

## **The Story of Glory and Holiness Series**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

During the next two Terms we hope to cover the story of Glory and Holiness which make up what we call 'Salvation History'. It is not just a history—which could be dull—but the story of Man's being created in the glory of God, his loss of that glory, of God showing His glory in creation, in Israel, in Christ, and again in Man, leading up to the glory in which Christ shall come, and the glorification of Man and the whole creation. This is a fascinating story, especially as we are involved in it. It takes note of how glorious Man was, how he lost the glory, feels the pain of that loss, exchanged God's glory for the (so-called) glory of the idols. History tells us how God confronts us with His glory and holiness in so many ways that we cannot say He has hidden it.

In this story is also Man's endeavour to develop a glory which will make up for what he has lost. Hence human glory, the glory of what he makes, and the glory of the idols. His attempts at self-glorification are pitiful when seen from the viewing point of death. God's glory is that He selects Israel to teach it and the world His glory and His holiness. This only succeeds partly, and it is not until Christ comes that the glory and holiness of God can truly be seen.

One of the keys to the matter of sanctification and glorification lies in the fact that it was God's intention, even before He created the world, to glorify and sanctify us. The fall of Man in Eden could not destroy that plan, nor could the powers of darkness prevent it. To have the goal of glory and holiness before us is to have a purposeful life. To share that glory with others is one of our deepest joys. To tell to the world what Paul calls 'the gospel of the glory of Christ' is a wonderful privilege and ministry.

So, then, our Studies for these next two terms should be both interesting and useful. They should help us to see afresh the 'glory of His grace', to grow 'from one stage of glory to another', and ultimately to be 'to the praise of His glory'. The list of studies below should help us to see the steps we will be taking:

<b>Study 1: The Story of Glory and Holiness</b>	<b>Study 9: The Ascension, Session and the Glory of God</b>
<b>Study 2: The Perpetual Showing of the Glory</b>	<b>Study 10: The Present Glory and Glorification of Redeemed Man—I</b>
<b>Study 3: Israel and the Glory and Holiness</b>	<b>Study 11: The Present Glory and Glorification of Redeemed Man—II</b>
<b>Study 4: The Glory of Christ Incarnate</b>	<b>Study 12: Man and the Eschatological Glory—I</b>
<b>Study 5: The Glory of the Cross—I</b>	<b>Study 13: Man and the Eschatological Glory—II</b>
<b>Study 6: The Glory of the Cross—II</b>	<b>Study 14: Man and the Eschatological Glory—III</b>
<b>Study 7: The Glory of the Resurrection—I</b>	
<b>Study 8: The Glory of the Resurrection—II</b>	

## Study 1: The Story of Glory and Holiness

### WHAT IS GLORY?

I Timothy 6:15–16 speaks of 'the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, whom alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, who no man has ever seen or can see'. From our human point of view, 'whom no man has ever seen' may mean one of two things; either God is invisible to the seeing of Man, or Man is forbidden such seeing. Whilst it is true that all men cannot bear to see the glory of the Lord, and many are not shown that glory, yet it is true that the true people of God are not only permitted to see manifestations of Himself in and through glory, but also will one day be partakers in that glory. *God's glory, then, constitutes those manifestations of Himself, in multitudinous ways, which He is pleased to give to Man and other elements of His creation, both celestial and terrestrial.* Even so, we should say that God's glory is His very Being, but what we see are *manifestations* of that Being and not, in themselves, God's glory.

In the Old Testament, there are a number of terms rendered as glory, so that the Hebrew words *addereth, heder, tohar, yegar, tsebi* and *tipharah* prove to be synonyms for the more generally used word *kabod*. There are, of course, differences in meaning, but then many of these are translated with the Greek *doxa* in the LXX (Greek) translation of the Old Testament. The former terms include the ideas of honour, adornment, cleanness, rarity and beauty, whilst *kabod* itself primarily signified weight or heaviness or honour, signifying something substantial and successful.

There are so many usages of the words and particularly of *kabod*, that when these are read in their contexts we come to a richer understanding of the meaning of the word. For example, in Genesis 49:6, Jacob says of Simeon and Levi, 'O my soul, come not into their council; O my spirit [glory: *kabod*], be not joined to their company'. Here the word 'spirit' is actually *kabod*, and the same is used of 'soul' (RSV) in Psalm 16:9, 'Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul [glory] rejoices'; and Psalm 57:8 (cf. Ps. 108:1), 'Awake, my soul [glory]! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn!' In Jeremiah 2:11 and Psalm 106:20 the term 'their glory' really means 'God's glory', insisting that the only authentic glory Man has is God's glory, but it is interesting that it can be said that glory is 'their glory', showing how Man's glory derives from God's *kabod*.

In Genesis 31:1, *kabod* is translated as *wealth*. In Psalm 49:16, this wealth is translated as 'glory'. It also refers to position, as is seen in Genesis 45:13 (RSV, *splendor*). In Exodus 28:40, the garments of the priest glorify him. In I Samuel 4:21f., it is seen that the Ark of the Covenant is the glory of Israel; when it has gone the glory has gone. Job 19:9 indicates that the humiliation of Job is his loss of glory; his glory is his honour and dignity. This same glory is seen in the army of Assyria (Isa. 8:7, 17:3–4); the trees of Lebanon (Isa. 60:13); in royalty (Esther 1:4; Ps. 45:3, Dan. 11:20). It refers to Man's created status in Psalm 8:5, and relates to the nature of *the* first temple (I Chron. 22:5), as also the second (Hag. 2:3).

We gather, then, that glory has the ideas of weight, substance, possessions, authority, brilliance, as in I Chronicles 29:11–13:

Thine O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Likewise in Revelation 4:11 and 5:12, the ascription to the God of glory really catches up the synonyms such as honour, power, wisdom, might and blessing, as being elements of that

glory. In II Corinthians 4:17, Paul talks about ‘an eternal weight of glory’, showing its substantial nature. The heart of glory is not just light, radiance and such things, but the very Being of God, His moral excellence, such as is set forth in Exodus 34:6–7, but we will enlarge this when we come to it, later. It will be seen most powerfully at the Cross.

## **A HISTORY OF GLORY**

This brief description of the history of glory and holiness is simply to give us a panoramic view of it. First let us see that glory and holiness go together. It has been said, ‘Holiness is God’s hidden glory: glory is God’s ever-present holiness’. These two are never apart. The glory and holiness of God had been present in creation—‘the whole earth is filled with his glory’, and ‘the heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork’. Man was created in the image of God. Paul later says, ‘[Man] is the image and glory of God’ (I Cor. 11:7). Psalm 8 says that God crowned Man with glory and honour. Man—the man and the woman and their descendants—were to have lordship over the whole earth, and were to ‘fill it up’. That is, they were to fill it with the glory and holiness of Eden. Instead they sought their own glory and thus fell short of God’s glory. Separated from the glory of the indwelling God of Eden, they now lived only by the grace of God. It soon became apparent that there were two separated groups of humanity—those who had faith in God and those who only had faith in themselves. Violence and corruption spread across the earth and brought the judgment of the Flood. God’s glory appeared from time to time in theophanies. Then ‘the God of glory appeared unto Abraham’, and from that time onwards the covenant of grace was evident. Moses saw the glory of God and that was God’s coming to, and dwelling in, Israel. Israel was given the glory of God (Rom. 9:4), along with holiness for worship and living in the covenant.

Israel failed to live in God’s glory and holiness. It had far too much to do with idols and the glory of other nations, and so it was judged, yet the coming glory of its own nation and God’s Kingdom was powerfully prophesied. Amidst similar prophecies, Christ was born, in the glory of the angels, and his life and ministry were of that glory. In particular, the Cross was said to be *the* place and occasion of God’s glory. The Resurrection was by ‘the Father of glory’ (Eph. 1:17ff.), and the Ascension was when Christ was ‘taken up in glory’, for ‘he suffered and entered into his glory’. He will come again in the glory cloud and the presence of the angels ‘at the right hand of the Power’. First Corinthians 2:7f. speaks of a wisdom of God which decreed the glorification of the elect. Many passages speak of this glorification (e.g. Col. 3:27; Rom. 8:17–30; II Cor. 4:16–18) whilst II Corinthians 3:18 speaks of a present growth and development of the glory of believers. So, at the end of time all believers will be received in glory as those glorified. The glory of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, with the glory of the Bride, the Bridegroom, the Temple (God and the Lamb) and Paradise, will be the glory in which the glorified people of God will live and have their being. It will all be glory! Everything will be sanctified so that all will be holy and glorious.

Brief and inadequate as is this sketch of the glory and the holiness of God, yet it gives us an understanding of history. Man cannot bear the emptiness of an inglorious life. God wills to glorify His elect. When His people experience the glory of God they glorify Him; not only by worship, but also by the ways in which they live their lives.

## Study 2: The Story of Glory and Holiness

### THE PERPETUAL SHOWING OF THE GLORY

#### The Creation and Glory

There is no doubt about it; creation *declares* the glory of God (cf. Ps. 19:1ff.; Rom. 1:20ff.), but creation is *not* God's glory: it simply *declares* God's glory. No created thing is God's own glory but He gives it glory, for example, Man 'is the image and glory of God' (I Cor. 11:7). 'The whole earth is *full* of his glory' (Isa. 6:3), and there are prophecies which speak of that total filling (Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14; Isa. 2:11; cf. Ps. 72:19). God said, 'My glory I will not give to another' (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). Some people exult in the creation; they seem to love every bit of it. Others dread it, and yet others have mixed feelings about it. Those who give it unqualified liking are often thought idealistic for they see no fault in it. Those who dread it are always thinking in terms of predatory creatures or insects or the diseases that cripple forests, deserts and savannas, or just the incidence of floods, plagues and dangerous events which used to be called 'acts of God'. Those who face the creation with mixed feelings, who on the one hand welcome all its beauties and benefits, but on the other hand dislike what appear to be the cruelty of nature in both animal and vegetable kingdoms—to say nothing of the human kingdom!—probably see creation as a mixed blessing. It is probable that both these groups do not see the glory of God, but the glory of creation, or its lack of glory.

#### Created Man and the Glory

Man was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27; Ps. 8:3f.; I Cor. 11:7). We might say he was a copy of God, but then a *living* copy. He was to be active according to Genesis 1:28f. He did not have glory *of himself*, but God 'crowned him with glory and honour' (Ps. 8). God is King over all creation and that is His glory. Man was to be His vice-regent. He was to rule over the creation. Created outside the garden he was then placed in it. The man and the woman = 'Man'. Man lived with God in the garden, fellowshiped with Him, knew His Presence and worshipped Him. Man was to show the glory of God and to *fill* the earth with God's glory—the Edenic glory he knew. So he knew the glory of God. God's glory is linked with the terms 'God's Presence', 'God's Face'.

#### Man and the Loss of Glory

The Fall, as spoken of in Genesis 3 and referred to in Romans 5:12ff., shows that Man lost his intimate glory-relationship with God. In the midst of the failure of the crest-fallen couple, God promised them that the snatcher of glory—the serpent—would one day be crushed by the seed of Woman. It is at this point we begin to realise that history is, from one point of view, a battle by God to restore glory to Man and enhance him eternally, whilst, on the other hand, it is the battle by evil to keep him denuded of glory and have him sent out into darkness for ever. Man was not entirely driven from the Face and Presence of God as was Cain because of murder (Gen. 4:14, 16), and were Man to have faith and read creation, the glory of God would be heard as declared to him. He had fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) for his sin was (i) original (Rom. 5:12f.), and (ii) habitual—he constantly sinned (cf. Gen. 6:5; 8:21), and it

was the existential anguish—this loss of glory—into which he came which has always been intolerable to Man. So, then, all humanity strives towards glory of one kind or another as ‘make-up’, or else slides into inglorious living in depression, inferiority, and so on.

### **The Continuous Glory**

- (a) We have seen that God’s glory is always declared by creation even though creation itself has been ‘subjected to futility’. People of faith in God have always seen this glory (cf. Heb. 11).
- (b) God’s glory is manifested in theophanies. A theophany is a showing forth of God. There are theophanies in the appearance of angels to humanity. These are really many in Israel, but before Israel ‘the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham’ (Acts 7:1–2). He appeared a number of times. He also appeared to Isaac and more than once to Jacob. In this sense they were covenantal theophanies. Manifestations of God’s glory were often in storms, in lightning and thunder and ‘hailstones and fire’. These have been explained as ‘nature theophanies’— manifestations of God’s glory in nature (cf. Ps. 29). These theophanic manifestations of God’s glory did not always include all natural meteorological phenomena, theophanies being only on special occasions and for specific reasons as Divine manifestations of glory.
- (c) Then God gave His glory to Israel (cf. Rom. 9:4). In Study 3 we will look at this more closely, but it is sufficient for us to say here that Israel had the glory of God shown to it first in the burning bush, then in the signs in Egypt, in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and in other events such as at Sinai. The Presence of God was known to be in the Holy of Holies, at the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Also He appeared to the prophets.
- (d) The glory of God surrounded the birth events of Jesus—angels appearing to Mary, Joseph and Zechariah, the angels appearing to the shepherds. The heavens opening at the Baptism, and the event of the Transfiguration were connected with the glory of God. What happened at the Transfiguration shows us the true glory of Jesus and thus of Man, since Jesus was the Second and Last Adam. We will see that the act of the Cross was that of glory, then the Resurrection, Ascension and Reigning at the right hand of the Father were also events of glory. Now, through the Holy Spirit and the Word Man can see ‘the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’. This means we can continually see the glory of God in the present.
- (e) Man will ultimately see the glory of God in fullness (I John 3:1–3; Rev. 22:4). This will be in the Holy City/Paradise. The new heaven and the new earth will coincide with the earth being filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea, for where God’s glory is, that is where He is wholly King. At present the earth is indeed filled with the glory of God, but it is not seen fully because this time is the ‘ends of the ages’—the present evil age which is passing away and the new age which has partly come and then will come fully.

