

# EYES ON GLORY

By

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“Beholding...the glory of the Lord” (II Cor. 3:18).

Paul wrote that “the whole creation groans and travails in pain”, only it seems that it groans and travails more now than ever before. Yet God desires that we do not become sidetracked and bogged down in the world’s sin, but keep a clear vision of the One who is perfect, holy and gloriously all-mighty.

Since the invention of the hoax called “evolution” the humanists have dinned into our ears the story of man’s progress from primitive ignorance to the present state of advanced slavery. Like the Jews of old, they “call evil good, and good evil” and cannot see that violence, fear, immortality, unrest, mental distress, covetousness and war are the real signs of man’s condition. In such a world, how can a Christian live with composure, without fear, despair or pessimism?

Jesus said that His Kingdom is not of this world; that the world will be filled with these evils until the end, but that we are to focus attention upon Him and relate to him rather than to the world. In the midst of a deteriorating and darkened world, it is possible to have the illumination of One who stands above and beyond it, free of its bondage and, in fact, overruling it.

The Hebrew epistle teaches us to “lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2).

While the world about us madly pursues the course of materialism, pleasure and false security, we have a course set by Christ and which follows Christ. The way to stay on this course is by deliberately and devoutly **looking to Jesus** who has already run and won the race.

It is in looking to Jesus that we see the image of God, the “effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance” (Heb. 1:3). The church is often criticized because it is involved in so many issues that one does not hear in it the attributes of God, nor the actual person and work of Christ in revealing God to man. Church doctrines are reexamined, heart rending stories are grammatically recited, appeals to patriotism are given and evangelical fervor is kept at a high pitch. But people remain ignorant of God. There is a glorying in the musical talent, praise for the workers, the preaching of some inspiring messages. Yet the people say, “We would see Jesus.” The center of the Bible is Christ and the aim of God is to make man in His image. If our aim is to be “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:10) then the best thing we can do is to know all we can about Jesus. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

When Isaiah saw “the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” he underwent a vast transformation. It was not done by pep talks and graphic illustrations, but by seeing the Lord.

Looking to Jesus, we see the glory of absolute goodness and justice. Daily we are exposed to the blasphemy that says all men are equal, that, for example, a homosexual is to be accepted as a moral person. Some churches are declaring that sodomy is now acceptable because it is a way of life for many “responsible people.”

But what makes a thing right and just? Simply because a lot of people do it? By this token we must justify lying, cheating, lust, greed and unbelief because all these sins are practiced by the majority. No, there is only one standard for absolute goodness and justice: Jesus Christ. He is the creator who determined from the beginning what is right. As man He demonstrated it.

He was subject to the same temptations we face, yet He never sinned. When confronted by Satan He immediately responded with the Scripture (which He himself authored) and successfully resisted the temptation. This is still the means by which every person, young and old, can withstand the deluge of sin that is flooding the world.

In Christ we see the glory of true justice. “Thou has loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, they God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb. 1:9). Not only that he did that which was right, but that he loved doing it and hated all unrighteousness. How different from the common man who does right because he has to, but actually loves sin and does it if and when he can get away with it. Jesus spent a lot of time with people with sin problems. He accepted them only as they turned from sin and were willing for Him to lift them from their wickedness. Therefore Christ was “anointed...above thy fellows,” because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. This is His glory, that He is “holy, guileless, undefiled and separated from sinners.” It is this holiness, absolute goodness, that elevates the person who looks to Him. Pity those who only see a Superstar Jesus, the Jesus “brought down to their level,” the revolutionary or swinger. All who present such a picture of Christ are “preaching another gospel” and not that of the Christ “who endured the cross, despising shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God”; “who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”; who “offered himself without blemish unto God” to cleanse us and save us (Heb. 12:2, 7:26, 9:14).

In Jesus we see the glory of the King. The first gospel sermon was based on the fact that Jesus had ascended to the throne of David, thus fulfilling the ancient prophecies of a Messiah, and that God has made Him both Lord and Christ. This was the message of Pentecost which brought the ten thousand to humble repentance and baptism (Acts 2:14–41). We, too, must see Jesus on the throne in total authority over the entire universe, even angels and the heavenly hosts subject to Him (Eph. 1:21, Matt. 28:18). He is King of Kings, not that He will someday be King for a thousand years as many teach, but already He is the King over all rulers of the world. This is the scandal which even many professing Christians cannot accept, that Christ is actually in control, even if things are not going just the way the creatures think they should. It is significant that men came to Jesus to “make him King,” as if the One Who was and is superior to all, should rely upon man to make Him anything.

This is a mistake we make when we talk about people making Jesus their Lord, or “letting” Him be Lord of their lives. If you “let” Him, the worst man around can be your Lord in a limited way, but even then Christ would still rule over the both of you. Apostolic language is different. We are simply told by the apostles that we must confess that Jesus is Lord, that is, the Lord of all. Whether one confesses this or not, Jesus is still

the Lord. One can be in rebellion to Him, but even a rebel knows that he hasn't the power of the King, and that unless he succeeds in overthrowing the King completely he is doomed. When Christ returns, it will not be to accept the crown as King, but to execute judgment because men have rebelled against His present reign (Luke 19:27).

As Lord and King, Jesus is "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:21). Then He should be so exalted in the church that His glory overshadows everything and everyone else. Paul wrote, "beware of the dogs...beware of the false circumcision for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (Phi. 3:3). His warning is going unheeded today by those who glorify fleshly kingdoms, who seek a special dispensation for "Jews according to the flesh" and say "keep your eyes on Israel." The Scripture states that we (Christians) are the true circumcision and that we glory in Christ. We are to keep our eyes on Christ and see His glory, rather than the faded glory of an earthly temporal nation which is past. Christ is the glory of Israel. Not the land of Palestine, not the armies and destructive power of the Israelis, not the restoration of a past national splendor, but the one who was promised as the "seed of Abraham...which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

A vision of the glory of Jesus was given Peter, James and John in the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8). Peter wrote, "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty, for he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of the heaven when we were with him on the holy mount" (II Peter 1:16-18). This vision comes through to us through the apostles' letters, and we have a mental concept of the glory of Christ as He now reigns over the world. It is the contemplation of this glory which inspires, encourages and elevates Christians today. It is the knowledge of His sovereign power that gives us boldness and strength to view the world without flinching. It is knowing what He has done to obtain our redemption, what He is doing to fit us for His presence, and what He will do in bringing us to glory that draws the believer in humble obedience, et bold confidence, to seek His way and strive for the goal, believing that "we shall be like Him, for we shall see him even as he is" (I John 3:2).

Even now, "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory..." (II Cor. 3:18).

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