you seek to witness for Christ? Or does it bring praise and honor and glory to God? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do **all** to the **glory of God**."

Unregenerate men do not see the glory of God in Jesus Christ. To all unbelievers, Christ is **Ichabod**; where is the glory? Unbelievers see neither form nor comeliness in Christ that they should desire him. An unsaved person is bored when his mind is turned to the glory of Christ. **Do you have any desire to see the glory of God in Christ?**

One of the greatest privileges a Christian has, both now and in eternity in the future, is beholding the glory of God in Jesus Christ. Every Christian, like Moses, desires for the Lord to "show me thy glory."

In this life we see the glory of God **by faith**. We do not see it with our physical eyes but by faith. And faith cometh by hearing and not by the sight of the physical eye. Here we walk by faith and not by sight, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:7. Have you ever seen the glory in the face of Christ? Has God ever revealed to you his glories in Jesus Christ?

In eternity in the future, we will see Christ's glory with our resurrected, glorified, physical eyes. No longer will we see through a glass darkly but then we will see face to face.

But no one who has not first seen Christ and his glory here by faith will ever see Christ's glory by sight in eternity, at least not for his own good. The only way that person will see the glory of Christ in eternity will be to see him in the glory of the awful, majestic, holy and righteous judgment at the great white throne when the righteous Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ, will cast sinners into the flames of eternal hell.

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One day the trumpet will sound for his coming,  
One day the skies with his glories will shine;  
Wonderful day my beloved ones bringing;  
**Glorious** Savior, this Jesus is mine!  
Living, he loved me; dying, he saved me;  
Buried, he carried my sins far away;  
Rising, he justified freely forever:  
One day he's coming—  
O **Glorious** Day!

Julia Ward Howe's so-called *Battle Hymn of the Republic* which the Northern armies sang as they burned Georgia, begins with the words, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." But friends Jesus Christ did not return in glory during that awful War Between the States! The glory of Christ's coming is yet future! Even beyond Christ's glorious second coming, the occupation of the saints in heaven will be beholding the glory of Christ. It will not be the mansions nor the foundations made out of precious stones nor the gates of solid pearl, it will not be the streets of pure gold as it were transparent glass which will occupy the saints in heaven, but **the glory of the Lamb!** Revelation 21:10-11, 23, 22:5. Christ himself prayed for this in his great intercessory prayer in John 17. In verse 24 he said, "Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may behold **my glory**." Yes, the greatest the ultimate expression of the glory of God is to be seen in Jesus Christ!

## What Application of the Fact of God's Glory Can Be Made To Our Everyday Lives?

First of all God's word teaches us that we are responsible to praise God for his glory. Charles Spurgeon's great catechism points out from God's word that "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." The very purpose of our creation is that we might glorify God or bring praise and honor to him for what he is. Psalm 29:2 commands us to "give unto the Lord the **glory** due unto his name." Praise is involved here. But we are not just to praise and glorify God with our lips. We are also to **bring praise to his glory**. We are to make manifest to others the glory of God in the way we live and the things we do. Our personal habits, our dress, our home life, all of our conduct should be done for the purpose of glorifying God, bringing the attention of others to the perfections of God.

Let me ask a question or two. Does your home life bring glory to God? Does it show the world what peace and tranquility and happiness God can bring to a

and death of Christ. God's perfect justice is seen here because the only thing that could satisfy it was the precious blood of his own dear Son and that was the price that was actually paid.

God's holiness is made manifest in the death of Christ. Never did God so manifest his perfect hatred for sin as in the death of his only begotten Son **for** sin on Calvary's cross.

God's grace is made manifest in Christ's death in that though all men are sinners and deserve only eternal suffering and death in hell, Christ came in the room and in the stead and in the place of his people and took their guilt and their sin and paid the price and accomplished their redemption. **Oh what grace!**

God's glory is also seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. God's power to resurrect the dead, to quicken and give life to them, is seen in his raising of Christ. Paul says in Rom. 6:4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead **by the glory of the Father** even so we also should walk in newness of life."