### **Conclusion: God’s Glory Is Always Shining Forth**

The story of glory, as we have just presented it, tells us that God does not hide His glory. He has always shown it. Man may wear a veil over his heart so that he will not see the glory (Rom. 1:19–25; II Cor. 3:14; Isa. 25:6–8), but ultimately the glory will be seen by all, firstly as glorifying power by the elect and then as judgment by the unbelieving. The glory of God will glorify the elect (I Cor. 2:7f.; II Cor. 3:18), but it will come as terrifying judgment to those who do not ‘love His appearing’.



## Study 3: Israel and the Glory and Holiness

### GOD'S GLORY, LAW AND COVENANT UNIQUE TO ISRAEL

Whilst we do not say that God's eternal covenant began with Abraham,<sup>1</sup> since through Adam it was for all mankind, we do acknowledge that God revealed His covenant of grace to Abraham and promised His own covenant faithfulness for all generations. Stephen understood the covenant when he said, 'The God of glory appeared unto Abraham'. Looking back to the events of the past forty years, Moses tells Israel of its unique nature as a nation, and its unique relationship with Yahweh, the Lord:

Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day? (Deut. 4:5–8).

The nations around Israel would soon recognise the unique quality of Israel, its God-given law and its God, as in Deuteronomy 4:15–19:

Therefore take good heed to yourselves. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. And beware lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them and serve them, things which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

### God's Manifestations of His Glory to Israel

The way in which God chose to manifest Himself as the Covenant One was by His glory. In Egypt His glory was shown in the ten signs which defeated Egypt and liberated the people of Israel. Exodus 15:11 is part of the Song of Moses which was set forth at the successful crossing of the Red Sea:

Who is like thee, O LORD, among the gods?  
Who is like thee, majestic in holiness,  
terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

'Terrible in deeds of glory' was the cry. By comparison the idols were nothing for they wrought nothing. From the time of the burning-bush theophany, through the signs and wonders and then in the journey in the Sinai Peninsula, Israel saw God's glory. They saw the glory of the Lord in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (Exod. 14: 19, 24; Num. 10:34; Ps. 78:14), in the cloud of the giving of the manna (Exod. 16:6–7), in the cloud which would descend to the door of the tent, when—habitually—God would speak with Moses (33:7–11),

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<sup>1</sup> See *Covenant and Creation* by William Dumbrell (Paternoster, Devon, 1984); some studies on Covenant by Herman Hoeksema in his *Reformed Dogmatics* (Reformed Free Pub., Grand Rapids, 1976); and my *God's Most Glorious Covenant* (Redeemer Pr., Castle Hill, 1997), for the argument of God's eternal covenant, stemming from His triune nature as being covenantal.

in the cloud on Mount Sinai (19:9, 11, 18; Ps. 99:7; Neh. 9:12), in the glory shown to Moses descending in the cloud and by passing before him, showing His hinder part and pronouncing His moral glory (Exod. 34:5–9), on the face of Moses (34:29–35), in the glory-cloud covering the completed tabernacle and filling it (40:34–38), as later in the dedication of the completed temple (I Kings 8:10). Each one of these occasions was significant.

### **God's Face, Cloud, Presence and Indwelling are All Part of Covenantal Glory**

These are what we might call objective showings-forth of God's glory—theophanic manifestations. What we need to see is that they all showed God's dwelling with His people. One of the covenantal realities was that God dwelled always in the midst of His people. The tabernacle was set in the midst of the camp during their wanderings in the wilderness. The ark of the covenant was evidence that God was present in the Most Holy Place. In the ark was the law, but above it was the mercy seat, the symbol of His dwelling and His mercy in accordance with Exodus 34:6–7. God had promised, of the first temple, 'For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time' (II Chron. 7:16). That the second temple did not have the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat would seem to imply some loss of Presence, but this did not have to be the case. A knowledge and worship of God which could transcend this furniture is the matter before us.

### **The Moral Glory of God**

If we become preoccupied with radiance, light, clouds and God's so-called 'otherness'—those powerful phenomena which indicate God's glory—then we may miss the heart of His glory which is moral. We use the term 'moral' because from the Godward side it has to do with proper living, moral behaviour and holiness of action. That is why we need to understand Moses' approach to God in Exodus chapters 33 and 34. Moses had seen much of God's glory and more than most, but he knew that the taking up of a people to Canaan was no simple matter. Already they had horribly expressed their inner selves in making the idol called 'the golden calf'. They had been told, and they believed, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' Although God had promised that His Presence would go with them (Exod. 33:15), it was not enough for Moses. He wanted to know the essence of the Lord, the whole of the glory. Whilst this was not possible, since to *see* the Invisible God is to die, the Lord showed Moses what some have called His 'moral' glory.

Morality is widely known and understood as right and proper behaviour in the light of certain unchangeable values, that which is done according to law, and in the present case, God's law. This would seem to be, then, a matter of ethics and ethical behaviour. Such a conclusion is insufficient. True morality is not simply in accordance with accepted custom, for that is more culture than morality. Morality is primarily to do with the will of God. God's law is not simply a set of commands He gives to the human race, but is *His* law, the law which is His own *torah*, His own glory. His righteousness is not apart from His love, His goodness, His truth and His holiness. It takes a revolution in thinking to break out of seeing law as an eternal entity in itself. True law is not only linked with the will of God, but, through creation, with the will of Man. To will to do what God wills is true morality. What Moses wanted to see was that glory of God which would enable him to see the mind and power of God in the matter of true living, the living he hoped to inspire in Israel in order to get them to the Promised Land:

And the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.' And Moses made

haste to bow his head toward the earth, and worshiped. And he said, 'If now I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in the midst of us, although it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thy inheritance' (Exod. 34:5–9).

We call things like mercy, grace, steadfast love, forgiveness of the repentant but not of the impenitent, moral elements. God was occupied with true moral living. An analysis of chapters 16 to 34, in which are virtually all the revelations of God's glory, has very little about the covenant and the glory-manifestations, but has great sections of moral instruction. When we say, 'moral instruction', we mean all to do with Israel's manner of life, its behaviour in worship and service of God, and its societal actions and living.

What we have termed 'moral glory' and, in particular the very words of Exodus 34:6–7, are words we never dare forget. Without them we will come heavily under legal oppression. Israel was often in terrible straits because of her failure, but time and again they had to rest on the Exodus communication. Thus these words are recalled and laid out before God. God's love, mercy and forgiveness are the elements of His covenantal glory. Israel always had God's moral glory before it: never was it absent.

### **Israel and Eschatological Glory**

Israel's natural passion for the land as the inheritance God had given them, suffered deeply under God's judgments of the people for their idolatry and seeking the help of pagan nations. As a people they were open to the sins and failures of all humanity. Fearful judgments and exiles gradually changed their views of God's future for them. The true prophets fed them with God's plan for Israel and His glory. Gradually local geography, Israel, the Holy City, the Holy Temple and the Holy People, gave way to wider, more visionary understanding. God's dwelling was not to be confined to the Holy Land. God's glory was to cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, and equally the *knowledge* of that glory was to be far spread. The New Temple was to be the house of prayer for all nations (Isa. 56:6–8; cf. Eph. 2:11ff.). The dividing wall was to fall and the nations could come to this Holy Jerusalem and worship on its Holy Mountain (Isa. 2:1–4; Isa. 66:18–23; cf. 25:6–8) The law of the Lord and the word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem.

The prophets made much of the holiness of God and of a holy worship which was beyond that of undependable Israel. The nation would be made anew, and the new people would be priestly to all the world. The heart of Exodus 34:6–7 would be opened to all mankind. A new heaven and a new earth would transcend the present heaven and earth, the veil which was over the heart of all nations but Israel would be taken away, and there would be a holy feast on the Mountain of the Lord, for all nations, so that there would no longer be suffering, tears, death or ancient reproach. God would remove it all, and His glory, moral and otherwise, would be seen in all the earth.

This is the glory which was Israel, which is—properly understood—Israel, and will be holy Israel for all eternity. Until Christ no other nation had witnessed the glory of God or lived under that glory-cloud, but a new day has come, for the glory of God has descended to the earth in God's Son, Jesus of Nazareth, and His glory is present in the church, now, and throughout all ages. Thus the significance of Isaiah 66:18–23:

I know their works and I am coming to gather all nations; and they shall come and see my glory . . . survivors . . . that have not heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations (vv. 18–19).

Thus 'the new heavens and the new earth'.



## Study 4: The Glory of Christ Incarnate

### THE HIDDEN GLORY: PROPHECY AND THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

We could first speak of *the prophetic glory of Christ*, by which we would mean that the Messiah was predicted in the Old Testament, and this would be correct. Peter (I Pet. 1:11) said, 'they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory'. We could look at the person of Psalm 2 who is described as the Lord's 'anointed', 'my king', 'my son'; of Psalm 110 as the 'priest for ever after the order of Melchizedeck, seated at the right hand of God; the Davidic king of Psalm 89; the Davidic King-Shepherd of Ezekiel chapters 34 and 37; the 'son' of Isaiah 9:6-7; the one called 'Immanuel' of Isaiah 7:14; the Davidic 'righteous Branch' of Jeremiah 23:5-6; the 'one like a son of man' of Daniel 7:13f.; and a figure such as the royal one of Zechariah 9:9-10. Even so, all these prophecies could not be applied to one person until Christ had appeared, had lived his life, ministered and been crucified, resurrected, ascended and begun to reign in glory at God's right hand.

#### He was Born in Glory: The Synoptic Gospels

In Matthew's Gospel we see an angel—in glory—visiting Joseph in his sleep, and telling him that the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was being fulfilled in the birth of Mary's son and that this one called 'Emmanuel' would save his people from their sins. In Luke's Gospel, Mary was told by the Angel Gabriel that her son was to be the prophesied Davidic King. She was told, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God' (1:35). In the word 'overshadow' is the suggestion of the glory cloud, for the same word is used at Jesus' transfiguration on Mt Tabor. Again, in Luke 2:9, 'And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear'. The shepherds heard the voice of the angel, announcing the birth of 'a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'. 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"'

The Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79), is filled with teaching regarding the coming of Jesus and John the Baptist. Simeon sees the Christ babe as God's salvation, 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel' (2:32). This catches up much of the teaching of the Old Testament, that ultimately many would come from all Gentile nations, seeking God at Jerusalem and worshipping Him in His temple.

#### John's Gospel and the Glory

Whilst the Synoptic Gospels speak little that is explicit in regard to Christ's glory, yet since the emphasis is much on the Kingdom of God, they are, in fact, teaching much about glory. However, it is John's Gospel which gives much emphasis to the matter of the glory of the Father and the Son. John 1:14-18 is most important:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.") And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

The Word by which all things were created and which was—and is—the true light that lightens every man coming into the world, had become flesh! John said, ‘we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father’, truly an incredible statement. It has to be said that few, if any, really saw his real glory. His glory seemed to remain hidden, under veils. Glimpses of his glory, ‘full of grace and truth’, were undoubtedly caught by some, but for many the idea of glory was linked with outward beauty, radiance and light. What most saw seemed to be the opposite to glory—non-acceptance, rejection, shameful reactions, enmity, and the murder of the Cross.

In 1:14 we read, ‘And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father; ‘full of grace and truth’ represents what we read in Exodus 34:6–7 as the moral glory of God; ‘dwelt among us’ is literally ‘tabernacled among us’, and it was in the tabernacle that the glory of God had dwelt in Israel. **A. M. Ramsey** says:

We are reminded both of the tabernacle in the wilderness and of the prophetic imagery of Yahweh tabernacling in the midst of His people, and of the Shekinah which He causes to dwell among them . . . The place of His dwelling is the *flesh* of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

The glory of God was in Christ but virtually unseen.

As we proceed in John’s Gospel we see the seven signs, which the author himself tells us, ‘are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name’. In 2:11, it is said, ‘This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, *and manifested his glory*; and his disciples believed in him’. It is evident they saw his glory, because he ‘manifested his glory’. He was giving them grounds for faith. It does not seem that viewers other than the disciples and his close followers believed. In some way the glory *was* shown.

Again, in 11:4 regarding Lazarus’ sickness, ‘But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it”’. This *sign* was an act of glory and to Martha, at the least, it was specially given: ‘Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you would believe *you would see the glory of God?*”’ As the disciples had seen Christ’s glory in 2:11, so here (11:40) it was done for the coming of faith.

John’s Gospel tells us of other aspects of glory. In 7:18 he shows his sole intent is to seek the Father’s glory. ‘He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.’ In 8:50 he adds, ‘Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it and he will be the judge’. It is clear from both contexts that the matter of glory occupies the minds of his hearers. In 12:27–32 we look into an event relating to glory:

‘Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? “Father, save me from this hour?” No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.’ He said this to show by what death he was to die.

In this Christ wishes the Father to glorify Himself. The Father says He has done this, meaning He has glorified His name by glorifying Jesus. If we ask, ‘When did he do that?’, the answer must be at Christ’s baptism when the heavens opened and God declared Jesus to be His Son. It may possibly mean that He glorified him in what he—Christ—did (John 5:36). When will He glorify His name again? When Christ goes to the Cross. Therefore, in John 13:31–32 we have the next glorification in mind:

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<sup>1</sup> *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ*, by A. M. Ramsey (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1949) quoted by Leon Morris in his *Commentary on John’s Gospel* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1977) p. 104.

When he [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.'

He means in the coming work of the Cross. That the Cross was the event of glory there can be no doubt. For this reason we need to look in detail at John 17:1–5, 22–24. In our next Study we will see that the Son desired the Father to glorify him at the Cross so that he, the Son, could glorify the Father. Also it seems probable that in 7:37–39 the 'not yet glorified' refers to the death of the Cross.

### **Christ's Glory in the Transfiguration**

We take the longest of the three descriptions of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor:

And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, who *appeared in glory* and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened *they saw his glory* and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' (Luke 9:29–31).

Ramsey reminds us that the German translation of 'the transfiguration' is 'the glorification'. The word 'glory' is only mentioned twice, but so many elements of brightness, radiance and the cloud are present that we can rightly call it 'the glorification'. The nature of the clothes—white as light', 'his garments became glistening, intensely white', 'dazzling white'—indicate holy glory; the nature of the cloud—'a bright cloud overshadowed them', 'a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud'—and the nature of the glory of Moses, Elijah and Jesus; all combine to speak of great glory.

