

Partaking of God's Glory

I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. 1 Pt 5:1

Few people talk about glory today. Sermons are full of practical advice, self-help talks, mission statements, self-esteem exhortations, commands to action, and general encouragement. Yet in the past there was much talk of glory and many hymns extolling the glory of Christ and our ability to see it. This sad picture is due to the huge emphasis of recent decades upon man instead of God. Far too many songs and homilies are centred upon self and not God's glory. This generation is all about me, myself, and mine.

Yet Christians are told to look away from themselves and to look to Christ.¹ They are commanded to deny themselves and take up the cross. They are instructed to focus upon heavenly things and not earthly things (Col 3:1-3). They are told to have faith that they are dead to themselves but alive in Christ. Introspection is not an option for true believers.

We are not here to wallow in self-esteem but to deny ourselves and centre upon God in Christ and to serve him. Introspection leads to depression, paranoia, and weakness or sometimes arrogance and pride; looking at God's glory imparts strength, vivacity, power, vision and motivation.

So it behoves me to talk about God's glory and our involvement in it. First we need to understand what is meant by the word 'glory'

Glory

In English the word 'glory' has the following meanings:

- High renown or honour won by notable achievements.
- Praise, worship, and thanksgiving offered to God.
- Magnificence.
- A thing that is beautiful or distinctive; a special cause for pride, respect or delight.
- The splendour and bliss of heaven.
- A luminous ring or halo, especially as depicted around the head of Christ or a saint.
- (Glory in) to take great pride or pleasure in.

The origin of the word in English is the Middle English, from Old French *glorie*, from the Latin *gloria*.

The Hebrew word most commonly used is *kabowd* [Strong's 3519] meaning: glory, honour, glorious, abundance, riches, honour, splendour, dignity, reputation and reverence.²

¹ Heb 12:2, '*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith*'. The word 'looking' here means to turn the eyes away from something and look at something else.

² Daniel uses an Aramaic word. Zechariah uses four different words (e.g. 'splendour', 'beauty').

The Greek word is *doxa* [Strong's 1391] with these meanings:

- Opinion, judgment, view whether good or bad concerning someone but in the NT always a good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honour and glory.
- Splendour, brightness, e.g. of the moon, sun, stars.
- Magnificence, excellence, pre-eminence, dignity, grace, majesty; a thing belonging to God; the kingly majesty which belongs to Him as supreme ruler; majesty in the sense of the absolute perfection of the deity; a thing belonging to Christ; the kingly majesty of the Messiah; the absolutely perfect inward or personal excellency of Christ; the majesty.
- The splendour of angels as apparent in their exterior brightness.
- A most glorious condition, a most exalted state, e.g. of that condition with God the Father in heaven or the glorious condition of blessedness into which is appointed and promised that true Christians shall enter after their Saviour's return from heaven.

We can reduce all these ideas down to the following: splendour, magnificence, brightness, pre-eminence, honour, excellence and majesty. For our purposes in this paper, it means the magnificent splendour and majesty of God.

Symbols or glimpses of glory

From time to time God allowed his people to see either a symbolic appearance of his glory or a glimpse of that glory. This was usually to encourage people to pursue some course or continue in some work. These include:

The cloud

Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. Exod 16:10

This was to authenticate that God was with the Israelites in the wilderness, despite their privations.

The cloud on Sinai

Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. Exod 24:16-18

This was to demonstrate the holiness of the transaction of receiving the Law.

The cloud over the Tabernacle

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Exod 40:34-35

The cloud symbolised God's presence in the Israelite camp.

The cloud of glory is called the '*Shekinah*' by Jews, but this is not a Biblical term. It is also associated with much false teaching in Kabbalism.

The Tabernacle

This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. Exod 29:42-43

The Tabernacle represented the presence of God in the camp. It was the place where God dwelled with Israel.

The glory seen by Moses

The LORD said to Moses, 'I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name'. And he said, 'Please, show me Your glory'. Then He said, 'I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion'. But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live'. And the LORD said, 'Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen'. Exod 33:17-23

Even Moses could not see God's glory directly. He saw the remnants of God's glory from behind but not the full force from God's face. This was to prepare Moses for the hard work that he was about to face for decades.

The glory seen by Israel

Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. Lev 9:23-24

This appearance of the glory was in fire and consuming the sacrifice.

