

# GOD GLORIFIED

By

Curtis Dickinson

Historians have cited a number of causes for the fall of the Roman Empire, with attempts to explain the immorality which prevailed in its last days. But whatever the circumstances, Paul said that they were “without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks” (Rom. 1:20–21). Then follows a list of sins, from pride and envy to murder and sodomy, all rooted in man’s failure to glorify God and give Him thanks (Rom. 1:18–32).

Without excuse! God has shown Himself in millions of ways, “For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen” (Rom. 1:20). This is an oxymoron. How can invisible things be seen? Paul immediately supplies the solution: “being perceived through the things that are made.” Man has had ample opportunity to view “things that are made,” “since the creation of the world.” Even in this age of advanced science and technology, there is no end in sight to discoveries concerning the “things that are made.”

The unbelieving scientists and educators work at nothing more intensely than their effort to destroy the evidence of creation. As Paul put it, they “hinder the truth in unrighteousness” (v. 18). Even so, all things that we see and handle declare that they have a Maker. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork” (Psa. 19:1).

Indeed, for unbelief there is no excuse, and once God is denied, unbelievers are on the slippery slope that spirals down to the cesspool of sin, violence, and misery, as described here by Paul. Unfortunately, they are not aware of this fateful descent, for they “became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless heart was darkened” (v. 21). All the reasoning in the world is vain when the basic truth of God is denied, and without the light of that truth, man’s heart leads him only into blind and meaningless ways.

The fact that “they glorified him not as God,” is not just about their failure to give Him praise. Mere words of praise can be expressed by anyone, including unbelievers. Scripture shows that God is pleased with praise from the lips of sincere people, and we can hardly overdo it, but to glorify God is much more.

God’s glory is already infinitely great, beyond man’s greatest imagination. Man cannot add anything to it, but we can glorify Him as God by acknowledging who and what He is, and then act accordingly: **worship, honor, obey and serve Him**. This is where they “glorified him not as God,” in that they had no regard for His instructions and lived as though He did not exist.

In addition to this, they “neither gave thanks.” This is evidence that they refused to recognize God as Creator and the giver of every good gift. One cannot glorify God as God and not want to give Him thanks. To give thanks is to recognize our dependency upon Him, and this is where man stumbles, for if we are dependent upon Him, then we are obligated to obey Him.

The New Age movement is primarily an effort to avoid glorifying God as the one true God, and thus escape having to depend upon Him. Instead of worshipping God our

Father, it encourages the worship of the earth as *Gaia*, or Mother Earth. Its god is composed of all things, and everything is a part of god. Rather than obeying God, we are to obey the wind and earth (as preached in the film, *Pocahontas*). Eventually all become “one” — God included. In this religious mixture, there is no personal God to glorify or thank. It is hard to imagine any concept that could demonstrate reasoning more vain (Greek = “empty”) and unenlightened than this. It is most amazing that this century, the greatest in history for scientific discovery, proliferation of schools and opportunities for learning, is drawing to its close with the powerful advance of the most irrational, illogical and ill-conceived belief system the world has ever known. It is as though man has intentionally shut out the light and systematically drawn an evil veil of darkness over civilization. In reality, it is simply what happens when man does not glorify God as God nor give Him thanks.

We are created in the image of the Creator, and it is to His honor and glory when we heed His voice and walk in the light of His word. He is disgraced and dishonored when man ignores Him and denies His work by the worship of things create: animals, birds, and inanimate objects such as trees, waters and stones. God does not claim such rebels as His children, and “gave them up” to develop their rebellion to its bitter conclusion. The results, outlined by Paul in his Roman letter, are now plainly visible for all to see: “for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men...burned in their lust one toward another...being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful...” (Rom. 1:26–31).

Not only is God dishonored, but all of society is deeply shamed when its leaders sanction the sin of sodomy, which denigrates the very core of the Creator’s masterpiece, the creation of male and female to reproduce themselves in God’s image. It is made worse, if that is possible, by its endorsement by various churches and their leaders, the people who claim to be there for the service and exultation of God!

It is the apostle Paul who points out that there is a price for such behavior among men: “receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due” (v. 27). That price must be paid by the entire society which condones the behavior.

This horrid descent into degradation cannot be blamed on the environment, or on some genetic factor as some claim. It began with man’s refusal to glorify God and give Him thanks. It can be reversed only by giving Him in humbly receiving that which He provides that we might give Him thanks. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord” (Psa. 116:12, 13).

Jehovah is glorified as man receives the grace which He bestows through Christ, so that he may be cleansed of sin, filled with God’s pure spirit, and transformed into the Creator’s image. Man can bestow nothing upon God to make Him more glorious, but he can glorify God by yielding to Him his life, that the Creator may bestow upon him holiness, peace, and immortality.

Throughout His time on earth, in all of His works and words, Jesus glorified the Father. In His prayer the night He was betrayed, Jesus said, “I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which you have given me to do” (John 17:4). The Father

was glorified as the Son fulfilled His purpose as savior, in obedience to the Father, “becoming obedient even unto death” (Phil. 2:8). The Son was glorified by the Father’s accepting the sacrifice, then raising Him from the dead, exalting Him to His own right hand, and giving Him all power and authority.

As God is dishonored by disobedience, so is He glorified by the obedience of His creatures. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world...so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14, 16). The good works are the things we do in keeping with His commandments. Again, He said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and be my disciples” (John 14:8).

The fruit of which He spoke is the fruit of faith and obedience, not the mere proliferation of religious organizations, with fun and games the main attraction. When they asked Jesus what they could do to do the work of God, He answered, “This is the work of God that you believe on him whom he has sent” (John 6:29). This is where glorifying God begins — believing on Jesus, His Son. The current fad of trying to unite different world religions is a great dishonor to both the Father and the Son, and a sign of unbelief.

Genuine belief will not stand alone; it will create a fire of desire in the heart to serve and obey God, and to speak boldly of His power, His goodness, His holiness, His love, His justice, His mercy, His provision, and the glorious life He promises His people.

Jesus was despised and humiliated as He lived in obedience to the Father. It was after His resurrection that He was glorified. The same route is to be taken by His disciples. Obedience now; glory on Resurrection Day.

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