What was the significance of the Transfiguration? It certainly was to show the glory of Jesus as the Son of man, if not the Son of God, as incarnate. His glory, up to this point, had been hidden. Now it is revealed. However, it was glory with a view to greater glory, the glorification of fallen Man through the Cross. We know that from that point he set his face towards Jerusalem. He talked with Moses and Elijah 'and spoke of his *exodus*, which he was to *accomplish* at Jerusalem'. His crucifixion was to be the exodus that this new Moses was to accomplish on the Cross, to lead his people out of bondage into freedom (cf. John 8:31–36). Thinking in terms of Christ's suffering on the Cross, and particularly with Isaiah 52:14, 'As many were astonished at him—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men', we can say, 'Here, on the high mountain, he was transfigured that there, high on the Cross, he might be disfigured; in order that we who are so disfigured by sin might be transfigured into the likeness of his glory'. Nothing but the Cross could effect *this*.

### **Christ's Glory in the Epistles**

These Letters can show us more of Christ's glory than was explicit in the Gospels. However, we will be dealing with the Epistles in a later Study and will leave it until then.

## **Study 5: The Glory of the Cross—I**

### **THE CROSS THE OBJECT OF GLORY**

Paul's cry springs to mind immediately: 'But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world' (Gal. 6:14). The Cross so fills Paul's horizon that he will preach nothing else, and he will be glad to preach it without adornment or human persuasiveness (I Cor. 1:17 – 2:5), 'For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified'. He will not be put off by the scandal it presents to some, and the foolishness it presents to others. For Paul the centrality of the Cross is his primary thought and concern. It is his life and passion. This is the way it must be with all believers.

#### **The Cross Is Eternal**

We mean that it was planned before the creation of the world. I Peter 1:19–20 speaks of the precious blood of Christ who was destined to be the Lamb before the foundation of the world. Likewise in Revelation 13:8, John talks of the names written—or not written—in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world, that is, slain in the intention of God so that it would happen in time, even in the 'fullness of time'. Then, to see in Revelation chapter 5 and other chapters following, the power and authority of that Slain Lamb over all the world, is to see that there is no point in history where the Cross is not effective. We cannot escape the fact that the Cross was both designed and destined to be the major fact of all history. This is what we mean by 'the glory of the Cross'. That its effects do not cease with the actual event of the Cross is shown in many places in the New Testament, not the least of which is the one we have mentioned—the powerful reigning of Christ in the midst of heaven as the Lamb once slain, and so who is as the Lion of Judah in respect to all nations, for 'to him shall be the obedience of the peoples' (Gen. 49:10; cf. Ps. 2).

#### **The Cross Essential and Indispensable**

We may as well start off with the claim that the Cross is the glory of God. It has no outward appearance of being so, but it is. Its glory is hidden under veils of the inglorious, for this is how Man would see it, as a dreadful event, of shame to God and Man. However, what happens there is 'to the praise of his glorious grace'. Grace is part of the substantiality of God. We should not then be surprised if the Cross is not seen and understood by human beings, for grace is anathema to fallen Man, repugnant to his spiritual pride, offensive to his dignity and unappreciative of his supposed righteousness. He thinks he has enough glory within himself to produce works acceptable to God, but he has not. It is beyond his grasp—this lofty holiness of God, this demand for similar holiness in Man.

#### **The Necessity of the Cross in the Synoptics**

In the Synoptic Gospels we see Christ enlightening his followers step-by-step regarding this most substantial work of God the Father, and of himself, the Son—the Cross. Mary was told that a sword would pierce her soul. She must have felt the sword as she witnessed the growing rejection of her Son, but it pierced most deeply and most awfully in the very

happening of the Cross. Jesus' three years of ministry were oriented towards the Cross. Three times in the Gospel of Mark he foretold to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, be betrayed and be slain at the hands of wicked men and rise again the third day (8:31; 9:31; 10:33). This teaching was also given in the Gospels of Matthew (16:21; 17:22; 20:17–19), and Luke (9:22; 9:44; 17:25). Three mentions in each of the Synoptics indicates importance. It is also interesting to see the occasions on which he predicted his death and resurrection, and the fearful reaction of the disciples.

Whilst he did not speak explicitly of crucifixion,<sup>1</sup> it was inferred in his teaching his disciples to take up the Cross, daily. In Luke 24:26 he said to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, 'Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' Here he placed the Cross as a necessity for his glorification.

### **The Significance of the Transfiguration in Regard to the Cross**

There can be no doubt that the Transfiguration was an act which brought to the three disciples most vividly the innate glory of Christ and—may we say it?—of the man Jesus. The brilliance of the event must have deeply moved the three disciples present. They would have wished to share it with others, and especially with their fellow disciples, but Jesus told them to say nothing until his resurrection. What was the meaning of the Transfiguration? We simply know that his glory was made manifest to his disciples. We know it was the watershed of his ministry, and that from that point he set his face towards Jerusalem—the glory of the Cross, the Resurrection and Ascension. We know it was necessary for him to converse with the two glorified ones—Moses and Elijah—'concerning his *exodus* which he was to *accomplish* at Jerusalem'. His crucifixion was to be the *exodus* that this new Moses was to accomplish on the Cross to lead his people out of bondage into freedom (cf. John 8:31–36). Thinking in terms of Christ's suffering on the Cross, and particularly with Isaiah 52:14, 'As many were astonished at him—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of men', we can say, 'Here on the high mountain he was transfigured, that there on the high Cross he might be disfigured, that we who are so disfigured by sin might be transfigured into the likeness of his glory.' Nothing but the Cross could effect *this*.

### **The Necessity of the Cross in John's Gospel**

John's Gospel differs somewhat from the Synoptics. There is the consciousness of the coming Cross, without doubt, but the act of the Cross is that of glory—showing the glory of God and his own glory. Whilst he showed his glory—and thus the glory of the Father—in signs such as changing the water into wine (2:11) and raising Lazarus from the dead (11:4, 40), yet the Cross is undoubtedly the act of showing his own glory and that of the Father. In 7:37–39, he promised the gift of the Spirit, but this could not be given until he would be glorified. In this passage it would seem that his glorification must begin at the Cross and comes to fullness at the Ascension, but John might be saying the Cross alone was the time of his glorification. Support for this seems to come in two passages, the first being 12:23: 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified', and the next in 12:27–28, when he asked the Father to glorify His name. The Father replied, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again'. It appears that His having glorified His name can be seen in His words at the Baptism and the Transfiguration, for to glorify the Son is to glorify His own name. It may even mean that all the time of Christ's ministry the Father has been glorifying him.

The next and ultimate glorification by the Father must be the Cross, and then through the resurrecting and exalting of His Son. Even more is the Cross itself indicated as the act of glory in 13:31f.: 'Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; if God

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<sup>1</sup> In the predictions of Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33, Jesus does not use the word 'crucified', but simply 'will be killed' and 'condemned to death'.



is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once”’. It seems inescapable that this is the matter of the Cross, though by no means excepting the Resurrection and the Ascension. The principle of the Father glorifying the Son and the Son the Father is again evident. Calvin comments:

So whatever ignominy appears in the cross, which could bewilder believers, Christ testifies that the same cross is glorious to him. The immediately following clause, *And God is glorified in him*, is put in for confirmation. For it was a paradox that the glory of the Son of man arose from a death humanly ignominious and even accursed before God. He shows therefore how He would win glory from such a death—because He glorifies the Father. For in the cross of Christ, as in a splendid theatre, the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world. The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross, in which there was a wonderful change of things (*admirabilis rerum conversio*)—the condemnation of all men was manifested, sin was blotted out, salvation restored to men; in short, the whole world was renewed and all things restored to order.<sup>2</sup>

Unmistakable in regard to the Cross is John 17:1–5:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glory thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent. I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made.

His prayer is that the Father may glorify him (Christ) as the Son, so he, as the Son, may show forth the glory of the Father. Calvin says:

If it be objected that nothing could be less glorious than Christ’s death which was then at hand, I reply that in that death we see a boundless glory which is concealed from the ungodly. For there we know that by the expiation of sins the world has been reconciled to God, the curse blotted out and Satan vanquished.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear, then, that in John’s Gospel the Cross is the place of the glorification of the Father and the Son.

Linked with this matter of Christ being glorified *for* the Cross where he will glorify the Father, is Hebrews 2:9:

But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one.

Whilst most commentators see the glorification of Jesus as a result of his ‘suffering of death’, many others feel the construction of the verse means that he was crowned with glory and honour *for* ‘the suffering of death’. The main objection to this idea is that it does not seem to fit. For example, in Philippians 2:8–10 Jesus was highly exalted because he died the death of the Cross. In the light of the Johannine view of the Cross being the place and action of glory, Hebrews 2:9 fits perfectly.<sup>4</sup> It has been argued by some that the Transfiguration was the place where Jesus was crowned with glory and honour. Whatever the case may be, in Hebrews 2:9 the Johannine text certainly places the Crucifixion as the greatest manifestation of the glory of God in Christ’s ministry. This is not to except the glory of the Resurrection and the Ascension, and it is certainly not to put them in opposition to the glory of the Cross, for they are all of the one piece.

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<sup>2</sup> Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries, *The Gospel According to St John 11–21 and The First Epistle of John* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1959), p.68.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> For the argument see F. F. Bruce on the verse in his *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, N.I.C.O.T.N.T. (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964) pp. 37–39.

## Study 6: The Glory of the Cross—II

### THE ELEMENTS WHICH MAKE THE CROSS THE OBJECT OF GLORY

- (a) *The glory of the Cross is primarily moral.* What we mean is that the human race, being under the covenant which was innate in creation, is obligated by God's relational love to live in unity and love with Him, and thus to live in unity and love, mutually, as the human race. It is obliged by love to fulfil the commission God gave it at creation to be lord (God's vice-regent) over the creation and to be His covenant-partner in bringing the world to that climax or *telos* which He has for Man and the rest of creation, that is, of glorification. Because Man sinned against God in the Fall, he became the creature whose enemies thenceforth constituted sin, the flesh, Satan, the world and its evil, fallen, celestial powers (including demonic forces and idols), the law, the wrath of God and the conscience. Our point is that only the Cross could deal with all such enemies, as we shall see.
- (b) *Man's moral rebellion means he fell short of the glory of God, and the Cross is destined to bring forgiveness, regeneration, justification and sanctification to Man.* The Old Testament constantly sets forth the nature of God in His holiness and love. The attributes of righteousness, goodness and truth tell us that His covenant is moral, that is, its members are obligated by love to render full obedience to God's true law. In Exodus 34:6–7 the true glory God is shown to Moses and it is moral glory:

The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation'

The big question is, 'How can God forgive the sinning world of human creatures, without a universal sacrifice?' Also, 'How can the guilt of the world be righteously removed so that forgiveness and justification are not gratuitous?' The answer must be that God is the God of grace, that His covenant is of grace, and that Christ must bear the sin of the world, receiving its guilt into himself on the Cross and bearing the wrath of God which is not only on guilt, but is part of its outworking. When Jesus used the word 'must' (*dei*) in his predictions of the crucifixion—as in Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:32, and Luke 24:26, 44f. ('was it not necessary?')—it was because the redemption of humanity could not be achieved without the work of the Cross. Because the law—God's own law—demands the death of a sinner, then in order to exercise mercy, grace, steadfast love, faithfulness and to forgive the sinner, the Son must suffer death on the cross. God's love provides the propitiation which allows these elements of glory to so work that sinners 'are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith'. To put it in the words of Calvin in a statement quoted in our previous study:

If it be objected that nothing could be less glorious than Christ's death which was then at hand, I reply that in that death we see a boundless glory which is concealed from the ungodly. For there we know that by the expiation of sins the world has been reconciled to God, the curse blotted out and Satan vanquished.

Once we see this reason for Christ's suffering and the nature of that indispensable suffering then we understand every aspect of the Cross.<sup>1</sup> When it says, 'He bore our sins

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<sup>1</sup> There is a sense in which we understand nothing. The death is unique: never man suffered like this man. It is a mystery. Only the inner revelatory work of the Holy Spirit can lay open this mystery to us until we do see it and cry out for the wonder of it all.

in his body on the tree', 'He was made sin for us', 'The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all', 'God judged sin in the flesh [Christ's flesh]', 'God has set him forth as a propitiation', 'Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous', 'Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many', 'Christ . . . offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins', 'who loosed us from our sins by his blood'—along with many other such references to his suffering—then we see the moral glory of both the Father and the Son. We see, too, that the disfigurement caused by bearing Man's sin and guilt, brings transfiguration to the human spirit which had once been called 'My glory!' As we look at the Suffering One we are constrained to cry with Calvin, 'The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross'.

- (c) *The glory of the Cross lies also in the conflict which came to Christ through the visitation of all evil powers.* In John 12:31 Jesus had said, 'Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world cast out.' In 14:30–31 he had spoken of the coming of the prince of this world, Satan, and that he would take up the conflict with him. In 16:11 he spoke of the condemnation which was coming to the prince of this world. He said to those who came to apprehend him on the last night, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness' (Luke 2:53). The Cross, then, was the arena of the battle against all evil, and Jesus suffered deeply from the onslaughts of evil powers under Satan. They had opposed him from the moment of his Baptism and throughout his ministry. We know from Hebrews 2:14–15 that men and women 'through fear of death were subject to lifetime bondage', and that the 'accuser' (diabolos) was—and is—Satan. It appears from Colossians 2:14–15 that the evil principalities and powers used the law to keep their victims in bondage. Psalms 22 and 69—both considered to be Messianic Psalms—portray the dreadful conflict the crucified Christ had with these evil powers. In them he is subjected to humiliating conditions, especially in Psalm 22 where evil powers rush on him like 'Many bulls . . . strong bulls of Bashan'. These 'encompass me . . . surround me, they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion'. He cries, 'Yea, dogs are round about me, a company of evil doers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and my feet . . . they stare and gloat over me'. The end of Psalm 22 shows his victory over the evil powers, and likewise in Psalm 69 the sufferer becomes victorious. We see, then, that the glory of the battle was the victory won over the enemies of fallen Man, namely sin, the flesh, death, Satan, the world powers, the law and its curse, the defiled conscience, the idols and the wrath of God. This victory was won by Christ bearing the guilt of human sin which is the very violation of the Divine holiness. Fear of death—endemic in the human race—was borne by him as he 'tasted death for every man'. Regarding the law he 'became curse for us', that the judgment of the law upon all sin might be expended upon him. It was this propitiatory act which took the guilt and expended and exhausted it in unspeakable suffering. The suffering of degradation, the taking into himself the pollution of all humanity, and the exhausting of it in his suffering is beyond our conception. The natural man shrinks back from the story of it, preferring to call it 'scandalous' or 'intellectual nonsense'. Well he might, for it confronts him as one day it will judge him with finality. What needs to be kept in mind all the time is that 'the god of this world'—the one Jesus called 'the prince of this world'—has as his aim the blinding of Man's eyes to the glory of God and God's decree for Man's glorification (cf. I Cor. 2:7). Christ at the Cross as 'the Lord of glory' fought for the glorification of Man. He won it there—the ultimate and irreversible transfiguration of humanity.