The glory over the Tabernacle at the end of the wanderings

And all the congregation said to stone them [Joshua & Caleb] with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. Then the LORD said to Moses: 'How long will these people reject Me?' Num 14:10-11

This was to authenticate the message of Joshua and Caleb and to affirm the need to obey the Lord.

The glory associated with judgment

Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation. Num 16:19

This was the precursor to the judgment on Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

We could continue in this vein. God continued to give glimpses of his glory, or show a symbol of it (fire, cloud) at the appropriate time. Prophets saw God's glory from time to time, as well as some kings. A great demonstration of God's glory was the appearance on Mt Carmel when fire from heaven devoured the offering prepared by Elijah. Many prophets saw visions of glory, such as Ezekiel's vision of the wheels or Isaiah's vision of God's train (Isa 6:1).

In the NT the great outward expression of God's glory was during the Transfiguration of Christ on the mountain. This caused John to say, 'We beheld his glory' (Jn 1:14). The apostles also saw symbolic representations of glory, such as the tongues of fire. Paul saw a vision of the glorified Lord Jesus, which led to his conversion.

Throughout church history, from the Fall onwards, God's has been pleased to give glimpses or visions of his glory in order to encourage the saints. But what about participating in the glory?

What sharing in God's glory is not

Men do not become divine

Despite the heresies of many Charismatic false teachers who claim otherwise,³ seeing and sharing in God's glory does not make you a little god; men do not become divine through the Gospel, though they do share in divine life.

God is entirely other and his glory is personal; it is intrinsically infinite and divine. Men, even Christians, do not share in this.

The essence of God is that he has life in himself; he is self-existent. This is called aseity. Man's life is derived from God but man has no independent life, only derived life. The glory of God is part of this self-existence and it is the manifestation of it in God's glorious attributes and acts. For example, God's holiness is glorious and a glimpse of this for a fraction of a second would kill an ordinary human being. Men do not share in this sort of glory.

People who go around saying that they are God, or that they are a little god, or that they are Christ, or that Christ is plainly seen in them at any given moment, or that all that they say and do is true because it comes from Christ – such are all heretics. They are self-deluded and have misunderstood what the Gospel teaches. Doctrines based on this sort of idea include perfectionism, Word Faith theology, mysticism, New Ageism, occultism, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, Kabbalism and extreme aspects of Higher Life doctrine.

Yes, God gives us huge privileges in the Gospel and union with Christ is most precious but in this life we ever remain sinners,⁴ we always have sin present with us,⁵ we always battle against the old nature which grows in corruption⁶ and can never live a perfect life until Jesus changes our mortal body at his Coming.

So man does not become God, does not become divine, and does not appropriate God's personal glory. Man always remains man (even in Christ). What is created cannot become self-existent.

God's splendour is relative to his personal existence. We do not share in the glory of God's personal attributes but our relationship with Christ enables us to reflect them to the degree that we are faithful in Christ. Thus when a believer loves to the end he is reflecting the love that God the Father has for Christ. Believer's reflect God's glory and they share in the riches of Christ's glorious inheritance through spiritual union; but they do not obtain the infinite personal glory of God because they are finite creatures.

The perils of mysticism

Another thing that seeing God's glory is not is mysticism.

³ Notably Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn, plus many others.

⁴ 1 Jn 1:8-10, '*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us*'.

⁵ Heb 12:1, '*let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely*'. [RSV]

⁶ Eph 4:22, '*put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*'.

Again, the church today has lost its Biblical moorings and its objective relationship with God through Christ. Instead whole swathes of the church, including many so-called New Calvinist churches, are fascinated with subjective mysticism. Not a few even go so far as to appropriate the evils of Roman Catholic mysticism which our forefathers gave their lives to combat. It grieves me when I see supposed Protestant church leaders promoting Catholic mystical prayer and mystical stages of transformation or even applauding some Catholic mystic priest as their mentor. This is an utter failure to understand theology and history.⁷ It is heresy.

Mysticism has many forms but all of them are based upon a deep centred subjective introspection and finding God within the depths of the soul. In reality it is a form of radical emotionalism which pretends to be an experience of God but in reality is a deception of Satan. Mysticism is the stimulation of the old nature to provide ecstatic feelings, which pretend to be God's glory.