You recall that light or brightness is often associated with God's glory in the scriptures. In Hebrews 1:3, Paul calls Christ, "The **brightness** of God's **glory**." And in 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul tells us that the glory of God **shines** in the gospel of Jesus Christ. "But if our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should **shine** unto them."

God's glory will also be seen one day in the return of Christ to this earth. The Lord himself says in Matthew 24:30, "...they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great **glory**." Paul speaks in Titus 2:13 of "Looking for that blessed hope and the **glorious appearing** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ..." Brother, in that day we're going to get a view of God's glory in Christ that none has ever yet seen! All his excellencies will be manifested to us as never before. Who knows what all this could possibly involve?

The writer of the hymn "one day" speaks of this coming sight of Christ's glory when he says,

excellencies made known, revealed, made manifest!

God's glory and God's *name* often mean the same thing in the scriptures. God's name refers to what God is; his character, his perfections. The many different names of God in scripture; Elohim, Jehovah-Nissi, Jehovah Sabaoth, etc., reveal different aspects or different perfections of God's being. When Moses asked God to show him his glory, God answered in verse 19 of our text: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee and I will proclaim *the name of the Lord* before thee..." Psalm 102:15 uses God's name and God's glory to mean basically the same thing. "So the heathen shall fear *the name of the LORD* and all the kings of the earth *thy glory*."

God's glory then is his perfections made known or revealed. God's answer to Moses' request of "show me thy glory" was, in verse 19, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee." God's goodness is one of his perfections and God told Moses here that he would reveal his goodness to him.

God's sovereignty is also one of his perfections and he says in verse 19 in reply to Moses' request, I "will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." To deny God's sovereignty in salvation or in any other area is to take away from God's glory because God's sovereignty is one of his perfections which he has made known in his word. Most people today serve a God who is under some obligation to his creatures, a God who is bound to treat them all alike. But to glorify God is to recognize this perfection of his character, that he is the supreme governor of all things who does as he pleases in all things including the matter of salvation!

God's glory also involves the manifestation of his power. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 speaks of "the *glory* of his *power*." In the Exodus 16, after promising Moses and Israel that he would feed them with manna from heaven, God said in verse 7, "and in the morning ye shall see *glory of the LORD*..." God was saying that in the morning he would miraculously send the manna and when he did, they would see his glory, they would see his miraculous *power* displayed or made manifest. Psalm 24:8 speaks of God's power as being a perfection which is involved in his glory when it asks, "Who is the *King of glory*?" and then it answers its own question, "*the LORD strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle*."

God's glory includes his righteousness. This is what Paul has reference to in Romans 3:23 when he says, "For all have sinned and come short of the *glory of God*." That is, all men have come short of the manifested perfection of God's character, his righteousness particularly. Any and all of God's manifested perfections are involved in what God's word calls his glory.

The thought of light or brightness is also often related in the scriptures to the glory of God. Exodus 24:16-17 describes the glory of God as being like devouring fire. "And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." Ezekiel 43:2 says, "And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east and his voice was like a noise of many waters and the earth shined with his glory." Luke 2:9 is speaking of the angel appearing to the shepherds for the purpose of announcing the birth of Christ when it says, "And Lo the angel of the Lord came upon them and the *glory of the Lord shown* round about them and they were sore afraid." In Acts 22:11, the apostle Paul is describing how the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus when he was saved. Here Paul saw the glory of Christ. "And when I could not see for the glory of that light being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus." In our text God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock in order to protect him from the dazzling light and devouring fire of his glory.

Still another thing involved in God's glory is the matter of praise and honor. Glory and praise mean the same thing many times in the scripture. Psalm 22:23 says, "Ye who fear the Lord, *praise* him: all ye the seed of Jacob *glorify* him..." And Isaiah 42:8 says, "I am the Lord, that is my name: and *my glorify* will I not give to another neither my *praise* to graven images." God says in Psalm 50:23 that "whoso offereth *praise glorifieth me*."