- (d) *The glory of the Cross lies in the love action of Christ to win and purify his Bride, his people his body.* The motif of the Bride and the Bridegroom is strong in the Old Testament. It is there in the Prophets, and many commentators link it with The Song of Solomon. It was Jonathan Edwards who spoke much of a 'Marriage theology'. It is remarkable how the death of the Cross for the Bride's sake, salvation and sanctification is neglected, yet Ephesians 5:25–27 says:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself, in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Christ's death upon the Cross is for his own people, the church, 'Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'. In Acts 20:28 Paul spoke of this matter, 'Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son'. We will need to speak more of this when we look at the fruits of the Cross.<sup>2</sup> The vast love required to bear the sin and evil of all members of the Bride is immeasurable, is beyond human computing.

- (e) *The glory of the Cross lies in Christ's personal and intimate death for each person.* Sometimes the Cross is thought of as a work which has been done apart from the sinner, something effected over him as for the mass of humanity, a block action without the intimate, personal relationship. In Galatians 2:20 Paul wrote, 'I have been crucified with Christ', and spoke of 'the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me'. He went on to talk about his present one-to-one intimacy with Christ. This ties in very much with the figure of Christ the Good Shepherd. As Shepherd, he knows his sheep by name, and they know him. He walks with them through the valley of the shadow of death, though not 'the valley of death', for there is none such. This Shepherd lays down his life for the flock, fighting the thief and the wolf (Satan), which is why death does not come to the sheep (cf. John 11:25). At the risking of repeating some material set out above, it must be said that the intimacy of Christ with each person on the Cross opens the most terrible and awful reality of sin in all its wretchedness, its horror of evil, its rebellion, its pollution and its perversity. This Christ suffered in his own person as he took the totality of guilt and worked it out in a propitiation which escapes a complete description.

## CONCLUSION

We see now that God, in dealing with the sin and guilt which destroys Man, setting him free from Satan and the evil powers, loving and redeeming him, sanctifying and perfecting him through the Cross, shows His glory in the Cross.

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<sup>2</sup> For comments on 'marriage theology' see *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* by Robert W. Jenson (O. U. P., New York, 1992), pp. 42–43. Also my *The Profound Mystery* (NCPI, 1995), pp. 51–60, and *The Miscellanies a—500* by Jonathan Edwards (Yale U. P., 1994), various references.

## **Study 7: The Glory of the Resurrection—I**

### **THE LINK OF THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

A clear link of the work of the Cross and what we may call 'the work of the resurrection' is found in I Corinthians 15:3–4, 'For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures'. The Cross and Resurrection are coupled to make 'the gospel' (15:1), and both are 'in accordance with the scriptures'. The two, together, are of 'first importance', in fact the importance is balanced, both the death and the resurrection are 'of first importance'. This principle is found in Romans 4:25, where Christ 'was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification'. In salvation the works of the Cross and Resurrection are wedded.

As we set out the whole work of the Cross as the action of the glory of the Father, as also the glory of the Son and of the Spirit, we can also argue here that the work of the Resurrection is also a work of the glory of the Father—he 'was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father' (Rom. 6:4). For the moment we will leave the phrase 'the glory of the Father' and see elsewhere that it was the Father who raised him. In I Peter 1:21 the Apostle wrote that 'God . . . raised him from the dead, and gave him glory'. Leaving aside for the moment the statements in the Epistles that God raised him from the dead, we have twenty-one statements of the Resurrection in the Book of Acts, eleven of which state explicitly that it was God who raised him from the dead.<sup>1</sup>

To go back to Romans 6:4, the emphasis here is on by—or *through*—'the glory of the Father', which can be taken to mean that majesty and power by which God rules all things and effects His will. It is thus a manifestation or action of that glory—a manifestation to be taken into account: it has happened in history! It is not a development from one stage of humanity to another. At the same time the word 'Father' speaks of Christ's Sonship, and so we can speak of a 'relational glory'—the Father raises the Son by His glory: it is in the interests of Divine Fatherly glory to raise the Son. In passing we note that in Romans 8:18–30 there is a working of God to bring about the glory of 'the sons', which is linked in principle with resurrection—'the redemption of our bodies'—but our focus is not on this parallel for the moment. Here, in Romans 6:4, 'the glory of the Father' is to bring to fullness the Sonship of Jesus.

### **JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD IS AN EXTRAORDINARY MATTER**

Because of our Christian history, theology and creeds, the resurrection of Jesus seems to be natural enough. That God's power could do such a thing many assume without thought. Also many who are reasonably well-versed in Christian doctrine assume that in the Old Testament, thinking concerning a resurrection was general belief. This was not the case. Immortality was not ascribed to Man.<sup>2</sup> Even being in the image of God did not presuppose human immortality. God is God and Man is Man. God alone has immortality. That God may

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:24, 31, 32; 3:15; 4:2, 10, 33; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 34, 37; 17:31.

<sup>2</sup> This sort of statement is often furiously denied and debated by Bible readers who rightly believe human beings are never, finally, extinguished. Not being extinguished does not denote immortality but continuance of existence. I Timothy 6:15–16 states that God alone has immortality. II Timothy 1:10 speaks of Christ 'who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light *through the gospel*'. God gives eternal life to those who believe on Christ but not to others. There will be a resurrection.



give immortality to a person may be thought possible by the translations of Enoch and Elijah—in regard to whom nothing of resurrection is mentioned—but a definite conclusion must be suspended. We would be surprised to discover how much our thinking has coloured our view of how we think the Jews thought or ought to have thought. Given that a number of Jews believed in the resurrection of the dead, this does not represent them all, and we may have to rethink the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and in particular those passages which seem to speak of a resurrection from the dead.<sup>3</sup>

However, in I Corinthians 15:3–4, Paul does not say that the gospel’s second element was ‘the resurrection’ which was to be believed, but that Christ ‘was buried, that he was raised . . . in accordance with the scriptures’. In other words, it is Christ’s resurrection which was to be believed and not a general resurrection. So in Romans 10:9 it is stated, ‘if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved’. It is the resurrection of Christ which was to be believed. Doubtless the truth of a general resurrection may well depend upon his being raised, but the idea of a general resurrection is not the point with which we are dealing here.

Despite the fact that Jesus had at least three times referred to the reality that he would be killed and rise again—(Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34)—the disciples did not expect his resurrection.<sup>4</sup> Whilst the four Gospel accounts give details of that event, they also show the disciples’ unbelief that it had happened until Christ appeared to two of them on the road to Damascus, to more of them in the upper room, and then, eight days later, to Thomas.<sup>5</sup>

The resurrection in Christ’s case is not a resuscitation, as was the case with the reviving to life of the boys in both Elijah and Elisha’s cases, or the raising from the dead of Jairus’ daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, or Lazarus. They were raised from death, only to eventually, die again. In Romans 6:9 Paul writes, ‘We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him’.

## CHRIST’S RESURRECTION GLORY

We saw, above, that Christ was ‘raised from the dead by the glory of the Father’. In Ephesians the Father is ‘the Father of glory’. As we have noted, His glory is His power by which he raised Christ, but it is a moral power, the power which will not let His Holy One see corruption. Psalm 16:9–10 has, ‘Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul [Heb. ‘my glory’] rejoices; my body also dwells secure. For thou does not give me up to Sheol, or let thy godly one see the Pit’. In Acts 2:27, Peter quotes Psalm 16:10 as, ‘For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption’, and in Acts 13:35, Paul quotes the same verse as ‘Thou wilt not let thy Holy One see corruption’. Peter and Paul quote the LXX. Paul’s comment on the verse in 13:37, ‘but he whom God raised up saw no corruption’, seems to infer that Christ’s physical body did not corrupt. He said that David ‘saw corruption’. The fact of the resurrection is not dependent upon the mode of resurrection, but the mode would be dependent upon the act of the Father’s glory, that is, as to whether the body experienced corruption or not.

In Luke 24:26 Jesus asked the two disciples, ‘Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ Paul and Barnabas later used this sort of argument (Acts 17:3). Paul’s statement in Romans 1:4–5, ‘designated Son of God in power

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the article ‘Jesus and the Resurrection’ by Ian Pennicook in the NCTM 1998 Pastors’ School notes under the title of ‘The Apostolic Faith in Today’s World’, pp. 20–27.

<sup>4</sup> There are references to the general resurrection from the dead by Jesus but these three references are to his own resurrection.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 24:22–24, John 20:8, and I Corinthians 15:4 seem to indicate there was some sort of belief in Jesus’ resurrection, but it was not conclusive until his appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus, the ten in the upper room, and the later appearance to Thomas.

according to the Spirit of holiness<sup>6</sup>, by his resurrection from the dead' certainly speaks of Christ being glorified as to his designation and position. The 'enter into his glory' of Luke 24:26 can mean that his body was glorified, that he received his high position of authority as Paul elaborates it in Ephesians 1:19–23. Glory is always associated with authority and rule. Even so, our minds are directed to what Paul calls 'his body of glory' in Philippians 3:21. Theologians have debated whether the body which Christ had after his resurrection should just be designated 'resurrection body' rather than called a glorified body. That it was a true human body those who saw Christ risen could testify. For this reason it has been surmised that either Jesus' resurrection body was not yet glorified, that he had to ascend to the Father before that would happen, or that 'the body of glory' was seen as a resurrected body, and perhaps its full glory hidden<sup>7</sup> in order to accommodate to the situation where he was seen by his viewers. We know that on the one hand Jesus appeared in a locked room, and on the other he ate a piece of broiled fish (Luke 24:42–43), so that the matter of resurrection glory is still a mystery.

At the same time we must consider that the act and event of the Cross was the actuation and revelation of the glory of God, of the Triune God, and in the matter of glory the Resurrection was one with the Cross, as it was also one with both the Ascension and the Son's reigning at the right hand of the Father. This seems to accord with the statement, 'not yet glorified' of John 7:39; that is, that by the time the Father and the Son poured out the Spirit, Jesus was fully glorified. In John's Gospel the event of the Cross is certainly the revelation of God's glory, but the revelation is not limited to that event.

What must have struck the apostles and others with them was the glory of the Resurrection, not simply in terms of Christ's body being enhanced with radiance, but the incredible fact that he had overcome death by the work of the Father, and now 'opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers'. It was not only the vindication of God's moral glory which had worked successfully at the Cross, but the expression of God's moral glory which was effecting the Messiahship and Lordship of His Son, the Man, Jesus. Jesus was not Lord after the events of the Cross and Resurrection, but Messiah and Lord by these events. His victory was the outworking of the glory of God filling all things, that is, the rule of the Father and the Son had now been shown to be over all things. Believing Man could now see and share the glory of God.

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<sup>6</sup> Christ could be spoken of here as having been raised by the Spirit of holiness if the term does not mean 'his—Christ's—spirit of holiness'. Romans 8:10–13 does not say the Spirit raised Christ from the dead, but the remainder of the verses states that people will be raised by the Spirit. Generally it is 'God' or 'the Father' who is said to have resurrected Christ. In the three Markan references to the Cross and Resurrection it is simply said that Jesus would rise from the dead.

<sup>7</sup> Did his body have to show visible glory such as happened on the Mount of Transfiguration before it could be called 'the body of glory'? This does not seem to be the case.

## **Study 8: The Glory of the Resurrection—II**

### **THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION FOR MAN AND HIS GLORY**

We remember that the disciples had been told by Jesus that he would rise. Hence the message by the two men in dazzling raiment to the women at the tomb, 'Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified,<sup>1</sup> and on the third day rise' (Luke 24:6–7). When the women told the disciples, 'these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them'.

It is now a matter of history that millions have believed in the Resurrection. When its truth comes freshly to us, we can scarcely believe it, so significant is it. The terror and dread of death hanging over the human race for millenniums of time is now no longer a powerful factor where the resurrection is believed. If we were palaeographers, those who deal with ancient writings and inscriptions, we could read the beliefs and rituals concerning human death and none of them could give humanity hope.<sup>2</sup> That is why we say the resurrection of Christ is dynamic and redolent with hope and assurance for believers. The rotting corpse no longer worries us in the way it did. Death is swallowed up for ever (Isa. 25:8; I Cor. 15:55–56). The thinking of the person of faith is transformed. It is all glory ahead. Like Christ we shall have a 'body of glory'. We have seen, time and again, that human beings long for glory. The loss of original glory was painful for Man. With Christ, not only is original glory restored, but also the higher, richer, fuller glory that God had planned for us (I Cor. 2:7) is now our hope, and hope gives great strength to Christ's body—the church—and to us as persons looking to His predestined end.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN IT**

#### **The Union of the Believing People With the Resurrected Christ Means Moral Power for Holy and Righteous Living**

Because Christ is the living one, so there is the community belonging to him and finding its origin and its life in him. We do not mean that Christ's death, burial and resurrection are only imputed or accredited to believing Man, but that Man was taken up into the cross, burial and resurrection of Christ. He was made a participator in them.