All the excesses of Charismatic phenomena (falling over backwards, uncontrollable laughing, animal noises etc.) are evidences of mysticism. They are no different from the mysticism found in paganism, occultism and heathen religions.⁸ All oriental religions and occult sects have their own tongue speaking, prophecies, falling over, singing in the spirit and so on and they are all based upon inducing passivity in the subject, which creates suggestibility and acceptance of hypnotism, producing emotional phenomena and deep seated affections caused by the release of serotonin, dopamine and adrenaline.⁹

This is not evidence of God's glory at all. It is proof of deception and satanic manipulation resulting in temptation to lose self control (a sin by the way). When someone laughs uncontrollably, screams, bays like a donkey or falls over backwards, it is not evidence of God coming upon a person for good, but of a loss of self-control and Satan deceiving that person. No good comes of it whatsoever; in fact people have been psychologically damaged by it for years; some have lost their minds.

Imagine the devil's laughing at what he created here; mass delusion to follow his temptations being lauded by church leaders as a work of God. This is not God's glory.

It's not occult auras

During the Signs and Wonders craze in the mid-80s, disciples of John Wimber would lay hands on unsuspecting believers saying things like, 'I can see the glory of God on your chest'. This sounded very impressive since ordinary mortals can't see this.

But this was not seeing the glory of God at all. The people that claimed to see such glory usually had very bad theology and sometimes even worse morals. God would not give special vision to people with bad fruit.

⁷ Not only is Roman theology deeply opposed to Reformed theology and still curses those who follow it, but it is also steeped in Satanism. The post-Renaissance Roman Catholic Church was completely infiltrated by Jewish Talmudism (which is Luciferianism and blasphemous) and the even worse Kabbala (which is pure Satanism). Jesuits opposed to Christ still dominate the papacy, which is in league with the global elite and committed to developing a satanic world empire. This is why it is riddled with paedophilia (that is proven) at high levels and is accused of performing ritual satanic abuse and murder of children. Any church leader who supports Catholic practices in any form is a self-confessed heretic, someone who knows nothing of theology and history.

⁸ For example Indian Kundalini yoga, Chinese Qigong, Wicca, occult sects, heathen Shamanism and so on.

⁹ Just one example is Indian Kundalini yoga, which produces exactly the same phenomena as was found in the Toronto Blessing and is caused by the same intense passivity and suggestibility. It is also transferred by an adept laying hands on a disciple.

In fact, this was nothing but an occult experience. For centuries, or even millennia, shaman, witches, magicians, Hindu gurus, Reiki practitioners, and pagan priests have claimed to be able to see auras around people, as many as seven layers. Some have written manuals on this claiming that different colours represent different spiritual aspects of the personality, for good or bad. Many New Age practitioners have taken this up and made a therapy out of it, claiming to change a colour from a bad one to a good one, or to adjust the frequencies. Some have claimed that the aura is the electromagnetic field surrounding the body that certain people can see. Manuals will tell you what all the variations of colour represent, such as anger or peace.

Like many of the phenomena associated with Wimber's ministry, it was nothing but an occult experience introduced into Christianity. It was not God's glory.

It is not party tricks

Throughout history charlatans and occultists have performed certain feats and wonders proclaiming that this was an act of God. In short, men pretend to be God by using some kind of phenomenon or trick.

Some occult adepts have been very good at this charade and have fooled many gullible people. Some of these have operated by the clever use of prestidigitation (illusions, magic tricks, legerdemain or sleight of hand). Certain Indian gurus¹⁰ were very professional in manifesting small objects from nowhere, such as flower petals, ashes, rings or coins. This was accepted by disciples as creation from nothing and thus an emanation of God's glory, but it was just a magic trick.

Other occultists performed feats that are harder to explain. There are reports of gurus walking across a river or sitting virtually naked in snow and not being cold. Some have stopped breathing for very long periods and there are many historical reports of people levitating.

In the modern world of heretical churches, there are multiple stories of unusual phenomena that are claimed to be manifestations of God's glory, and thus authenticate the church leader who quickly gains a following and lots of money. Some of these things fail to survive investigation, others turn out to be faked and staged, but a few are hard to explain. Examples include: gold fillings in teeth appearing instantly (no real evidence), gold dust appearing on the skin (no real evidence), gold tinsel falling from the ceiling (clearly staged).

