

The Transforming Glory Of God

By

Curtis Dickinson

Before Isaiah received his commission as prophet, he was allowed to see the glory of God, “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim:...and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried and the house was filled with smoke” (Isa. 6:1–4).

The awesome scene caused Isaiah to fall down in deep humiliation, but also motivated him for the terrible ordeal of warning the rebellious nation of their doom.

In the introduction of his Gospel, John wrote that he and the other apostles had beheld the glory of the Lord, probably referring to the transfiguration, as well as the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Before the Revelation was given to John, Jesus again came to him in His glory, such glory that John “fell at his feet as one dead.” The Lord said to him, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one, and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades” (Rev. 1:17–18).

One of the chief purposes of Jesus on earth was to glorify the Father, and one of the chief purposes of the apostles was to glorify the risen and glorified Christ. New Testament letters are filled with expressions referring to the glory and honor that belongs to Christ. We are told that our own reward as faithful servants of His is that we will be glorified with Him.

Whatever happened to this Biblical concept of the glory of the Lord? It has been obscured by the deceptions of Satan, who knows that he cannot destroy or ever defeat the purpose of God, but who is the father of lies and the world’s greatest counterfeiter. Following his subtle leadership the world has “exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man...”(Rom. 1:23). The world wants a god, all right, but not one that is so glorious as to humble him as He did Isaiah, or frighten him as He did John. Refusing to glorify God as God, the world has resorted to glorifying man, and exalting the works of his hands. The Humanist Society is spending huge sums of money today on radio broadcasts advertising its philosophy of man’s own power and glory, and suggesting that a faith in this philosophy will help one face the problems of the day. So Humanism admits to being a religion, which competes for faith, taking the glory that rightfully is due to God and heaping it upon man himself. (See Romans 1:21.)

Where the chosen prophets and apostles of the Lord were first thoroughly convicted of the Glory of God before beginning their work, their modern counterparts often are steeped in all the philosophies of men and filled with questions and doubts concerning the Almighty before sallying forth on their errands.

Both common sense and divine revelation teach us that all creation ought to glorify God. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork”(Psa. 19:1). With all the advantages of modern communication, perfected by

the powers God had given, it should be the daily experience to hear continuous praise to God. Through radio, TV and newspaper, the glory of God should be so magnified that every man, woman and child would be constantly aware of the reality and presence of God.

Instead there is a determined evasion of the basic truth about the Almighty. People are literally stuffed with information through the media, through scores of pieces of literature coming into their homes, through advertisements, pamphlets, newsletters and bulletins. They sit for hours in front of TV looking and listening to thousands of tid-bits of news, misinformation from advertisers and propaganda cleverly portrayed in colorful drama. We should be the best informed, the wisest of all people, with the highest morals and the greatest record of spiritual and cultural achievement, all to the glory of God. Instead we excel in confusion, depression and crime!

Where the Glory of God is unknown, there can be no aspiration toward that which is His glory. No one has actually seen God's glory, save the Son, nevertheless it is disclosed through what the Scripture reveals of His attributes, His works and His purpose.

His power is glorious. It is glorious in creation: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"(Rev. 4:11). From the greatest galaxy to the tiniest living cell, there is a miracle that portrays a glorious Creator. For this reason, man, in his rebellion, must deny the creation in order that he may deny the Creator and give Him no more glory! He is thus compelled to invent evolution and forever uphold it through every deceitful method his powerful God-created mind can devise. By contrast, the task of every Christian is to honor and glorify the Lord for the very fact that He is Creator, and all things are to be used for His pleasure and glory.

He is glorious in His goodness. Moses, when charged with one of the most awesome and thankless tasks ever assigned to a man, begged, "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory." And He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Ex. 33:18-19). Moses saw God's glory in His goodness, as did David, who sang, "Thou art good and does good; teach me thy statutes" (Psa. 119:68).