A least three passages attest to the fact we have just set forth; Romans 6:1–10, Galatians 2:19–20, and Colossians 3:1–4. What we gather from them is what is stated in II Corinthians 5:14, 'we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died'. Christ gathered up all humanity in the Cross, and suffered not only *for* them but also *as* them. Likewise he suffered the death humanity should have suffered for sin, *as* them. He also rose not only for them but *as* them. All of this fits with the doctrine of Christ as the New, Second—final—Adam in the New Testament. Romans 5:12–21 shows that Christ is one who obtained 'much more' than Adam and all he did. Adam lost the glory but Christ has regained it for Man. Paul

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<sup>1</sup> In the three predictions of the Cross by Christ to the disciples, the word 'crucified' had not been used.

<sup>2</sup> Morris West in his book *Eminence* (Harper Collins, 1998) p. 80, has a palaeologist speaking of his word:

It's one of the most arid fields of scholarship—one of the most lonely too. Everything refers back to the past. The sign-posts all point down dead-end streets, to crumbling temples and forgotten gods. My own self has become a very dusty habitat.

in the three passages quoted makes moral value from them. What has become foremost in our understanding of God's glory—and Man's glory, for that matter—is the moral nature of glory. We saw that in accordance with God's glory shown in Exodus 34:6–7, the work of Christ on the cross was a work-out, practically speaking, of that moral glory of God. Christ had to suffer the guilt of Man, Man's guilt before the holy law and the Holy God, and so the work of justification on which God's forgiveness is based was no mere forensic manipulation, but the painful working out of sinful Man's condemnation before a Holy God, so that humanity's acquittal from eternal judgment could be effected in the truly moral way. This moral work-out we saw was in the vicarious suffering of Christ for guilty, sinful humanity.

Now, in the Crucifixion and Resurrection Man is wholly set free. 'He was delivered for our sins and raised for our justification.' Romans 6:1–14 shows that he who has died with Christ has been justified from sin (6:7), so that now the power of sin has been broken because its power lay in human guilt, guilt that has to do with the condemnation of the law. Thus the one who has died, been buried and raised with Christ now has moral glory, for sin shall no longer have (the right to have) dominion over him (6:12–14). He is no longer under (the condemnation of) law but he is under grace. The life he now lives he lives by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave himself for him (Gal. 2:20). This is part of what Paul calls 'the power of his resurrection' (Phil. 3:10).

### **Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead Brings His People under His Living Lordship**

The power of God which raised Jesus from the dead was the same power that:

made him sit at his [God's] right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all (Eph. 1:20–23).

Christ is glorified at the right hand of God and the power of his moral victory is over all things, and this is, among other things, 'for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all'. In this sense we can speak of moral power for his people in the task of proclaiming the gospel of grace, and living as a community in grace. Because Christ is Lord nothing can prevail against his church.

In practice it means that the members of Christ—his church—can know peace amidst the conflicts that go on in the world, in history, and even in their own hearts. Christ has overcome Satan, the world and its evil powers. What is more he is sharing his resurrection authority and power with his people. The church as the bride or wife of Christ is his helpmeet. She uses that power to assist him in carrying out the plan of God for all history. It is when we realise this freedom from bondage and oppression that the majesty of the Resurrection grips our minds and hearts. We are the beneficiaries of his Cross–Resurrection work. We are one in union with his person. As his bride we can look forward to the ultimate marriage union, for then the Bride will have 'the [whole] glory of God' (Rev. 21:11).

### **Christ's Resurrection Secures for His People the Fruits of the Cross**

We keep noting that Romans 4:25 links the work of the Cross and the Resurrection together, as though the two were the one work for salvation, he 'was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification'. Isaiah 53:11 has, 'he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied'. The fruit of the Cross is the forgiveness, justification, sanctification, perfection and glorification of God's elect, won by it—by him—as also the fulfilment of the covenant, and the victory over all evil powers so that they were defeated

for ever. These are monumental matters, worthy of our continuous contemplation and understanding, since they influence our lives so deeply. Again we note this is wholly the moral glory achieved by Christ's work of the Atonement. We may not see radiance, light and Shekinah glory but we are living in it.

### **The Resurrection of Christ Makes Christ Intercessor for God's People**

In Romans 8:33–34, Paul shows that without the Resurrection, God's people would have no intercessor for them. They would be defeated by Satan:

*Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?*

Hebrews 4:14–16 and 7:23–25 links with this idea in that it is the victorious Christ, raised to God's right hand, who is our intercessor. Whilst it is by him as our Intercessor that we come to God (cf. Isa. 53:12; Heb. 2:17; 4:14–16), it is also by him that we are continually preserved from the Evil One and his powers every moment of our lives. He guards us in all our moments and his presence at the right hand of the Father is the guarantee that through him we are more than conquerors.

### **CONCLUSION: THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**

We have seen that the fact of this One Man risen from the dead is the basis for all who believe in Christ to have implanted in them the whole matter of hope. Hope is based upon the work of the Cross and its fruits. It is also based on the resurrection of Christ, his ascension and reigning in glory. The following quote links all that the New Testament tells us concerning hope. If we examine these objects of hope in their several contexts we will find they link with glory, and are to do with the eschatological glory planned for God's elect:

*The references to the objects of hope are, 'the hope of glory'; 'the hope [of] the resurrection'; 'our hope of sharing the glory of God'; 'the hope of righteousness [justification]'; 'the hope of salvation'; 'Christ Jesus our hope'; 'our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ'; 'the hope of his calling'; along with 'his glorious inheritance in the saints'; 'the hope of the gospel'; 'the hope of eternal life'. It is because God is 'the God of hope' and our hope is 'laid up in heaven' that hope 'hopes all things', and even 'in hope believes against hope'. As Paul says, 'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men to be pitied'. It is hope that is for here and eternity—how could it be otherwise and be hope?—for Christ himself is our hope, and within us (among us) he is 'the hope of glory'. That is why we are enjoined to 'seize the hope that is before us' and to 'hold fast the confession of our hope'.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Because we wished this particular paragraph not to be interrupted by references so that straight reading of it might prove more effective, we have stated the references in this footnote. They can be checked against the text. They are Colossians 1:27; Acts 23:6; 24:15; cf. 28:20; Romans 5:2; Galatians 5:5; I Thessalonians 5:8; Titus 1:2; 3:7; I Timothy 1:1; Titus 2:13; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4; I Thessalonians 2:12; II Peter 1:3–5; Colossians 1:23; Titus 1:2; 3:7; cf. I Peter 5:10; Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:5; I Corinthians 13:7; Romans 4:18; I Corinthians 15:9; 10:23; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 6:18; 10:23 The quotation and footnote are taken from the August study of the NCTM Monday Pastors' Study Group, entitled, 'Glory and the Apostolic Proclamation'.



## **Study 9: The Ascension, Session and the Glory of God**

### **THE GLORY OF THE CROSS, RESURRECTION, ASCENSION AND REIGNING**

John tells us, 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father' (John 1:14). The glory of the Son is not in one event—the Incarnation—but relates to all events, his Incarnation, his Ministry, the Cross, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and his Session—reigning—at the right hand of God. If we think of the glory as we have been thinking in terms of moral being and moral action, then we see all these events constitute the action of the glory by which the Son manifests the glory of God and himself. We have been emphatic on saying the work of the Cross is the special manifestation of glory, and it is certain that this is the case, but the Cross must be seen in its place in the total events. None is authentic without the others.

In our study on the Resurrection we saw it is difficult to differentiate it from the ascension and heavenly session. John 7:37–39 speaks of the Holy Spirit to be given when Christ was glorified, and not before. His glorification might be deduced to have happened prior to the Ascension from the passage of John 20:22–23, where Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. It seems certain, also, that in some sense they received the Spirit then. Even so, the giving of the Spirit as spoken of in John 14:15–17, 26, 15:26, and 16:7–15, does seem to be of larger nature than this.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly we have Pentecost conditioning our primary thinking as regards glorification and John was present in this event and so carried its effects into his apostolic ministry. Our main point here is that resurrection, ascension and reigning are certainly all involved in the glorifying of the Son by the Father.

### **THE GLORIFICATION OF CHRIST BY THE RESURRECTION–ASCENSION**

#### **Luke and the Ascension in Luke–Acts**

Luke 9:51 is quite intriguing: 'When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem'. It is interesting that Luke traces the movement of Christ in his ministry to the Ascension, and this could be some indication of the importance of the Ascension in the mind of Luke and the early church.

We saw in Luke 24:26 that Christ asked the two disciples, 'Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' Here 'glory'—Christ's glorification—could stand for resurrection or ascension or both. In the three predictions of the Cross and the Resurrection the term 'glory' is not mentioned. The Mark ending of 16:9–20 speaks of the Ascension: 'So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God'. Matthew 28:18 has 'And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me"', and this surely is speaking of glorification, since authority and ruling are part of true glory. Luke 24:50–51 has, 'Then he

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<sup>1</sup> The reference to the Holy Spirit in I John (2:20, passim; 3:24; 4:13; 5:6–8) conform to the teaching of John chs 14–16, but point to a more universal action than that of John 20:22–23 which seems to be confined to the apostles. If we include the Book of Revelation in Johannine teaching of the Spirit then John's pneumatology is quite expansive.

led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.’ In Acts 1:9–11 both the Ascension and the return of Christ are described:

And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’

In Acts 3:13, Peter told the large crowd which had gathered at the time of the healing of the lame man, ‘The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him’. Peter does not say whether ‘glorified’ referred to the Resurrection or glorification in heaven or both. Later, in I Peter 1:21 he wrote, ‘Through him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God’. Paul, as we saw in our study on resurrection, often referred to the resurrection of Christ, and in I Timothy 3:16, he describes Christ’s life and ministry:

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion:

He was manifested in the flesh,  
vindicated in the Spirit,  
seen by angels,  
preached among the nations,  
believed on in the world,  
taken up in glory.

That Christ who had ascended, possessed glorified humanity, was seen by Stephen at his death, ‘But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God”’. Paul, too, saw this glory when Christ confronted him on the road to Damascus—‘a light from heaven flashed about him’, ‘a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me’, ‘I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me’. These descriptions in Acts speak of extraordinary visual glory. In Philippians 3:21, Paul wrote of Christ being in heaven having a ‘glorious body’. In I Corinthians 15:49 he speaks of ‘the man of heaven’ as against ‘the man of dust’. As we shall see, the glorification of believers depends upon the glorification of Christ by the Father. What is clear is that Paul was a personal witness to the glorified Christ. Without doubt his understanding of Christ’s glorification sprang not only from the prophetic Scriptures, but from his personal sight of the glorified Christ on the road to Damascus, to say nothing of the impact that Stephen’s witness to Christ glorified made upon him and which so enraged him.

### **John and the Ascension and the Glory of Christ**

As early as John 1:51, Christ as the Son of man has to do with traffic of angels from and to heaven. This is a reminder to us of Jacob’s experience in Genesis 28:12, but in Jesus’ statement he as Son of man determines the rising and descending of angels.<sup>2</sup> In 3:13 Jesus said, ‘No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man’. This is a saying difficult to explain, but the inference is that none can ascend but he who was there, in heaven. In 6:62 Jesus asked his disciples, ‘Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?’ The context partly explains the verse and we shall not

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<sup>2</sup> The significance of the rising and of declining of angels is seen by many to be the rising and declining of nations over whom the celestial creatures are ‘folk-angels’. This is an ancient Jewish interpretation of Jacob’s dream. God reassured Jacob that He, the Lord, was Israel’s angel.

seek to develop its meaning. For our purposes it shows that Jesus was pointing to his ascension and the significance of his own eternal life as the bread of life which would always be available to believing Man. Jesus often spoke of his departure from the disciples and of his coming to them again<sup>3</sup> so that we assume the Ascension is part of the 'going' of which he spoke. These passages fit with other things he has said about ascending to heaven.

Important is John 20:17, where Jesus spoke to Mary Magdalene, 'Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'. Mary was to realise that Jesus did not come to her as he had in their former relationship but that he was an ascending Lord. She was not to resume that way of thinking about him. We can, perhaps, detect the fact of his glorification that had resulted from his resurrection and would be whole, perhaps, by his ascension.

### **The Ascension in the Epistles and the Revelation**

That the Ascension was natural is taken as a reality, but its happening is not described. The witnesses of Jesus are those who saw his ministry from the time of the baptism of John 'until he was taken up from us' (Acts 1:22), so that it included the forty days' teaching. That by the Ascension he is 'both Lord and Christ' is assumed. He is in heaven and from heaven he will appear. This is the understanding of the Epistles. His intercession for his people is part of the work of his session at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 4:16; 7:25). Being seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus is a theme Paul pursues in Ephesians chapter 2. In chapter 1 he has spoken of Christ being raised above all other ruling powers. In chapter 4 Paul speaks of Christ descending and then ascending 'that he might fill all things', one more significant meaning of the Ascension. We saw in John and Acts 1 that not until his ascension had taken place could he and the Father send forth the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 4 the ascended Jesus is said to 'give gifts to men'. He is the great cosmic Ruler. Hebrews chapter 1 is studded with references to Psalms 2, 45 and 110, all of which refer to his ascension and reigning at the right hand of God. Again, Paul also sees Christ as active in his session at God's right hand as this work is described in I Corinthians 15:24–28. His glory in heaven is an active glory, not a resting one: Stephen saw him standing at God's right hand. Because of the Cross he was 'highly exalted', but his exaltation is to a further work, that of defeating evil and fulfilling God's plan for creation. It will be from that glory, with his own heavenly glory, that Christ will come in his parousia and, this again, is to effect the Father's intention for all history.

In the Revelation we have the opening chapter in which Christ is shown in unutterable glory, not only in his appearance but as 'King of kings and Lord of lords'. His glory determines all things including the works and judgments of the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of wrath. The eschatological glory of creation is the very glory of the active 'Lord of glory', Christ himself.

