

The Glory of God

Most theology [study of God] has lost its God-emphasis and is really anthropology [the study of man].

Most theology today is done on the assumption that:-

- a) Man is the centre of the universe
- b) God owes man an explanation of all that happens in this universe and society.

This type of theology largely existential, where the emphasis is on our “*existence*” in the here and now, “*what’s in it for me?*” approach to the study of God and His Word.

Very little is mentioned about the Sovereign Creator God before whom we all will have to stand and give account of our lives, some time in the future.

Why then study the Glory of God?

a) **Acts 7:2** [NIV] *“To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.”*

This study is a good introduction to the God of The Bible for He is called “*the God of Glory*”.

b) **Isaiah 42:8** [NIV] *“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”*

This study teaches us what matters most to the God of The Bible whom we serve. His own Glory and His Name which are inseparable.

Yehweh” often translated “*yehôuāh*” [yeh-ho-vaw] is the personal name of God, not a description of His characteristics. “*Yehweh*” means “*I am that I am*” or “*I will be that I will be*”.

The God we worship announces Himself as faithful, unchanging, the same yesterday, today and forever, self-existent with no beginning or end.

c) **Romans 3:23** [NIV] *“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”*

This study will show us what we are falling short of, why we are sinners. We need to hate sin because it detracts from God His Glory, not because of the pain and suffering it brings us.

Psalms 51:4 [NIV] *“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”*

d) **Exodus 3:1-6** [NIV] *“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight, why the bush does not burn up.” When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.”*

This study takes us on to Holy ground. We are entering into the most sacred area of God’s Word. We need to react in the same way as Moses.

The strength of Moses was in the way he constantly upheld God's name and hence His Glory before all people.

e) When we grasp this subject and affirm it in our hearts it will become life changing.

Isaiah 6:1-4 [NIV] *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke."*

Understanding God's Glory will transform our sense of worship and how we worship Him.

Isaiah 6:5 [NIV] *"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."*

Understanding God's Glory will humble us, as we compare ourselves to God and His Glory.

Isaiah 6:6-8 [NIV] *"Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

Understanding God's Glory will lead us to obedience and submission to His Will.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship."*

We will worship our Creator God by becoming a living sacrifice on the altar before His Glory.

Romans 6:15-18 [NIV] *"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."*

Paul is telling us to respond to God's Grace in the same way as Isaiah did, yield to His Will. *"Here am I, send me."*

Matthew 28:16-20 [NIV] *"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Jesus desired His disciples to turn the physical worship into active, living, worship by continuing the work He had started on earth.

f) **1 Corinthians 10:31** [NIV] *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."*

This study will help us understand the aim of all believers. We are to live a life that in every aspect will bring glory to God.

g) Sooner or later in our quest to know God we will come up against this theme, the Sovereign Glory of God. We will either love what we learn or hate it, but we will never be the same again.

If we understand God's Sovereign Glory and still love Him we will be treading where the spiritual greats in both Bible and Church history have trod.

What is the Glory of God?

God's Glory is His Personal Dignity, His Worthiness, His Honour or Respect.

God's Glory is His essential being. He is a personal God who expresses Himself in the trinity, three persons but one being.

- a) God the Father, the Supreme Being and the Source of Life.
- b) God the Son, as the Saviour of sinful humanity, our mediating high Priest and elder brother.
- c) God the Holy Spirit the comforter and counsellor who lives with or in us, creating in us, as we yield to Him, new "*born again*" children of God with all the characteristics of our Creator God.

There are two words in the ancient languages that are translated "glory":

a) **Old Testament:** "*kâbôdh*" [kaw-bode] meaning heaviness or weight, referring to one's stature. Used of people to describe their wealth, splendour or reputation.

b) **New Testament:** "*dôxa*" [dox-ah] in secular Greek this word is used for opinion or reputation. In certain passages of the New Testament the word "*dôxa*" refers to human honour but the chief use is to describe the revelation of the character and the presence of God in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:3 [NIV] "*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*"

Christ is the outshining of the divine Glory of God.

John 1:14 [NIV] "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

John uses "*dôxa*" to describe Jesus personally and what He brought to us from the Father.

2 Corinthians 4:4,6 [NIV] "*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*" ... "*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*"

Paul uses "*dôxa*" to describe the gospel message.

John 12:23 [NIV] "*Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."*

The death of Jesus Christ is described by John as His hour of glory ["*dôxa*"].

Luke 24:26 [NIV] "*Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ are seen as manifestations of the Glory of God.

1 Corinthians 11:7 [NIV] "*A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.*"

Humanity, who was made in the image and Glory of God with the intention of having a relationship with Him.

