

**Pastor Paul Bawden**  
**Grace Evangelical Church**  
**Sunday, December 20, 2009**  
**God – Most Glorious**  
**Exodus 40:34-38; I Kings 8:11; Ezekiel 11:22-23**  
**John 1:14; I Corinthians 10:31**

I enjoyed playing basketball when I was in high school a number of years ago. Once in awhile there would be a fellow on the team who liked to think that he was team. With that kind of thinking, he would like to show off his shooting ability to impress others rather than work the ball around for a good shot. He was labeled a "glory hog." He wanted to get all the honor and recognition on his own.

In fact, I was reading of one instance where a basketball player lost the game because he took a shot without working the ball around. The coach was asked why the player made that shot. He answered by saying that his girlfriend was in the stands and he was trying to impress her. He was trying to be a "glory hog."

Today, we are considering a different type of glory. Not a selfish glory that thinks only about itself and what recognition it can gain for itself, or even further its own ends.

Rather, we are thinking today about a glory that is pure, yes, a glory that is eternal, yes the very glory of the biblical God. Amazingly the biblical God has made His glory available to us in the nitty gritty of life.

As we consider the glory of God today, let's begin with a definition.

### **I. The word, glory, described.**

#### **1. Old Testament – the word glory is found some 194 times.**

**The basic word used for "glory" in the Old Testament is "Kabod."**

"Kabod" means heavy, honored, important, splendid. The word, awesome, can even describe the word, glory.

In the Old Testament the word, glory, was used to describe people of wealth and importance.

**Genesis 45:13** – Joseph told his brothers who had come to Egypt when Joseph was Prime Minister, "You must tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and all that you seen."

The word, glory, was used to describe the priestly garments.

**Exodus 28:2** – "You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty."

The word, glory, was used to describe the temple that Solomon would built that was designed by his father Davie.

**I Chronicles 22:5** – David speaking, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD shall be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all lands..."

There can also be a false, selfish glory as Haman in Esther 5:11 bragged about his riches and "glory" in the kingdom of Xerxes.

**But the word, glory, in the Old Testament is used basically to describe the "glory of God."**

The Psalmist puts it this way in **Psalm 96:8**:

"Ascribe to the LORD, the glory of His name."

"Let the glory of the LORD endure forever" (**Psalm 104:31**).

"The LORD is high above all nations; His glory above the heavens" (**Psalm 113:4**).

"Not unto us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory" (**Psalm 115:1**).

#### **2. New Testament – the word glory is found some 161 times.**

**The word that is used for glory is "doxa."**

It comes from the word meaning, "to seem or think." Glory, then, concerns what people think about something or someone, and thus refers to the reputation the person or object has. The glory of God is what He really is.

The word, glory was used by our Lord to refer to the splendor of Solomon in relationship to the lilies of the field.

**Matthew 6:29** – “Yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these.”  
Solomon came out second best when compared to the lilies of the field.

Converts we bring to Christ and nurture are our glory and joy.

**I Thessalonians 2:19-20** – “You are our glory and joy.”

**I Corinthians 10:31** – Believers can do all to the glory of God.

**As in the Old Testament, so in the New Testament, glory centers on the God.**

**Ephesians 1:17** – “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

**Philippians 4:20** – “Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever, Amen.”

**II Timothy 4:13** – “To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen”

**Since the glory of God refers to who He really is, it becomes quickly apparent that His glory is the express summary of all His attributes. Certainly God may express one His attributes at one time, and another of His attributes at another time, but whenever one of His attributes is seen His glory is being displayed. But the full display of God’s attributes is the fullness of His most glorious person and presence.**

**The glory of God then is the full manifestation of the person and presence of God in all His attributes. It is the awesome presence of the biblical God.**

**All the attributes of God that we have considered:**

**God’s eternality, infinitude, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, sovereignty, truth, freedom, righteous, just, love, holiness – all display together the full glory of the biblical God.**

When the biblical God shows up His glory is revealed.