## **THE ASCENSION AND US**

The intention in our studies is not to cover all aspects of the works of the Triune God in reference to creation, redemption and the final glorification, but rather to see them from the point of the glory of God and Man. The Pauline Epistles especially see Christ's people as having been crucified, dead and buried with Christ and then raised and presently seated with him in his glory. Their lives are hid with Christ in God, and that is a mystery we cannot wholly unveil. It does tell us, however, that on the one hand we are seated with Christ, and on the other we are too look upwards, look to where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. We are yet to rise physically from the dead, and to ascend with him as spoken about in

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<sup>3</sup> See John 14:1–11, 18, 25–31; 16:4–7, 16–22; 17:13.

I Corinthians 15:51–56 and I Thessalonians 4:13–18. The process of progressive glorification is going on in us, now. We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is the face of the Man incarnate, resurrected and glorified. Our image is being transformed into his image, the image who is the new Adam, and the new Adam is seated in heaven, all glorious. This rich vein of truth tells us how powerful is his ascension and session. It is as though the glory flows continually from the throne. When we remind ourselves of the nature of what we have called ‘moral glory’, then that is the way it would have to be.

## **Study 10: The Present Glory and Glorification of Redeemed Man—I**

### **INTRODUCTION: MAN IN GLORY INITIALLY, PRESENTLY AND ESCHATOLOGICALLY**

We have seen that Man as created had glory. We have also seen that despite his fall and loss of glory God holds him—as it were—to live as though in glory. His fall is not recognised as essentially part of his created self. Man is still called to fulfil the original mandate of Genesis 1:28f. This is because Man is ever under God's everlasting covenant, though he deny that and profess himself to be ignorant of it. With the coming of Christ and his work, and then with the coming of the Holy Spirit and his work, believing Man has a restoration of glory.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately Man will be wholly glorified with what we call 'eschatological glory'. That glory will not be simply a mild *reflection* of 'Who and What He is', but the very *radiation* of all that, because our image is *in the Son* (II Cor. 3:18) who is the very radiation of God Himself. In previous studies we looked at the glory of both God and Man. Without knowing the glory of God we cannot understand the glory of Man. Now, for many reasons we need to enlarge our view of Man's glory and see how he lives *now* in that glory. Man's glory as God's image and glory (I Cor. 11:7) means he is to 'fill up the earth', that is, he is to possess it all, filling it with the glory God has given him—or, as we say, Edenising it. He is vice-regent to God's Kingship over creation. It is one thing to have a mandate to glorify the earth, but it is another to have the innate capacity to do so. The ability to do so only comes when Man is subject to his King, and dependent upon Him. God's glory rose on Man at creation and equipped him for his task. Psalm 8 shows all of this, explaining that only for a little while was he made 'a little lower than the angels', or 'a little less than God'.

#### **Living in Glory Is Human Fullness**

When we are truly informed of the glory of God and Man, then in hindsight we regret the Fall. We think how wonderfully well-off was Man whilst living in the glory. It meant living in what we have called 'the moral glory of God'. We need to point ourselves and others back to that original glory and to seek its restoration in full. Yet the glory of Man was not a mere accompaniment to his living, for God had designed him to be fulfilled, in the ultimate, *beyond* what he was when created. We have observed that Man was always a 'becoming' creature, never to be himself fully until the *telos*. In losing his created glory Man lost the prospect of his eschatological glory. Later we will discuss what is Man's eschatological glory, but for the present we will observe that it will be greater than his created glory. What we must keep in mind is what we observed before, namely that God still holds Man to his original glory, so to speak. He does not let Man off the original mandate or His relationship with him in the creational covenant. God makes His full moral demands of Man, no matter how much he appears to be fallen and, so, bereft of substantial glory.

#### **Man Brought into Glory in the Present, in the Now-time**

Now we come to the heart of our study of glory, namely that living, believing Man is in a state of glory and glorification *in the present*. This is the matter of both our experience of present glory and knowing the prolepsis of future glory. In Romans 3:23—'all have sinned and fall short

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<sup>1</sup> We will not attempt to define that 'restoration', but leave the question, 'Was his glory a restored one, or is it a final glorification promised and certain, but one which is now developed 'from one stage of glory to another'. We will let the whole of this present study endeavour to give the answer.



of the glory of God’—Paul sums up most of what he has argued in Romans 1:18 to 3:22. ‘All’ means both Jew and Gentile. It includes his Romans 5:12 ‘all men sinned’; that is, in the original sin of Adam, and then in each person’s history, none has lived without sinning and falling short of God’s glory. We have seen that original sin and habitual sinning does not divest humanity from being ‘the image and glory of God’, but all are culpable for falling short of this ontological state. Paul has talked about ‘those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality’, and says God will give them eternal life (Rom. 2:7). He says, there will be ‘glory and honour and peace for every one who does good’. It is pointless to ask, ‘Who are these people?’, for it must be those whom God has initiated into seeking Him and His glory.

In the passage of Romans 3:24–26, Paul disclosed the way in which humanity can be rescued from its sin and sin’s judgment. It is by the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, for by this those who believe are justified. This is amplified in Romans 5:5–11, where Paul concludes that sinners have been given ‘reconciliation’ through Christ’s timely death. It can be assumed that the ‘falling short’ of God’s glory is now made up in the redemption that comes to Man ‘through faith in his blood’. Talk in other places of ‘new birth’, ‘regeneration’, and ‘new creation’ are indicators that the glory has been restored. Man may now proceed in glory.

## **THE PRESENT TIME OF THE NEW COVENANT AND GRACE IS THE TIME OF GLORY**

We mean by this that this age in which we live, the age before the coming new age, is the age in which the action of God’s glorification of us commences. Paul really brings this out in full in II Corinthians chapters 3 and 4. In 3:4–6 he speaks of the apostolic band as being ‘competent to be ministers of a new covenant’. He speaks against a mere written code, but exalts the ministry of the Spirit in communicating the New Covenant. He and the writer of the Book of Hebrews are particular in opening up the nature and power of the New Covenant. We come to his exposition of this freedom and glory in 3:7–18 (the key to it is 4:6 where he speaks of ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’):

Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses’ face because of its brightness, fading as this was, will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendor? For if there was splendor in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed it in splendor. Indeed, in this case, what once had splendor has come to have no splendor at all, because of the splendor that surpasses it. For if what faded away came with splendor, what is permanent must have much more splendor.

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor. But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

In this passage Paul speaks of ‘the dispensation of death’, that is, the dispensation of the law; and of ‘the dispensation of life’, that is, of the new covenant, the dispensation of grace. It is a fact that in the Old Testament the law was given with much glory at Mt Sinai, and we need to remember this.<sup>2</sup> It is observable that the ‘dispensation of grace’ was ushered in by Christ, though without it having recognised outward and discernible glory. All the grace-action of Christ was passed by without the world recognising the great event, so intent was Man upon fostering his own glory. John records, ‘For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through

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<sup>2</sup> Beside the Exodus chapters 24, 33 and 34 where the glory at Mt Sinai is portrayed, we have the beautiful passage of Deuteronomy 33:1–5. Paul speaks with a certain awe of ‘the giving of the law’ in Romans 9:4.

Jesus Christ' (1:17). Paul is saying that the brilliance of splendour which marked the giving of the law has been vastly surpassed by the dispensation of grace.

### **The Glory That Fades and the Glory That Does Not**

Going on to the matter of present, abiding glory, Paul says in II Corinthians 3:12–16 that when Moses was in the Presence of God his countenance grew glorious, and when he came from that Presence to the presence of the people he had to veil his face for the shame that the glory was a fading one. This veil has been passed on to the people who read the law. They have a veil over their minds which does not make for seeing God's glory, but those who turn to the Lord have the veil taken away. In verses 17–18, he comes to the crux of the matter. Whilst these two verses are much debated by exegetes, it would seem that the essence of the matter is as follows. When one turns to the Lord then the veil which blinds a person to the glory of God is taken away. The hindrance to seeing the Lord is the veil which is there because 'the written code kills' (3:6), and the glory of the Lord is not therefore seen in the dispensation of law. Because this present dispensation is 'the dispensation of the Spirit' (3:8), then the One known as 'the LORD' back in Exodus 34:29–35 is here—in the dispensation of grace—the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Lord. Elsewhere in the New Testament it is the Holy Spirit who is associated with the new and continuing freedom of the Christian (cf. Rom. 7:6; 8:1–11; Gal. 5:1–5, 13–26). He is also associated with glorifying Christ (John 16:14: cf. I Cor. 12:3).

Here, in II Corinthians 3:17, he is called 'the Spirit of the Lord'. It would seem then in 3:18, that 'the Lord who is the Spirit' could be a term in which 'Lord' may be used as an adjective, thus we could say, 'the Sovereign Spirit',<sup>3</sup> or 'the Spirit, who is Lord'. If this exegesis is correct then the one by whom the transformation into the image of Christ<sup>4</sup> takes place in 3:18 is the Holy Spirit. We would keep in mind that he is at one with Christ, just as the Father and the Son are one as in John 10:30. He is also elsewhere called 'the Spirit of Christ', 'the Spirit of Jesus', and 'the Spirit of [His] Son'. He is also the one by whom a believer says, 'Jesus is Lord!'

An alternate and reasonable exegesis taken by competent commentators is that the word 'Spirit' should be put in lower case, the argument being that Christ is the Lord, and it is his own spirit which effects freedom, and the transformation from one stage of glory to another. If this be the case, then the result is that Christ, by his own spirit, effects freedom and successive stages of glory. This kind of use of Christ's spirit would be close to unique in the Epistles. We can conclude that whether by the Holy Spirit, or by Christ's own spirit, or by Christ through the Holy Spirit, the marvellous transformation is effected.

### **THE PRESENT MATTER OF TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST'S IMAGE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO THAT THE PERSON GOES FROM ONE STAGE OF GLORY TO ANOTHER**

Transformation into Christ's image, which brings the Christian person into glory stage-by-stage, is a most important one. That person should be conscious of what is happening. If the first exegesis given above regarding the Spirit being the Lord is correct, then it is the Spirit who helps the believer to behold Christ and somehow to be transformed.

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<sup>3</sup> A. M. Ramsey in his *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ* (Longman, Green and Co., London, 1949), seems to favour this exegesis. In footnote 2 on page 52 he says, '... (b) In the same verse there is much to be said for the conjectural emendation of Hort, *kuvrion* for *kurivou*, i.e. 'where the Spirit is Lord, or sovereign'.

<sup>4</sup> In II Corinthians 3:18, the one beheld is 'the Lord'. Is this God as in Exodus 34, or is it Christ? It could be either. Is one changed into the image of God or is one transformed *into* the image of Christ, that is, Christ himself who is the image of God? The result is that the beholder is being changed from one stage of glory to another. Whilst 3:16–18 is not to be taken as an exposition of the Trinitarian nature, yet Trinitarian roots are deep, here.

## To See Glory Is to Be Glorified

The principle of glorification we adduced in a previous chapter is that *one is glorified by beholding glory*. Moses had a certain degree of glory by seeing something of the glory of God. The Son received his glory from the Father before his incarnation and he had wholly seen the Father. To see His glory wholly is to be wholly glorified. That principle is stated in I John 3:1–3, ‘When he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is’. The caution we need to keep in mind is that human glory—even eschatological human glory—cannot be more than it is to be the utmost of human glory. We mean that there is a glory of God, and a glory of Man, as is appropriate to Deity and to humanity. When Paul says that our bodies will be like unto Christ’s body of glory, he means that our humanity will be glorified as is Christ’s—no more and no less—but that does not go beyond the glorification God had planned for us before time (I Cor. 2:7, *passim*).<sup>5</sup>

### The Spirit Will Show the Glory of Christ

We have already seen that Christ promised the disciples what would happen with the Spirit’s coming. He would bring into their remembrance all things Christ had said and done. He would teach them all things. He would lead them into all the truth. He would glorify Christ. He would tell them things to come, that is, the things of the future. He would glorify Christ and the Father. He would convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. We have seen this is what he did, so much so that at Pentecost<sup>6</sup> all burst out in praise at what they had seen through the Spirit, so ‘telling . . . the wonderful works of God’. With razor-sharp definition everything of Christ was borne in upon them. The results are recorded. The fellowship burst into life. They lived out the things which are Christ as the living image and glory of God. We can say they went from one stage of glory to another. This was observable in the new disposition of love, and the acts of moral glory which they did.

We are saying that in II Corinthians 3:18, the Spirit constantly ‘Pentecostalises’ us. By the word ‘Pentecostalises’ we mean that whilst the Spirit introduces us to Christ and the gospel by an act of revelation, yet *he goes on* revealing the truth to us.<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere Paul speaks of an habitual living and walking in the Spirit, being continuously filled with him, glowing with him, bearing the fruits of the Spirit—and so on.<sup>8</sup> I John 2:20–27 speaks of an initial ‘anointing from the Holy One’ and this means truth has come to the anointed one, and in the Spirit truth goes on being the life of the anointed one. These passages are often quoted as ways of living a devotional life, but in reality they are the means by which the Spirit continually ‘Pentecostalises’ us, that he does what we have said in the paragraph above. The Spirit thus transforms us, but he transforms us *by continually showing us Christ*. Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration was brilliantly transformed. Peter wanted to preserve that glory so that it could be gazed upon, but that was not the pattern for that time. Not until Christ was glorified. Then he could be gazed upon—*by means of the Spirit!* This is what is happening in us: we are seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We should teach this wonder to others. We should recognise it ourselves. Christ is kept livingly before us by the Spirit. We see the glory and are always being glorified, and the glorification is a developing one—‘from one stage of glory to

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<sup>5</sup> When Moses asked to see all God’s glory and was told that it was not possible, we have here a clue to the fact that seeing God’s full glory could not be contained by a human being. ‘Face to face’, as the phrase is sometimes used, cannot mean ‘seeing all God’s glory’. That Man was made ‘little less than God’ (Ps. 8:5) does not mean ‘nearly God’! Hebrews 2:7 adds ‘for a little while’, and this could mean Christ’s incarnation or refer to Man’s creational glory which always had in mind his eschatological glory.