When phenomena find no explanation then it is possible that demonic power has been involved. The devil can use sinful people to do very odd things: such as bend over backwards over sharp objects and sustain being hit by sledgehammers. I have seen a person move very fast slithering like a snake in a way that is impossible for a human to replicate.

Whether the phenomenon is a trick or whether it is demonic power it is clear that none of these things have anything to do with God's glory. It is apparent, for example that these phenomena occur in churches or cults that teach heresy and behave sinfully. God would not sanction blessing such things.

The glory of God today is not according to human expectation. It is not manifest in tricks and phenomena commonly found in occult circles.

¹⁰ E.g. Sai Baba.

Healing comes into this orbit. Firstly, the claims of healings in Charismatic churches bear no investigation whatsoever. Whenever they have been subject to proper enquiry no real healing has ever been found. Whether it is 'moderate' healers like John Wimber or radical healers like Benny Hinn, Christian investigators found no actual healings. All that is observed is raised endorphins and adrenaline bringing temporary pain relief or just fakery. The medical conditions return and some people even die hours or days later. This has been the case throughout Pentecostal history.

The question of healings and signs needs to be understood. Scripture explains to us that the tsunami of healings and wonders in the ministry of Christ and the apostles was to authenticate that the message proclaimed was from God (Heb 2:4). This was necessary in that age full of competing claims of divine ministry and new cults. It was necessary to prove that Jesus Christ was not just another Zoroaster,¹¹ Pythagoras,¹² Hermes¹³ or Mithras.¹⁴

Having proved that Jesus Christ is God and that his Gospel is divine, this work no longer needs to be done. It was fulfilled within decades of the cross and such works gradually ceased.¹⁵

It is true that God may heal according to his good pleasure, but there is not going to be a world-wide crusade of healings and wonders to prove something that was proved centuries ago. God may also give prescience when times are dire, as he has done in history in order to save lives and sustain the church; but there is no need for a return of OT type prophetic ministry since that purpose was long ago fulfilled. Regarding tongue speaking and interpretation, that was also part of the authentication process of the early church that ceased within decades (note no mention after the Corinthian letters).

Anybody making a fuss about the need for healings as a witness, or signs and wonders, has failed to understand the times. God has authenticated Christ in the world and such things are gone. Anyone trying to resurrect them is working against Christ and dishonouring him. Christ does not need authenticating today, he needs to be obeyed. The desire for objective Charismatic gifts actually works against the ministry of Christ. It takes attention away from Christ and places it upon things and thence the needs of people. True Churches are not centred on man but upon Christ. So called 'healing services' are not just a misnomer, they are blasphemy. They utterly fail to understand the word of God about the purpose of the local church, which is centred upon Christ and the cross.

There is no divine glory in the manifestation of occult-type phenomena in modern cults and churches. In fact God's own glorious word warns us that at the end it is a Satanic work

¹¹ 7th–6th century BC, Persian religious reformer, the founder of Zoroastrianism.

¹² Pythagoras (c.580–500 BC) was a Greek philosopher and mathematician. However, he travelled to Persia and brought back the elements of what became the Greek mystery religions, the basis of modern Kabbalism and occultism. He also founded a religious sect in Italy.

¹³ In Greek mythology, the god of commerce, invention, theft, and cunning, also the messenger and herald of the other gods. The later Hermes Trismegistus was a legendary figure regarded by Neoplatonists and others as the author of certain works on astrology, magic, and alchemy. The religion based on him was a syncretism of Greek mythology, Egyptian wisdom and mythology, and magic. Much of this was the foundation of Theosophy, a modern occult religion.

¹⁴ The central figure of Persian Mithraism; a cult popular among Roman soldiers. Probably connected to the worship of 'Mithra', an Indo-Iranian creator Sun-god, in Hinduism and Zoroastrianism.