All God's actions are in accord with that goodness, for it never changes. "The goodness of God endures forever" (Psa. 53:1). It is the spirit of rebellion against God that prompts man to change God's laws, to "liberate" women from the rule of God regarding the family, to rescind the law against homosexuality, to remove the penalty against murder and to revise the whole social system for "man's good" — as if God's laws are not good, and man can set up better ones. God's laws are the reflection of His goodness, and the keeping of His law brings Him glory. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14, 16). The glory of His goodness is realized in the fact that "all things work together for good to them that are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

God is glorious in His justice, in that He does not tolerate anything contrary to His being, nor does He act in any way contrary to His own nature. Such justice demands a final judgment, in which God will be "justified" and all His judgments vindicated when

the rebels are executed. In all the universe there is nothing like this: the absolute and final correction of every single thing that has ever been wrong!

He is glorious in His mercy, mercy which is made available by His own grace and the sacrifice of His only begotten Son to meet the demands of His absolute justice. No wonder John exclaimed, “and we behold His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The glory of God is revealed in His omniscience, that He has full knowledge of everything, everywhere, even every thought and intent of the heart. Ordinarily we heap honors upon anyone who acquires more than the ordinary amount of knowledge about any one subject. Here is the One who has all knowledge. In the daily stress of decision-making and the tension of not always knowing the best judgment, it is a thrill and a relief to realize that our Father knows, and that in His infinite knowledge will work all things after the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11).

God is most glorious to fallen man in His infinite purpose. Paul writes of “The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (II Cor. 4:4). The glory of the Lord is revealed in the gospel, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Having created man in His own image, and then in His absolute justice sentenced him to death for his rebellion against the image, God sent Jesus to die, to receive the execution in man’s stead, that man might be free from the guilt and penalty of sin to live in the image in which he was created. “When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall you also with Him be manifested in glory” (Col. 3:4). John adds more revelation to this: “We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is” (I John 3:2).

A famous radio personality, speaking on values, said that at the top of the list of values should be this: What makes you happy? What makes you feel good about yourself? But this is the value system of the humanists, and it continues to leave man empty and hopeless. The real question of value is this: What is it that makes you more like Christ? What is it that brings you closer to the glorious image of God? Only those who have some knowledge of God in His glory can have such values.

It is only as we see His glory that we are drawn to Him, as Paul wrote, “But 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).

One of the distinct purposes of the church is to glorify the Lord. “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:20). Yet, the church often glorifies everyone and everything but the Lord. Jesus is presented as a “good buddy,” a forgiving friend, the One who works miracles to make us feel good, but not too often as the One exalted to the throne of God, the One who is Almighty, Who is the Judge of the universe and Who is exalted above all things in heaven and earth.

How many hymns can you find in the modern hymnal which sing of the glory of the Lord? Probably only a few, and most of them were written over a hundred years ago. The modern song writers dwell on themselves, their experience in faith, how good they feel about it, etc. A church is most successful when it can bring in some person who is famous in the world, an athlete, TV star or other person celebrated outside the church. Jesus chided the Jews who had turned humanists, saying, “How can you believe who

receive glory one of another and the glory that comes from the only God you seek not?” (John 5:44). Many in the church would come under the same indictment.

If there is anything that needs “restoring” in the church today, it is the glory of the Lord. His glory should be heard in the songs, expressed from the pulpit, and reflected in every act of worship. Every Christian should be a living testimony to the glory of God, testifying not of his own life, but of God’s power and purpose.

Here is the secret to a faith that sustains in all things, to know that there is a glorious God, the one who “formed thee from the womb” and “that makes all things; that stretches forth the heavens alone; that spreads abroad the earth” (Isa. 44:24), the One with whom “all things are possible;” to know that He created with a purpose to have man in His own glorious image and that He is bringing this plan to consummation according to His own time schedule and nothing can delay or defeat Him.

The whole universe, including ourselves, stands totally dependent upon God. He was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty. Of all His creation, man is the only being that is given the capacity to understand and reason concerning His glory, and to participate in it!

“Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee, How great Thou art...HOW GREAT THOU ART!”

.....
Copyright © Curtis Dickinson. Formatted and Posted by Ken Fortier Ministries. Permission is hereby granted by Mrs. Regina Dickinson to reproduce and distribute Curtis’ articles to as many as possible. This statement is to remain attached to this article for permission to be valid. Vol. XVIII, Number 10.
.....