## **II. The biblical God’s glory revealed.**

### **1. In the Old Testament.**

**Exodus 16:7** – In the midst of Israel complaining to Moses about having had to leave Egypt where there was food to eat and now that they were in the wilderness, Moses told the people that in the morning they would see the “glory of the LORD,” for He heard their grumblings against Him. God provided the people manna in the morning and quail in the evening. But note that it was in the midst of their grumbling that God showed His glory, manifested presence to the people – an indication that God’s glory is not removed from our challenges, in fact, He wants to help us if we obey Him. Here is seen God’s glory in His supply of their physical needs.

**Exodus 40:34-38** – When the tabernacle was finished, the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle so that Moses could not enter it. In fact the glory of the LORD was represented by a cloud that was over the tabernacle by day which led the nation or Israel. When the cloud stopped, the nation stopped. When the cloud moved, the nation moved (Numbers 9:15-23). The pillar of fire was over the tabernacle at night, protecting the people. The cloud and the fire are a picture of God’s glory, His presence leading and protecting His people.

**I Kings 8:10-11** – When Solomon dedicated the temple God used him to construct, the text says:  
“It came about when the priests came from the holy place, that the cloud fill the house of the LORD, so that the priests could no stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.”

**Isaiah 42:8** – God used Isaiah to tell the nation of Israel in the midst of their sin and idolatry:  
“I am the LORD, and that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, not My praise to graven images.”

Again,

**Isaiah 48:11** – “For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act’ For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.”

But something happened to God’s glory in relationship to Israel.

**Ezekiel 10 particularly 10:18-22** – these words are recorded as Ezekiel, while in captivity in Babylon is shown through a vision what is happening back in Jerusalem.

“Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim.” They continue to the entrance of the east gate of the LORD’s house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.

**Then in Ezekiel 11:23**, “The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.”

**A sad day for the Israel.** The glory of the LORD departed from His temple and city. A sign of God’s judgment on the nation. Certainly God was still in control, working out His plan for Israel and the world, but the GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE displayed to Israel was no longer there. Was that the end for the nation of Israel? Would God’s glory never be displayed again to Israel and to the world?

**Still in the midst of such darkness God used the prophet Isaiah to foretell in:**

**Isaiah 40:5** – “that the glory of the LORD would be revealed, and all flesh will see it” (applied to Christ in Luke 3:4-6).

**Isaiah 60:1-3** – “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. . . . The LORD will arise upon you and His glory will appear upon you” (also see Isaiah 9:2 – applied to Christ in Matthew 4:16).

Yes, 400 silent years went by after Malachi prophesied. Where is the glory of God? Has God left His people Israel and the world that He created. Is man doomed to total destruction? Where is the awesome presence of the Almighty biblical God who was so active in the Old Testament times? Are the expectations of the prophets shattered. Yes, is the glory of the biblical God still in tact?

## **2. In the New Testament**

But God shows up to a humble virgin maiden, called Mary (in her teens) who lived in the little village of Nazareth, who is engaged to young Joseph a carpenter, both of the descendants of King David.

The story was read for us today. But remember it is not just a story. It is a historical fact. Mary would bear a Son and call His name Jesus. Mary responded in obedience to the angel’s announcement to her with these words, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.”

Nine months later Jesus Christ, the God-man, was born in Bethlehem, the house of Bread.

### **(1) The angel’s announcement to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-14).**

**Introduction to the glory of the Lord - The glory of the Lord shone around them (2:10).**

Amazing! God’s glory seemingly nowhere to be found, suddenly shows up. His glory is still in tact. The prophets were not wrong. God is still alive in His glory!

**The content of the glory – “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (2:11).**

**The response to the glory of the Lord showing up – “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is well pleased.” (2:14).**

God used angels to display His glory to the shepherds, who can not experience salvation, but are His messengers to tell the content of His glory, but they do give God glory for they understand that God is making the ultimate display of His glory (of His presence) in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **(2) The shepherds’ response after viewing baby Jesus (Luke 2:20).**

They returned to their flocks, so sad and dejected? Not on your life. They went back to their flocks, “glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and see, just as had been told them.”