¹⁵ NB that the apostle John, writing late in the first century, centred upon the truth of Jesus' message that brought liberty and never mentioned Charismatic gifts at all. He never mentioned them because they had virtually died out by then. John emphasised the ministry of the Holy Spirit but not in giving supernatural gifts.

that will manifest healings and signs and wonders; Jesus himself and the apostles later all warn us about his.¹⁶

True glory	Fake glory
The magnificence of God's being; the splendour of God's attributes; the majesty of God's powerful acts. These are manifest in the decree of God, the life, work and glorification of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.	Charismatic exotic human phenomena (falling over, screaming, crying, animal noises etc.; in general, a lack of self-control leading to submission to demonic temptations of exhibitionism).
	Charismatic exotic non-human phenomena (appearances of gold, unearthly sounds etc.).
	Charismatic fake healings.
	Charismatic 'blowing in the Spirit' (knocking people over from a distance). [This is actually achieved by hypnosis and is common in occult sects and stage hypnotists.]
	Charismatic, pagan or occult singing in the spirit.
	Occult manifestations (walking on fire, walking on water, overcoming extreme cold, absurd body positions, inexplicable travel, levitation, astral travel, sustaining torture, mind projection etc.).
	Mystical emotionalism (ecstasy).
	Mystical revelation (illumination).
	Magic tricks (producing something apparently out of nothing, etc.).
	Occult magic (using spells, incantations etc.).
	Occult divination (astrology, clairvoyance etc.)
	Occult spiritualism (communication with the 'dead' or with a spiritual; entity).

The future glory

The fulness of glory will be evident in the future after the Day of Judgment and the restoration of the earth in holiness. In that day Christians will see God's glory with their physical eyes and will physically share in that glory. Today, however, God's glory is seen by the eyes of faith. Until you see God's glory you cannot share in it. '*Grace is glory begun*'.¹⁷ However, even in the glory (heaven on earth) the glory manifested in believers is different from the personal, intrinsic glory of God.

In that day all is revealed, all is changed. With a new spiritual, holy body believers will see God and Christ in their fullness of glory and not be consumed. All will be glorious. This is the glory that Peter refers to that we will share in. Many NT writers look forward to this blessed hope:

Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. Rm 8:17

¹⁶ Matt 24:24; Mk 13:22; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:11-15, 19:20.

¹⁷ Matthew Henry, I believe.

The glory which shall be revealed in us. Rm 8:18

When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Col 3:4

When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 1 Pt 5:4

This was even glimpsed in the Old Testament.

You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory. Ps 73:24

The LORD will give grace and glory; no good *thing* will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. Ps 84:11

This glory is not plainly seen today because the world is in sin; the devil operates in mankind and the curse of the fall is upon the world. God is hidden in darkness.¹⁸ Man's eyes are darkened to spiritual things. His glory is not evident, even though it is there.

Nature is filled with God's glory and yet men cannot see it and ascribe that glory to evolution, which is blasphemy. Angels delight in the glory that resides in the church because it is the body of Christ, but we do not see that glory; but it is there in the heavenlies.¹⁹

There is a big difference between the openness of glory in the future and God's glory present in the church today. However, believers can see aspects of this glory by faith and can share in the reflection of this glory.

The glory of God now

Can believers see the glory of God today? Yes, if they fulfil the right conditions, beginning with faith. Is this a sense of glory rather than sight of it? Usually yes, but sometimes believers can receive an actual vision of God's glory. Can believers share in this glory? Yes they can. This is not an appropriation of divine glory, nor is it the fulness of a manifestation of intrinsic glory as Jesus manifested in his transfiguration. But believers can bask in God's glory and it can be reflected on them as Moses' face reflected the glory of God at Sinai (Exod 34:29-30; 2 Cor 3:7, 13)

There is a sense in which all believers have glory now, but this is not visible glory. It is the glory of the privileges of being a son of God:

The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. Jn 17:22

This is the glory of being united with Christ; the church is in Christ.

Yet it is Jesus desire and prayer that believers should actually see his glory:

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me. Jn 17:24

¹⁸ Exod 20:21; 1 Kg 8:12; 2 Chron 6:1; Ps 18:9, 37:2. God's dwelling is surrounded by darkness according to the flesh and sin. This is figurative speech for hiddenness; sinners cannot see God. However, God's actual innermost dwelling is in unapproachable light (Ps 104:2; 1 Tim 6:16).

¹⁹ Eph 3:10, '*that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*'.

He is referring to the divine glory that is part of Jesus as the Second Person of the Trinity. This glory will be seen by believers in the new world after the Second Coming. All Christians will see the glory of Christ constantly as they fellowship with God in the restored world.