Romans 15:9 [NIV] *“...so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.”*

The object of the Church is to lead the world to acknowledge the glory which is God’s.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 [NIV] *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”*

Our individual physical lives are to bring honour [“*dōxa*”] to our Creator God.

Glory is the sum total of God’s attributes.

Glory is the nearest we can come to describing God in one word.

Acts 7:2 [NIV] *“To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.”*

Stephen called God “*the God of Glory*” for glory is God’s “*essence*”, that is all that makes something what it is, its nature. The nature or essence of God, in one word is glory.

God is the “*weightiest*” being there is [one use of the word glory].

We may ask the question “*who carries the most weight?*” meaning those with the most power. Royalty, politicians, wealthy people, rulers, etc.

God is the most powerful, awesome being that is, which is His Glory.

Glory means who gets the credit.

1 Chronicles 16:29 [NIV] *“...ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.”*

Too often we do not give God the credit or glory.

For Creation

Psalms 19:1 [NIV] *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”*

God should be given the credit [glory] for all creation.

Psalms 139:14 [NIV] *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”*

Each of us are the product of God’s creation.

How contemptible it is to speak of creation as a matter of chance or evolution.

Such belief is to come short of giving God the glory [“*dōxa*”] and therefore sin.

For Redemption

Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV] *“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy*

Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession, to the praise of his glory."

Our redemption is all God's doing, all of the credit [glory] should be given to Him.

Romans 8:30 [NIV] *"And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."*

How silly to speak of salvation in terms of what we have done for God!

Ephesians 1:8-10 [NIV] *"...that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment, to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."*

Salvation is a gift from God, how absurd to speak of salvation in terms of our law keeping and good works!

John 6:44 [NIV] *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

Our calling is to God's credit [glory]. Nothing we did or were, caused that calling. It was part of God's sovereign, choice.

How ridiculous that we should say we made the first move towards God. No-one really seeks the real God, He first seeks us.

Romans 8:38-39 [NIV] *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Having been saved by God it is God who preserves our salvation.

It is ludicrous to suppose we can keep ourselves in a state of justification or salvation.

1 Corinthians 4:7 [NIV] *"For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?"*

All our gifts or talents have come from God, give Him the credit [glory].

How arrogant for us to take credit for what we have.

Psalms 75:6-7 [NIV] *"No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another."*

Our position in life is dependent on the sovereignty of God.

How thoughtless of us if we say we got to where we are in life by our own cleverness!

All that we are, have and hope to be, can be summed up in this short statement. *"To God be the credit [glory]."*

The dignity [glory] of God is seen in His presence and sovereign pleasure.

Exodus 33:14-20 [NIV] *"The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*

And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

God promised to always be with Moses and assured him that he would know when God was pleased because Moses was fulfilling God's Will. Moses related this to God's Glory and asked as a final proof for God to show him His Glory.

We should pray that God will be pleased to reveal Himself to us, for us to see His Glory.

Romans 9:14-16 [NIV] *"What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy."*

Any sense of God's presence is subject to His Sovereign Will. He may be pleased to show or withhold His Glory.

There are various manifestations of God's Presence [His Glory].

Luke 5:17 [NIV] *"One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick."*

The healing presence of God.

Acts 5:11 [NIV] *"Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events."*

The instant judgement of God on Ananias and Sapphira confirmed the presence of God, bringing awe and fear on the whole church.

Acts 2:46-47 [NIV] *"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

The praise of God and loving fellowship of the Church resulted in the saving presence of God being manifested.

Acts 12:5-16 [NIV] *"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating." When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished."*

The presence of God as a response to intercessory prayer.

Acts 6:3-4, 7 [NIV] *“Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” ... “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”*

The presence of God manifested in given wisdom.

The presence of the manifested Glory of God is to be coveted above all else if the Church is to have any credibility and revival.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the church directing the church as it submits totally to His Will and direction is the glorious presence of God.

The worst thing that can happen to a church is for God’s Glory to depart, for the Holy Spirit to depart.

What makes a church a living powerful witnessing vehicle for God is **not** its wealth, or numbers, **not** its gifted ministers, **nor** its beautiful buildings or music.

What makes a church alive is the presence of the Glory of God, the Holy Spirit.

When we constantly seek to glorify God by giving Him the credit for all that is done and has been done. Always full of grateful thanks and praise, His presence will be with us. For we will not be grieving of quenching the work of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:13-14 [NIV] *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*

The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify God, when we seek to glorify God, the Holy Spirit will be with us and working in and through us.