When you come into the glorious presence of Jesus Christ, your life will be changed to one of dejection and sadness to one of thanksgiving and joy.

The account continues.

### **(3) When Jesus as a baby was brought to the temple fulfilling the law (Luke 2:21-38).**

Note what Simeon who was looking for the Messiah said about Jesus directed by the Spirit of God: "A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."

Simeon recognized with God's help that the child Jesus would minister to the Gentiles, but He would also be the glory of the nation Israel. Christ would return the glory to Israel that they had lost because of their rebellion against God.

### **(4) Jesus' glory in His ministry.**

**John's words in his gospel tell us:**

**John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" Now the glory of God is no longer coming to a structure, the glory of God is in a person, the eternal Son of God in flesh, who came to fulfill the entire Old Testament Worship System. Now Jesus would be the only way to God and His presence (John 14:6).**

Before His incarnation, Jesus Christ, existing in eternal as the eternal Son of God, had full glory. When he took upon Himself humanity, He gave up that glory, the insignia of His majesty (the kenosis – the emptying of Himself– His initial glory). He still displayed the glory of God, though, pleasing His heavenly Father in all that He did, but He did not display the fullness of His glory. That's why Jesus prayed in His High Priestly prayer before His crucifixion, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with yourself, with the glory with I had with You before the world was. Although at Christ's transfiguration – the true glory of Christ was evident for a brief time (Matthew 17:1-2).

What John was saying here that when they served the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, they were seeing God in flesh, the very presence of God, God's glory. That's why Christ said that He who has seen Me has seen the Father. He was God in flesh.

That's why the writer of Hebrews penned concerning Christ that "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature" (Hebrews 1:3).

Seeing Jesus in His earthly teaching and serving others, one saw God at work – His glory, the presence of God displayed.

### **(5) Jesus' glory in His ultimate work.**

**Paul penned this to the Corinthians in his second letter.**

**".... The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God" (II Corinthians 4:4).**

What's the Scripture saying here? If you want to see the glory of God in full display on earth come to the cross and open tomb of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel, that Christ died for us, was buried, and rose again for us to provide us eternal forgiveness and eternal life.

The gospel, the cross of Christ displays that ultimate glory of God. That's why Paul wrote in Galatians 6:14, "God forbid that I should glory (another word for glory) except in the cross of Jesus Christ.

**If you want to see the glory of God, His presence, laid open completely come to the cross where all the attributes of God are wrapped into one. God's love and justice in Christ who knew no sin being made sin for us, paying our price for sin which is death.**

That's why in the Book of Revelation praise is continually given to the Lamb of God – His redemption for us will be our theme of praise not just for time but for all eternity.

**What does the glory of God, then, displayed in Christ mean for each of us?**

## **III. The biblical God's glory applied to our lives today.**

### **1. In the initial creation, man was meant to glorify God.**

**In Genesis 1:26-28, God said,** "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, (with an immaterial part, mind, will, and emotion), and let them rule over the fish of sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God, then, created male and female, and told them to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.

Man was meant to have fellowship with God and by His very actions indicate that He was representing the presence of His Creator. It would be just natural for Him to give evidence of God's glory in his life, of demonstrating that he belonged to God.

## **2. Man disobeyed the Lord and lost his ability to glorify the Lord.**

**Romans 3:23 – "All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God"**

Since we all sinned when Adam sinned, we can no longer have fellowship with God – be personally in His presence, nor can we do anything that demonstrates God is our heavenly Father. We can not glorify, or show that God is truly in our lives.

## **3. To be restored to the glory of God we need Christ - we need the gospel – the glory of God.**

**That's why Paul tells the Corinthians in II Corinthians 4:6 that the gospel, the glory of God, shines in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."**

Why does Satan work so hard to influence people to come up with all kinds of ways to God, all kinds of cults and isims, world religions that distort and deny the cross of Christ, the gospel of Jesus Christ? He does not want people to be restored to experiencing the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Rather, sad to say, Satan wants people to keep glorifying him, serving him.