Can believers see any of this glory today?

Believers cannot see the fulness of this glory with their physical eyes because it takes new spiritual eyes as part of a new spiritual body to be able to see it. However, it is possible for believers with great faith to be able to get glimpses of this glory in Christ in their spirit. The regenerated human spirit houses divine intuition, which enables spiritual communication with God (prayer, communion etc.). This capacity is enabled to see glimpses of divine glory by inward eyes.

We know this because many Bible prophets have explained the visions of glory that they have received, most notably being Isaiah (Isa 6), Ezekiel (Ezek 1), John (Rev) and Paul (2 Cor 12:1-4). But many people throughout church history have also received visions of glory, often to sustain them during affliction or to encourage them to initiate some work. Some of these were later (wrongly) classed as mystics or saints while others were called prophets,²⁰ but they were just ministers whom God allowed to see a glimpse of his glory. God often gave persecuted saints, and particularly martyrs, glimpses of great glory. Note the vision of Stephen when he was being martyred.²¹

Union with Christ

The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
Col 1:27

That He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, *even* us whom He called. Rm 9:23-24

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Eph 1:18

That now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*. Eph 3:10

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man. Eph 3:16

God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Phil 4:19

The basis of seeing God's glory and also of experiencing it is the doctrine of union with Christ.

The purpose of sharing in that glory, through Christ, today is bearing witness to other powers. It is being a testimony to God in the world and to the heavenlies. The beauty of Christ in the church is that when Christians are faithful and holy they represent God to all around them and God is thus magnified. There is no glory that belongs to them, but they bear witness to God and that glorifies him.

Thus the local church, when it is obedient and working well, is a faithful testimony to God which the angels long to look into, 'the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to

²⁰ E.g. Alexander Peden ('Peden the Prophet') an evangelist in the Scottish killing times.

²¹ Acts 7:55, 'he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God'.

the principalities and powers in the heavenly places'; 'things which angels desire to look into' (1 Pt 1:12). The elect angels have not experienced redemption because they did not fall. Thus elect angels long to see the working of God in redemption in the church; it is a cause of praise to God in heaven.

Christians experience the support of God according to the riches of his glory. The very grace that God gives us is an aspect of God's glory.

The knowledge that God gives us in the ministry of truth is according to the riches of his glory. When Christians learn about doctrine and truth God is glorified. It is part of God's inheritance given to saints.

The inner spiritual empowerment of Christians to sustain persecution or to perform a work is also according to the riches of God's glory. When a believer remains steadfast in persecution, due to grace given, that glorifies God. When a preacher works tirelessly through grace abounding, and achieves great results, such as in a missionary situation, that glorifies God.

In fact, when God supplies any need of ours it is fulfilled by the riches of his glory. When God helps saints it is by his glory and when they perform work according to that grace given the result also glorifies God. It is glory when grace goes in and glory when, by grace, it is worked out. All things thus work to God's glory when saints are faithful and obedient.

Thus saints today, even before the Second Coming, share in God's glory and experience it frequently.

Aspects of innate glory

The name of God

This glorious and awesome name. Deut 28:58

We thank You and praise Your glorious name. 1 Chron 29:13

Blessed be Your glorious name. Neh 9:15

Blessed *be* His glorious name forever! Ps 72:19

To make Yourself a glorious name. Isa 63:14

God's works

The works of the LORD *are* great, studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work *is* honourable and glorious. Ps 111:2-3

God's majesty

The glorious splendour of Your majesty. Ps 145:5

God's holiness

Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness. Exod 15:11

God's kingdom

The glorious majesty of His kingdom. Ps 145:12

God's voice

The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard. Isa 30:30

God's power

Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power. Exod 15:6

His glorious arm. Isa 63:12

God's heaven

Look down from heaven, and see from Your habitation, holy and glorious. Isa 63:15

God's throne

A glorious high throne from the beginning *is* the place of our sanctuary. Jer 17:12

The person of Christ

The glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess 2:14

Our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory. Jm 2:1

The work of Christ

All the glorious things that were done by Him. Lk 13:17

The resurrection of Christ

Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Rm 6:4

The person of the Spirit

The Spirit of glory. 1 Pt 4:14

The work of the Spirit

How will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious. 2 Cor 3:8

The Gospel

The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. 2 Cor 4:4 [The glorious gospel of Christ. KJV]

The glorious gospel of the blessed God. 1 Tim 1:1

The church

That He might present her to Himself a glorious church. Eph 5:27

The glorious liberty of the children of God. Rm 8:21

The debasement of glory

The devil seeks to turn the things of God upside down. His intention is to ruin the glory of God by establishing the opposite in his creation. He does this by deception and by promising to give men what they want, when in fact the temptation ruins what they want.