<sup>6</sup> The praise was not only at Pentecost but also at Caesarea (Acts 10:44–48), at Ephesus (Acts 19:5–7), and we have reason to believe, at Samaria (Acts 8:14–17). The infilling of the Spirit in Acts 4:31–35 was no less dynamic as fresh revelation came to the church.

<sup>7</sup> The emphasis on a ‘second blessing’ or some special transforming experience of the Holy Spirit may be debated one way or the other, but what cannot be debated is that the Christian should be a person who is constantly being filled *with* the Spirit, and, so filled *by* the Spirit ‘unto all the fullness of God’.

<sup>8</sup> See Galatians 5:16, 18, 22–26; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 12:11; Jude 20.

another!

## Study 11: The Present Glory and Glorification of Redeemed Man—II

### THE MATTER OF IMAGE AND TRANSFORMATION

To this point we have been developing the rich truth that each redeemed person is being glorified in this present age. Primarily that person is a member of the New Covenant, and of Christ's body the church. He or she is a person who has come from terrible disfigurement of being to a state of being transformed. We have seen, previously, that at his transfiguration Christ was transfigured that he might—at the Cross—be disfigured (cf. Isa. 52:14 – 53:12), so that we who have been disfigured—by sin and the Fall—might be transfigured. We need one to show us that Cross unceasingly, so that we can be constantly 'conformed to his death' (Phil. 3:10), which is the place of Christ's greatest glory. That one is the Holy Spirit. We know that Man was created in the image of God. He is still *counted* as 'the image and glory of God', even though the image has undergone disfiguration. Paul makes a contrast between what the (fallen) image was and the renewed image is. In Ephesians 4:22–24, he says:

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self [*palaion anthropon*], corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self [*kainon anthropon*], created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (NRSV).

Likewise in Colossians 3:9–10, it is written:

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self [*palaion anthropon*] with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self ('new man': *ton neon*), which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image [*eikon*] of its creator (NRSV).

What we gain from these passages is that a transformation has come. The old has been made to give away to the new (cf. II Cor. 5:17<sup>1</sup>). The new image is 'created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness', and is 'being renewed in knowledge after the image [*eikon*] of its creator'. This is a remarkable change. The image of God in which Man was originally created is being renewed as they are 'renewed in the spirit of your minds'. Certainly, in the first place, we can talk about 'restoration'. What has been corrupted is now restored, is now being 're-primed', it is being made as it was. Yet, is this all? If this were all then it would be enormous in its act and implication. To think of the *palaion anthropon* being transformed to the *kainon anthropon* would be to think of an extraordinary miracle—the shattered old derelict being restored to the new and holy Man would be wonderful to contemplate, yet II Corinthians 3:18 talks of us 'being transformed into *his* [Christ's] image'. We are not only being transformed into our original image but into *his* image. Of course that is the way it would have to be, since we are not in Adam but in Christ the second and last Adam, but the wonder of it should give us great urge to see the power and magnificence of what is *now* happening in us.

Romans 12:1–2 is also to the point:

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be

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<sup>1</sup> Note in II Corinthians 5:17, 'the old' is 'renewed', the old has become new, and not, as some translations have it, 'the old is gone, the new has come', although that is what it amounts to, virtually.



transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Here we are asked to give our bodies as living sacrifices, and doing this is 'spiritual' or 'reasonable' worship. We are not to let the world form us, but we are to be 'transformed by the renewal of [our] minds'. Such transformation conforms us to the image of Christ (cf. Rom. 8:29). This is part of what Paul is speaking about in II Corinthians 3:18. Pastorally and personally we have a great vision to impart to our fellow humanity, and seeing that vision brings power to the believer and the whole church.

This action is, then, going on all the time and we have the responsibility of being renewed perpetually in the spirit of our minds, by the Holy Spirit. As we have said, the Holy Spirit constantly 'Pentecostalises' us so that we will have that view of his glory —'the glory of God in the face of Christ'—which will bring the succeeding stages of glory until all is consummated in the ultimate glorification. Of course, this 'beholding' is not a mystical one, but one of seeing Christ by the Holy Spirit and thus living in him in his actions. It also includes imitating him, as in Ephesians 5:1–2, and having Christ formed in us, as in Galatians 4:19. What should be kept in mind all the time is Colossians 3:1–4:

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory,

for this is saying that our lives are not lives which are seen by the world, or even by us (cf. II Cor. 5:10), but in their hiddenness in Christ and God they are so being transformed that the glory of them will be seen when he, Christ, appears. 'Christ in [among] you, the hope of glory' is saying much the same thing.

### **Transformation into Glory by Suffering in the Work Of the Gospel**

Suffering, of itself, does not bring glory. Peter talks about a suffering we deserve for our misdoing, and a suffering which we do not deserve. Jesus, Paul, Peter and others speak of a suffering which inevitably comes to those who proclaim Christ. This is not the place to enter into the whole subject of suffering, but Christ said that to suffer for the Kingdom of heaven's sake would be a matter for rejoicing. Paul showed in Romans 8:17–30 that suffering was the way to glory, though not at all the *cost* of glory, for we do not earn glory. In 8:17 he said, 'provided we suffer with him in order that we may be glorified with him'. This is something like II Timothy 2:12, 'if we endure, we shall also reign with him'. The key to the suffering which brings glory is that kind of suffering which is in the cause of Christ, the proclamation of the gospel and the membership of his Body, the Church. This is powerfully shown in II Corinthians 4:7–18:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Paul in wonderful words tells us of the *fact* of suffering. He also shows us the *nature* of suffering. We need also to look at other passages which deal with this kind of suffering, such as II Corinthians 6:3–10 and 11:21–29. It is the scandal of the gospel and the foolishness of it which brings the suffering of persecution and rejection. In 4:10–12, Paul shows us the *cause* of suffering. It is 'always carrying in the body the death [dying, killing] of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be also manifested in our bodies'. In one sense proclaiming the gospel is like carrying around all the time a video of the Cross. In Galatians 3:1, Paul uses the term 'publicly portrayed', or 'placarded'— so that no one can escape the sight of that terrible event. Again, the Cross is a 'scandal' and 'foolishness' to the viewers who are greatly angered at being confronted with the Cross. To proclaim Christ crucified is the deepest offence which can come to the human spirit which is repelled by the Cross, seeing no need for its saving, propitiatory work. The suffering that comes with, and because of, proclamation, is the suffering which brings 'an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison'.

For the Holy Spirit to so show us Christ that we are thereby transformed into *his* image (*eikon*) cannot omit the heart of his glory-suffering, the Cross. (Note that in I Peter 4:14 Peter shows us that our suffering and the working of the Spirit are together.) 'If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit [or, Spirit] of glory and of God rests upon you'. Here, as we have said time and again, is the way of moral glory, the outworking of the moral claim of Exodus 34:6–7 regarding the nature of God's true glory. It is not merely the unsightly elements of the Cross as a criminal's death which disgusts Man. It is because this is set out as God's great love for humanity and so, ultimately, the way to his glory. When Paul talks about 'being conformed to his [Christ's] death', he means that we become one with Christ's image as was set out in II Corinthians 3:18. In the passage quoted above he is telling us not to look at the things of sight but of faith, as in Colossians 3:1–4, that is, the things unseen. The more we proclaim the Cross, the more our earthen vessels will be battered about. The body will be worn and torn daily, but the inner man—that image of God which is being transformed—will gain increasing form and substance, until, when the vessel cracks and breaks and falls away—its sherds perished forever—there will be the true new man, the one in the *eikon* of Christ, the one in the fullness of the glory of Christ—the true son of the Father.

Let us repeat, as clearly as we can, that to bear about in the body the killing of Jesus confronts Man with at least three things: (i) he needs all of that suffering to deal with all his sins, transgression and iniquity, (ii) this is an insult to his moral pride of achievement<sup>2</sup> because he believes he can show himself as righteous before God, and (iii) in some way or another it is he who has crucified Christ and he is culpable of that death.<sup>3</sup>

What we must also equally emphasise is that it is only as we suffer with Christ by portraying the death of the Cross that we are transformed into the image of Christ. In this sense we partake, livingly, of that death. As Christ suffered for confronting Man with his sin and his need of the Cross as well as made him culpable for the act of crucifixion, so we come increasingly to know what it is to be *witnesses* to that death. We are brought into that suffering, and as we suffer we grow more and more like Christ. This is surely what Paul means when he says, 'that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death' (Phil. 3:10).

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT CONSTANTLY MAKES US SEE CHRIST**

We cannot look at all of Christ, all of his suffering and all of his nature apart from the Holy Spirit. We have said that he constantly 'Pentecostalises' us, for ever bringing the truth of

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<sup>2</sup> Man is angered by the thought that his evil is so much and so bad that he *needs* the Cross. It is an insult to his imagined moral powers to accomplish his own salvation.

<sup>3</sup> I suggest that readers look at my *Come Let Us Go to Calvary* (NCPI, 1977), where I claim that all humanity has been to the Cross and is culpable for that event.

Christ to our view and understanding. For our part our wills must constantly press us to 'keep looking'. In this way we become like him, more and more. As we see 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' so we are increasingly glorified. We have the prolepsis given to us of the ultimate glory in which we shall stand, and that feeds faith which is 'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' by human sight, though deeply felt as revelation.

### **CONCLUSION: PRESENT GLORIFICATION IS POWERFUL FOR LIVING LIFE**

What we mean is that unless we know there is a present development of glorification before the *telos*—the end time—then we will not have powerful motivation for present living. If all our glorification is set only at the end time then a present action of being conformed to the image of the Son (cf. II Cor. 3:18; cf. Rom. 8:17–30) will be absent. The two passages we presented above—Ephesians 4:22–24, and Colossians 3:9–10:

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self ['old man': *palaion anthropon*], corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self ['new man': *kainon anthropon*], created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness,

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self [*palaion anthropon*] with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self ('new man': *ton neon*), which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image [*eikon*] of its creator,

will have no present *renewing* and *transforming* action—which the two texts state that they do have—and so there would no significance to motivate the believer to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament readers sees that the completion of the present and ongoing glorification in this time will happen at the point of the *telos*. That is happening and will be completed means the object of glorification—the redeemed person—has strong hope and strong assurance. As we have seen all present living in Christ is living in faith, hope and love.

## **Study 12: Man and the Eschatological Glory—I**

### **THE GLORY OF THE ASCENSION AND PAROUSIA**

#### *The Ascension and Session in Glory*

We have seen that Christ was taken from the disciples in the cloud which we would now call 'the Shekinah', the cloud of glory, the cloud so often mentioned in Scripture as the very Presence of God.

In Acts 1:10–11 the two men in white robes declared that as the disciples had seen Jesus go, so he would come. We have seen in I Timothy 3:16 that he was 'received up into glory'. First Peter 1:21 spoke of God 'who raised him from the dead and gave him glory'. In Acts 7:55 we are told that Stephen 'gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God'.

Jesus told his disciples, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matt. 19:28). The two sons of Zebedee made their request for glory, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory' (Mark 10:37).

In the Acts the apostles are quick to declare Christ's glorification. In 3:13 Peter says, 'The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus'. Paul calls Christ, 'The Lord of glory'.

For the rest, the New Testament sees Christ as glorified, not simply in terms of radiance and beauty, but in terms of ruling as King. The many mentions of this in the Book of the Revelation are connected with this work. In the first chapter the remarkable vision of Christ in his glory is intended to be the opening gambit of the whole book. In the rest of the book God and the Lamb are bracketed together. Christ's session accomplishes the defeat of all enemies and he gives the Kingdom to the Father that He, the Father, may be 'all in all'. He brings the redeemed world to full glory, as we shall see.

#### **The Glory of the Parousia in the Synoptic Gospels**

In one sense the Ascension and Parousia are almost one. Certainly description of them are cast in similar language. In Matthew 24:29–31 Jesus describes his coming or 'appearing':

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Later, in the same discourse Jesus said, 'When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne'. At the time when he was being judged, Jesus told the high priest, 'But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven'. 'Power' here was a Jewish name for God, used because they were reluctant to utter His name.

Mark also has references to Christ coming in glory, 'For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (8:38).

As in Matthew, Christ refers to his coming, 'And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory' (13:26).

### **The Glory of the Parousia in the Acts, Epistles and the Revelation**

We saw in Acts 1:9–11 the prophecy of Christ's return in the cloud of glory. In his Pentecostal speech Peter refers to 'the day of the Lord' (2:20), and in terms that are almost the same as in our Lord's Olivet discourse. In 3:19–21 Christ's purposive return is described, 'Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old'.

In his Epistles Paul makes a number of references to the parousia, some of which he links with glory. For example, in Romans 5:2 he talks about the hope of rejoicing in the glory of God, which is obviously in the future. More clearly he says in Colossians 3:4, 'When Christ who is our life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory'. In Titus 2:13 he speaks of 'awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ'. So he can speak of 'all who have loved his appearing' (II Tim. 4:8; cf. 1:10; 4:1). He tells the Thessalonians that they 'turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come' (Thess. 1:9–10).

The majesty and glory of that return is especially described in I Thessalonians 4:15–17:

For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.

No less powerful is the passage of I Corinthians 15:51–55:

Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:  
'Death is swallowed up in victory'  
'O death, where is thy victory?'  
O death, where is thy sting'.

It is evident that the picture such as Paul depicts in these two passages was in the minds of his well-taught followers. As we keep suggesting, the picture was one of glory. If we add Philippians 3:20–21:

But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

In this passage we are beginning to see what the developing glorification we are now knowing will issue in—us having bodies of glory. Paul comes very close to saying all this in II Corinthians 4:16 – 5:5, where, as some commentators see it, our present suffering has helped to build within us that which we will be when the tent of this body is put off, and the eternal building which is 'the body of glory', will immediately replace it. This is the 'eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison'. We sum up, that the appearing (parousia) of Christ in glory will be the moment of the glorification of the redeemed.



The First Epistle of Peter has references which fit the Pauline. In 4:13 Peter writes, 'But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed'. Then in 5:1-4 he exhorts the kind of pastoral ministry which will result in 'the unfading crown of glory':

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

In II Peter 3:1-13 the author speaks powerfully of the day of the Lord. Verse 10 speaks of extraordinary phenomena which will accompany that return:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up.