## **4. Through faith in Christ, the believer is restored to the glory of God.**

John 1:12 - "As many as receive Him to them He gives the authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name"

Ephesians 2:8-9 – "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast."

I trust you have made that decision to receive Christ as personal Savior. If you haven't you need to do so today.

As a believer in Christ,

## **5. The believer participates in the glory of God now.**

**(1) The believer encounters the glory of God through the Word of God (II Corinthians 3:18a).**

II Corinthians 3:18 – "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord . . ."

Where do we behold the glory of the Lord – in a mirror – what mirror? James says that the perfect law of liberty, the Word of God, is the mirror in which we look (James 1:23-25). Then James challenges us not to be glancers at the Word of God, but gazers – taking time to read, meditate, and study the Word of God. Why? For that is where we see the glory of God – His presence – That's where we see Christ the Living Word of God – the glory of God.

**(2) Encountering the glory of Christ in the Word of God, the believer becomes like Christ in his character (II Corinthians 3:18b).**

The II Corinthians 3:18 verse continues: "Are being transformed (not reformed – same word as in Romans 12:2), it's an inward supernatural change, into the same image from glory to glory. . ." In other words, the process of Christ changing us through the Word of God is an on going daily experience as we read, meditate, and study God's Word. Sometimes, its two steps forward, one step backward. But God doesn't give up on us. His grace is greater than all of our sin. His forgiveness is always available when we sin, but He wants us to confess our sin immediately, and continue to enjoy the glory of His presence.

**(3) Relying on the Holy Spirit, the believer daily becomes like Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 3:18c).**

The II Corinthians 3:18 text continues again, "Just as from the Lord, the Spirit." The believer must keep sensitive and obedient to the Spirit of God, depending on Him to become like Christ.

**(4) Changed into the character of Christ, the believer glorifies the Lord in his life (Romans 5:1-5; I Corinthians 10:31). That is the believer can give evidence that God is in his or her life.**

In the tough times of different challenges, the believer can exult in hope of the glory of God.(Romans 5:1-5). In our tough times we know that God's hope does not disappoint.

**We can do the big things and small insignificant things to the glory of God.**

"Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31).

No matter if that is the first time to hear that verse or the 50<sup>th</sup> time you have heard that verse, it is a life-changing teaching. Think of all the many things you did this week. As a follower of Christ, I trust you had some awareness that you were doing those many tasks to the glory of God, giving evidence that He was in your life – whether attitude, word, or deed. As the saying use to be over the kitchen sink, "Divine services held here three times a day." It means no longer sweeping the dust under the rug, but sweeping it into the dust pan. It means being patient when you could be impatient. It means thinking of others and not yourself.

**6.The believer participates fully in the glory of God after this life (Colossians 1:27).**

"Christ in you, the hope of glory." The believer after this life goes into the presence of the Lord, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. When the Lord comes for His church, which could be any time now, all believers in Him will get a body like unto the Lord's glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21). How great that will be!! Then we will display fully the glory of God in our lives for all eternity.

**7. After the tribulation period, God will restore His glory to the nation of Israel during the millennial time on earth.**

Ezekiel 43:1-2 tells us that the glory of the LORD, yes , Jesus Christ will return to the eastern gate where the glory of the Lord left many years ago in Ezekiel's time. Of course at that time of Christ's coming to earth, the nation of Israel will return to the Lord, and He will set up His 1000 year reign on earth.

**8. God's glory will fill the eternal state and the New Jerusalem (Ezekiel 43:1-2; Revelation 21:11, 23; 22:3, 5).**

In the new heavens and earth, Revelation 21:11,13, there is no need for the sun or the moon for the glory of the Lord will light the New Jerusalem and the entire new heavens and earth. We will be serving the Lord forever enjoying His eternal glorious presence forever while continually worshipping Him in all we think, say, and do.

**There is no other God like the biblical God. He is truly the glorious God who deserves our all.**

**How can we do less than give Him our best and serve Him completely – glorify Him forever, after all He's done for you and me.**