For example, the devil promises men freedom to do what they want by ignoring or disobeying God's law. This is the essence of Satanism, '*do what thou wilt*'. The foundation of sin is selfishness; this appeals to man's pride. The temptation is that by ignoring God's commandments man gains liberty to express himself.

However, man's inner nature is depraved and sinful and any expression of that nature eventually leads to serious problems; such as when doing what you want hurts the freedom of somebody else. All extreme forms of selfishness and doing what you want hurt your neighbour (stealing, adultery, lying, killing, defrauding etc.).

All that the devil's temptation does is bring about bondage, which is what he seeks. Disobeying God does not bring individual freedom but brings bondage to Satan.

Ironically, obeying God's commands does bring about peace, harmony, order and liberty. When everyone is obeying God's law there is peace and security. Everyone is seeking the good of everyone else. All is harmony. This is glorious.

Thus the commandments of God, far from being onerous, are glorious and bring about liberty and peace. The satanic temptation to do what you want does not bring glory but brings slavery and death.

This is true of everything that is glorious.

God's name is glorious. When people blaspheme that name there is no glory. People achieve nothing but sin and eventually God's judgment and wrath.

Dishonouring God's glory achieves nothing but evil.

The real expression of God's glory in fulness

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; **who being the brightness of *His* glory** and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Heb 1:1-3

Only Jesus is the brightness of God's glory.

'Brightness' means 'out-shining', or 'out-raying', effulgence, a perfect reflection, a powerful expression or manifestation. Jesus is the brightness of the glory of God.

Jesus is the perfect expression of God's glory because he is a glorified man, a physical, material expression of God. God is spirit and not material; his heavenly glory is seen by angels and not by men. But Jesus is a material/spiritual being (both God and Man) who was and is seen by men. He is the fulness of God that relates to men.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jn 1:14

He who has seen Me has seen the Father. Jn 14:9

It is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor 4:6

It pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell. Col 1:19

In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Col 2:9

The apostle John never got over the fact that he had seen the glory of God manifested in Jesus and that he had even touched him. In his letters sixty years later he is still shocked at having being next to the glory of God (1 Jn 1:1-2).

Jesus is full of glory because he is the eternal begotten of the Father. He is one with God; he is the expression of God and always has been. Before his incarnation he was the expression of God as 'the angel of the Lord' in theophanies. He was with the Israelites in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:4). Part of the ministry of the Second Person of the Trinity is always to manifest the glory of God and communicate it to the elect. Jesus is that part of the Godhead that reaches out to man visibly.

Everything that Jesus does glorifies God. Even during his humiliation he glorified God in terms of character that represented the attributes of God in human virtues (love, long-suffering, goodness, humility, faith etc.). Now, as a glorified man on the throne he glorifies God in his preservation of the elect, interceding for them and being a Paraclete in heaven. After the Second Coming Jesus will be seen by all as the fulness of the glorious God who will manifest God's will and sovereignty on earth. To the wicked Jesus will be the great judge that administers glorious perfect justice and condemnation in awesome judgment on sin.

If you want to see God's glory today, look to Jesus.

Conclusion

God's glory is all about the splendour of his majesty. This is expressed in God's attributes that are all glorious, but it is also expressed in his works, which are equally glorious. God cannot do anything without it being glorious.

The glory of God today is expressed externally in his works of creation and the sustaining of the universe by his power in Christ (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; Acts 17:28). The glory of God is expressed internally in his grace works in the church supplying all her needs through the riches of his glory in Christ.

In the new world these two aspects come together when the church and the earth are all part of the same glory, released from the curse, with Christ being present and the centre of both.

Saints should be aware of the wonder of sharing in the glory of God.

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