

Thine is the glory.

1. Occurances in the Old Testament

In the days of the Old Testament, God revealed his glory from time to time. At the dedication of the temple that Solomon built we read:

Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God (2 Chronicles 5:13-14).

Thereafter Solomon blessed the people and prayed to the Lord God. Then we read:

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever" (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

The priests could not stand before the glory of the Lord. God revealed his glory because he was pleased with his people. There were singers and musicians clothed in white linen, with cymbals, harps, and stringed instruments, as well as 120 priests playing trumpets. (2 Chronicles 5:12). If God honoured the use of instruments in his worship service back then, I am sure he is pleased with instruments being used in church today to proclaim his praises. It is not the outward proclamation in isolation that pleases God, but the condition and attitude of the heart.

Years earlier when Moses finished building the tabernacle in the desert we find a similar occurrence of the glory of God.

And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:33-35).

Another time God showed his glory was when he revealed it to Isaiah. This was at the time when Isaiah was called to be a prophet. We read:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim;

each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke (Isaiah 6:1-4).

So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.” Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” and He said, “Go, and tell this people” (Isaiah 6:5-9).

Whoever sees the glory of the Lord will realize God’s holiness and their own sinfulness. They will see that they cannot stand before a holy God. It is in that moment, if they confess their sin, that God is able to take away the iniquity and purge the sin.

Moses once asked God to show him his glory. We read about it in Exodus 33.

And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:18-23).

When God showed Moses his glory it was combined with the proclamation of the Name of the Lord. And God’s Name is revealed with his attributes which are mercy, grace, patience, goodness and truth. That is glory!

Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. Then he said, “If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance” (Exodus 33:5-9).

Again, we have confession and a request for the pardon of sins. Moses interceded for the people. The Old Testament was a shadow of things to come.

2. In the New Testament, God's glory was revealed in Christ.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

In the New Testament Jesus Christ, through whom God revealed his glory to us, does not just intercede for us and ask for our pardon. Much more, he died for us and took our sins upon himself to enable the forgiveness of sins for all who believe in him, and see in him the glory of God, from that time forward. Speaking of Christ, John said: **“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).**

Holiness and Glory go together. You cannot stand before a holy God. But as you realize this and see his glory, you are made holy by God, as you confess your sins. God says you shall be holy for I am holy (1 Peter 1:15). Since we cannot do this ourselves God makes us holy through Christ. And Christ entreats us to go and sin no more (John 5:14, 8:11).

Christ is the glory of God. The book of Hebrews verifies this.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:1-3).

In 1 Corinthians 2:8 Christ is called the Lord of Glory. One of the ways Jesus revealed his glory was through the miracles he performed. Listen to what he says to Martha at the grave of Lazarus, just before he raised him from the dead.

Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:39-40).

At Christ's second coming all will see his glory for it is written:

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30).

3. Glory and Suffering

Jesus revealed to us that the way to glory often goes through great suffering. To the disciples on the way to Emmaus he said:

O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? (Luke 24:25-26)

When Stephen was stoned to death he saw the glory of the Lord. We read:

When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him (Acts 7:54-58).

The passion to do God’s will enables his children to not shy away from suffering. Indeed, when the saints in Caesarea wanted to dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem, he answered:

What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 21:13).

Paul calls the suffering in this world a light affliction in comparison to the glory to come. In his letter to the Corinthians he says:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17).

And in his letter to the Romans he states:

if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18b-18).

Indeed, suffering and glory often go together.

4. The Church is His Glory

Christ is the glory of the Lord. Yet, the Church is called the Body of Christ and as such we are to live to his glory. Jesus has cleansed us from sin through his own blood for holiness as we read in Ephesians:

that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).

Again, in Corinthians Paul reminds us that we are the body of Christ.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? (1 Corinthians 6:15).

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually (1 Corinthinans 12:27).

If Christ is the glory of God and we are his body, then our feet are his feet and our hands are his hands and our lives are to be his glory. We are to live to the glory of the Lord.

Indeed, in Ephesians 1:12 it tells us what our purpose is, the purpose of those, who trust in Christ. Ephesians 1:12 reads:

that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Our reason for living is to live for the glory of our Lord. Do we fulfill this calling?

In Corinthians we read:

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

5. Is our aim to glorify God?

The talents that God has given us, do we thank him for them? Or do we try to show who we are by what we can do? In our dealing with others, is it about us, about our glory, or are we concerned about God's glory. Is it our desire to show who we are and what we can do, or is it our desire to be a blessing for others to the glory of God. What is our motive?

Remember King Saul? When he was humble, God made him King of Israel. But when he got to the point where he cared more about his own honour and what people thought of him, than he cared to do the will of God, then God cast him aside. When Samuel confronted him, he reluctantly admitted that he had sinned, but he was still more concerned about his honour. He said to Samuel:

I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God (1 Samuel 15:30).

How sad. In Proverbs 16:8 we read that pride comes before destruction. In our society glitter and glamour belongs to the stars. Glory belongs to the athletes. And recognition belongs to those who have achieved great things. Really? And where is God's glory, praise and honour?

During the temptations of Jesus we read:

Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Matthew 4:8-10).

Here we read that the devil promises to give great glory to Jesus, if he will worship him. What is wrong with this promise? First of all glory and the world do not belong to the

devil. The earth and the kingdoms thereof belong to God. And secondly the devil is trying to rob God of his glory and give it away. How about us? Are we concerned about giving God his glory? Or do we wish to give glory to another? Or to ourselves? God created us and we want to live to his glory.

**Give to the LORD the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him.
Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! (1 Chronicles 16:29).**

6. Nature

Although the earth and what is in it shall pass away, and the glory of the spiritual is greater than the glory of the natural, nevertheless we also see the glory of God in Nature. How often have we been overwhelmed by the beauty of the sunset, or the grandeur of the mountains! The flowers and the birds reflect the beauty and glory of God.

Jesus himself says: **Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Luke 12:27).**

7. Heaven

Although the earth is beautiful and reflects the glory of God, the best is yet to come. The Bible says:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

When Jesus returns with the clouds of heaven and in great glory to judge the earth and to take us to glory, this also will be overwhelming glory. We read:

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven (Mark 13:26-27).

And in Ephesians it is written:

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

Perhaps the best known passage on the glory of heaven is in the book of Revelation.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (Revelation 21:10-11).

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on

either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:1-5).

Summary

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

God has given us a glimpse of his glory through nature. He has revealed his glory through Jesus Christ his Son. He appeared in his glory in the Old Testament, which is a shadow of the glory of the gospel. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 8:23), but God in his mercy and grace, through his glory, has given us a way back. This way is Jesus, the Lord of glory. Our present suffering is light affliction when compared to the glory which is to come. Christ will return in glory to take us to glory, a glory prepared for us by the Father. To him be all glory. Amen.

Questions

1. On what occasions did God show his glory in the Old Testament?
2. What did God call out when he revealed his glory to Moses?
3. Who is the glory of God?
4. How did Jesus reveal his glory on earth?
5. Why did Christ have to suffer?
6. What is our purpose on earth?
7. What was the devil's aim in Christ's third temptation?
8. How does nature reveal the glory of God?
9. How will Christ return?
10. How does John describe the glory of heaven in the book of Revelation?