One other thing we need to note in seeking to define just what God's glory is, is the fact that heaven itself, the place where God and all his perfections are openly manifested, is sometimes referred to in scripture as God's glory. Paul says for example in 1 Timothy 3:16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in

the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into *glory*," glory referring to heaven where God is.

### Where Can God's Glory Be Seen?

Where are his perfections made manifest? God's glory is seen, first of all, in his creation. God's wisdom, God's power, God's greatness are surely to be seen as we look around us at his creation. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens *declare the glory of God* and the firmament showeth his handiwork! Isaiah 6:3 says, "The whole earth is full of his *glory*. In Romans 1:19-20, Paul shows that the Gentiles who did not have the gospel preached unto them were, nevertheless, justly exposed to the wrath of God because, while they possessed an adequate knowledge of God through the things created by him, they did not honor and give thanks to him! "Because that which may be known of God is *manifest* in them: for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, *even his eternal power and Godhead*: so that they are without excuse..." Creation makes manifest God's power and Godhead, thus God's glory can be seen in creation.

God's glory can also be seen in his providence, his continual care which he exercises over his creation. Psalm 145:9-17 tells us of God's providence and how it makes manifest the perfections of God. "The LORD is *good* to all and his *tender mercies* are over all his works... (vs. 5) "They shall speak of the GLORY of thy kingdom and talk of thy POWER to make known to the sons of men his *mighty acts* and the *glorious majesty* of his kingdom...(vs. 16) thou openest thine hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. The Lord is *righteous* in *all his ways* and *holy in all his works*." In God's providential care for his creation, we see his goodness, his tender mercies, his power, his righteousness, his glory.

God's glory can even be seen in hell because in the fact of hell God's holiness is manifested. Hell makes manifest God's perfect hatred of sin which is an essential part of his holiness. Hell makes manifest God's perfect justice in that those who sin against God will certainly and unavoidably be punished, with a punishment that fits the awfulness of their crimes.

I could mention many things in which God's glory can be seen. But far and away the greatest expression of

God's glory is to be found in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 42:8, God says, "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another..." God will not share his glory with anyone outside of himself.

God has chosen to make manifest his perfections, to exhibit his glory to the fullest in Jesus Christ who is not someone outside of himself, but is God the Son, the Second Person of the Divine Trinity. In our text Moses prayed, "Show me thy glory" but God said to him in verse 20, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live." But we see God's glory in his Son Jesus Christ. John says in John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father *he* hath *declared* him" or led him forth or made him known.

God would not show Moses his face, he would not give him a full and open view of his glory. But we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the *glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*." So God's glory is exhibited to us in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. John is speaking of Christ when he says in John 1:14, "And *we* (the disciples) *beheld* (or saw) *his glory*, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth. In 1 Corinthians 2:8, Paul calls Christ Jesus, "the *Lord of glory*." Again in 1 Corinthians 1:24, Paul says, "Christ, the *wisdom* of God and the *power* of God."

How do we see God's glory in Christ? We see God's perfections made manifest in Christ and thus we see his glory. In Christ's mighty works and miracles we see the glory of God, we see God's power and wisdom and mercy and goodness made manifest. When Mary and Martha sent word to the Lord that his friend Lazarus was ill, the Lord Jesus said in John 11:4, "This sickness is...for the *glory of God*..." then in verse 40 after Lazarus had died and the Lord stood at the grave with the mourners, he said to Martha, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest *see the glory of God*?" The Lord then proceeded by his mighty power to raise Lazarus from the dead, God's glory was seen in Christ when his *power* was manifested in his raising Lazarus.

God's glory is seen in the vicarious suffering and death of Jesus Christ. God's perfections are nowhere more fully manifested than in the substitutionary suffering