As in the Book of the Revelation, glory is not always just pure, quiet and sheer radiance. It is often linked with dynamic happenings which to many would seem alarming (cf. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19), reminding us of the similar aspects of God's glory at Sinai.

The Book of the Revelation, contrary to general opinion, does not speak much of his coming. The first chapter does speak of it in verse 7, 'Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.' In the last chapter there is anticipation of his coming in verses 12 and 17, 'Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done'. 'The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him who hears say, 'Come.' And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price'. Of course the whole book is occupied with all the events which lead up to the parousia.

## **CONCLUSION: THE MATTER OF GOD'S CREATIONAL AND ESCHATOLOGICAL GLORY**

We are still in the midst of earthly existence. This last age is lived in this environment, but there is the coming or new age. This is the age which is to be ushered in fully by Christ and his parousia. Meanwhile how do we understand the matter of present glory in the creation?

The insistent prophecies of the earth being filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea,<sup>1</sup> bring us to the meaning of the earth being filled with God's glory. It means that what the glory fills and covers is God's possession. We take as an example the passage of Isaiah 60:1-5 which speaks of this glory in direct relationship with Israel:

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will be seen upon you.  
And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.  
Lift up your eyes round about, and see;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far,  
and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.

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<sup>1</sup> See again Numbers 14:21, passim; Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 11:9; Psalm 72:18-19.

Then you shall see and be radiant,  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice;  
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.<sup>2</sup>

When the glory of the Lord rises upon Israel it means that it is glorified, it is lightened, and *only it* in all the earth has glory. The glory of God has filled it. Now, when the rest of the world is in darkness because *God's glory has not risen upon it*, that part of it, then what is in darkness hastens to the light of Israel. Israel is glorious and the nations see clearly that it is substantial in wealth and position. This is an example of the glory of the Lord filling something—in this case, Israel. At the same time—though unseen, except to faith—the earth is filled with the glory of God, for as in Isaiah 6:3 the seraphim declared that 'the whole earth is full of his glory', so this glory is present, but unseen. It is the same as saying, 'God is present to the whole earth'. At the *telos* the whole creation will be seen to have been filled with His glory, else it could not properly proclaim. Of course, at the *telos* all anti-glory and inglorious elements will have been removed. Nothing will be left unfilled or uncovered with the Divine glory.

Seen fully these all add up to the Old Testament prophecies of 'the earth [being] filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea'. They add up to all things of the *eschaton* and its *telos*. Glory restored through the Cross, through the Resurrection, through the Ascension and Reigning, through the coming of the Holy Spirit. Man will again be God's vice-regent, but this time not only over all the earth, but also over all creation, in the Son, in the Second and Last Adam.

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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 60 is a treasure-house of the nature of God's glory and Man's, and the manner in which God glorifies. Israel is God's special, holy people, and its land is the newest Eden, its worship place the sanctuary of God. Where God dwells is His Presence, and where His Presence is, there is God's glory, the glory which rises upon Man and continually glorifies him.

## Study 13: Man and the Eschatological Glory—II

### THE GLORY OF REDEEMED MAN ANTICIPATED

#### The Gift of Prolepsis, 'The Hope of Glory'

We have indicated that being transformed into the same image—the very image of Christ—is something which is now happening within us. Not until this tent—this body—is fallen away will the glory be consummated. Yet it is 'the hope of glory' which is also a present dynamic and should be received by us and taught by us as such. 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for' can, I believe, be paraphrased as 'Faith is the prolepsis of things hoped for', that is, that we now sense, taste and feel that which is yet coming. What is in the future, by faith has come to us in the present. True, the process of glorification is now in actual operation and so aids faith to believe, but it is the substance of what will yet be which comes to us in the present. In sussing them out we discover that each one is linked with glory. Together they are the full picture of glory as we look forward to it:

These are, 'the hope of glory'; 'the hope [of] the resurrection'; 'our hope of sharing the glory of God'; 'the hope of righteousness [justification]'; 'the hope of salvation'; 'Christ Jesus our hope'; 'our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ'; 'the hope of his calling'; along with 'his glorious inheritance in the saints'; 'the hope of the gospel'; 'the hope of eternal life'. It is because God is 'the God of hope' and our hope is 'laid up in heaven' that hope 'hopes all things', and even 'in hope believes against hope'. As Paul says, 'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men to be pitied'. It is hope that is for here and eternity—how could it be otherwise and be hope?—for Christ himself is our hope, and within us (among us) he is 'the hope of glory'. That is why we are enjoined to 'seize the hope that is before us' and to 'hold fast the confession of our hope'.<sup>1</sup>

### THE REALITY OF THE PROLEPSIS

All the elements we have mentioned above so that they appear as one whole are already, in some measure, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. In I Corinthians 2:7–13 we read:

But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him,'

God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.

In the passage just quoted, Paul tells us firstly that 'a secret and hidden wisdom of God' was 'decreed before the ages for our glorification'. He then tells that none of our present senses can begin to comprehend what that glory will be for it is beyond human sensing. If we are wistful as to the nature of the future glory, then Paul tells us, amazingly, that God has revealed the nature of that future glory by the Holy Spirit who has communicated it within

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<sup>1</sup> Because we wished this particular paragraph not to be interrupted by references so that straight reading of it might prove more effective, we have stated the references in this footnote. They can be checked against the text. They are Colossians 1:27; Acts 23:6; 24:15; cf. 28:20; Romans 5:2; Galatians 5:5; I Thessalonians 5:8; Titus 1:2; 3:7; I Timothy 1:1; Titus 2:13; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4; I Thessalonians 2:12; II Peter 1:3–5; Colossians 1:23; Titus 1:2; 3:7; cf. I Peter 5:10; Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:5; I Corinthians 13:7; Romans 4:18; I Corinthians 15:9; 10:23; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 6:18; 10:23.

our depths. This is so that we might understand the amazing glory which is set before us, and so 'the gifts bestowed on us by God'.

What we need to look at is the context in which 'the gifts bestowed on us by God' are mentioned. These are not just any gifts or even what are called 'the gifts of the Spirit', but the gifts that are linked with the eschatological glory. In other words, all the elements of what we have called 'the prolepsis'. Since the understanding of these has been imparted, and the gifts are talked about in the New Testament, then we ought to give them some consideration so that we may fully know them.

### The Gifts of the Prolepsis

**Colossians 1:27** says 'To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory'. Without putting this verse back into full context we can say the meaning of the verse is that for both Jews and Gentiles now come together in one body, the church, Christ is in each heart, or among them all is the hope of glory. Just as the Spirit within believers is the 'earnest of our inheritance', so Christ who dwells in the believer by the Spirit, is 'the hope of glory'. To contemplate 'the hope of glory' is a very satisfying meditation. In **1 Timothy 1:1** Paul speaks of 'Christ Jesus our hope'.

**Acts 23:6, 24:15, cf. 28:20** speak of 'the hope [of] the resurrection'. Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and was thus glorified, so in the resurrection we shall have the promised glory, as we have 'bodies of glory' (cf. Phil. 3:20–21). How marvellous to contemplate.

**Romans 5:2** speaks of rejoicing in 'the hope of sharing the glory of God'. **Romans 8:17** speaks of being glorified with Christ, if we suffer with him, and the context also shows that the glory shall be revealed to us. By seeing glory we are glorified. **Romans 8:21** says this is the 'glorious liberty of the children of God', and in **8:30** simply says that having been called we are justified and having been justified we are glorified. These are the central texts referring to sharing the glory of God.

**Galatians 5:5** says 'For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness'. The 'hope of righteousness' certainly means 'the hope of justification', but if we take the widest means of righteousness, that is, 'God's being consistent with His own grace and love in all His acts', then it is even more than our being declared righteous. It is our sharing in the whole righteousness of God, which is a glorious anticipation.

**1 Thessalonians 5:8** speaks of 'the hope of salvation' which the believer wears as a helmet. In its context the meaning of the statement is that the believer, beleaguered by adverse elements, can remain calm, knowing the totality of his salvation is not in jeopardy. Total salvation means ultimate glory and inheritance. So **Colossians 1:23** speaks of 'the hope of the gospel'.

**Titus 1:2** speaks of the 'hope of eternal life', something we might easily, and casually take for granted. **Titus 3:7** speaks in much the same vein—'become heirs in hope of eternal life'. Both verses link with **1 Corinthians 2:7**, for this hope is based on God's intention made before time to give that life to believers. If we contemplate the nature of that eternal life then we can escape the fact of its glory.

**Titus 2:13** speaks of 'awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ'. This is, of course, the hope of the parousia when Christ will appear and all his saints shall see him and in that moment be glorified when they 'see him as he is'. What a powerful hope, and what a stimulus to holiness as the context, **Titus 2:11–14** shows.

In **Ephesians 4:4** Paul speaks of 'one hope which belongs to your call' for in **1:18** he has spoken of 'the hope to which he has called you', that is, all that is hoped for in Christ. In **Ephesians 1:14, and 18** this is linked with 'his glorious inheritance in the saints', a rather thrilling matter which may mean God inherits the saints in their glory, or they inherit the

glory of God. In any case 'glory' and 'inheritance' are both closely linked in biblical thought. **Romans 8:17** (cf. 5:2) seems to say that we inherit God! What an inheritance. **Colossians 1:5** speaks of 'the hope laid up for you in heaven', meaning much the same thing, and undoubtedly linked with inheritance. Peter speaks of it robustly in **I Peter 1:3-5**, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.' **I Thessalonians 2:12** speaks of God 'who calls you into his own kingdom and glory', so that 'the hope which belongs to your call' is as rich as this. We are called to glory! **II Peter 1:3-5** has a similar thought, 'His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who *called us to his own glory and excellence*, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and *become partakers of the divine nature*'. Again, **I Peter 5:10** speaks of 'the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ'.

After this magnificent view of the anticipation of hope of all the glories, and the one, substantial glory which catches them all up, we turn simply to see that Abraham by faith 'believed against hope' (Rom. 4:18), as indeed 'faith is the assurance of things hoped for' and that love 'hopes all things' (I Cor. 13:7). The writer of Hebrews exhorts us then to 'seize the hope that is set before us', and to 'hold fast the confession of our hope' (Heb. 6:18; 10:23).

### **CONCLUSION: WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE BASIS OF THE HOPE OF GLORY**

We see, now, what has been written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, namely the things which the human senses cannot yet perceive but are 'the gifts bestowed on us by God' as they are impressed upon us, as well as revealed to us, by the Holy Spirit. When, then, in our concluding study we look at these great glories, they will be as 'deep calleth unto deep'. We will recognise them in no small measure, but will hope to know them in the great measure that is known only by those glorified by His grace.

What better thing can we say, then, than that which Paul wrote to the Romans (15:13), 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope'. We keep in mind that faith and love are never apart from hope and that the greatest of these is love, because God is love and He has given us the heart to love, to believe, and to hope. He is the Object of all three of these.



## Study 14: Man and the Eschatological Glory—III

### THE ULTIMATE GLORY AS THE CLIMAX OF THE STORY OF GLORY

#### Introduction: Christ the Person, Lord and King of Glory

In our last study we discussed the prolepsis of hope, and the fact that we can now taste what is to come, and that our hope is built up by its object, namely Christ. God is, of course, the prime object of our hope (Rom. 15:13), but as Paul points out, 'For all the promises of God find their Yes in him [Christ]. That is why we utter the Amen through him [Christ], to the glory of God'.<sup>1</sup> Paul said, 'Christ in [among] you, the hope of glory', (Col. 1:27). Christ it was who brought the everlasting covenant to its climax by manifesting it as the New Covenant. When he was present in Israel he was King of the Kingdom. His casting out of demons meant the Kingdom of God came upon men and women (Matt. 12:28). He could say to the Pharisees, 'The Kingdom of God is in the midst of you' (Luke 17:21). That is why in Ephesians 5:5 it is 'the kingdom of Christ and of God', and in Revelation 11:15 'the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ'. Christ's work of the Cross, the Resurrection, Ascension and Reigning seals the triumph of the Kingdom.

In regard to his ultimate triumph he pointed to his *parousia*, saying, 'I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven' (Matt. 26:64). He had told his disciples previously, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world [the regeneration], when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne . . .' (Matt. 20:28), so that his coming which would be the triumph of his earthly and heavenly work,<sup>2</sup> would usher in the glory which we call eschatological—the *telos* of God's plan.<sup>3</sup>

Not only does Christ have to do with covenant and kingdom but also with creation. As the Word he created all things as John 1:1–3 sets out that event. Hebrews 1:1–3 also describes it, God creating all the worlds through His Son. Colossians 1:15–17 speak of his creative work—'for in him all things were created'—and of his sustaining work—'in him all things hold together'. It is inconceivable that this One should not be linked with the creation of 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Rev. 21:1; cf. Isa. 65:17f.; 66:22f.). As in the original creation so in the renewing of it will be the Lord of glory working with the Father.

In our study on the Cross we saw that Christ gave himself up for his Bride, the Church. In the climax of the kingdom and the covenant we will see that the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb will be the joining of God's people with the Son and so the induction of them into the Divine Family, all being 'partakers of the divine nature', though not as though the Church becomes divine in the sense of having deity, but divine in that it participates in the Triune God.

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Hebrews 6:13–19; 10:23–25; 11:1–40. The writer points out the immense dynamic of hope. God is not only as good as His promises, but as His promises. The Old Testament saints are a crowd of witnesses to faith, which, as the writer sees it, is 'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen'. Hope must be based upon the whole truth of God, but then the truth of God is Christ—from beginning to end. It is 'Christ in all the scriptures', and as Revelation 19:10 has it, 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit [Spirit?] of [all] prophecy'.

<sup>2</sup> By 'earthly and heavenly work' we mean his ministry on earth with its triumph through the Cross and Resurrection, and then his ministry in heaven, not only of intercession, but of putting down all the enemies and giving the perfected Kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24–28), that God would be all in all.

<sup>3</sup> An excellent treatment of eschatology is Adrio König's *The Eclipse of Christ in Eschatology: Toward a Christ-centred Approach* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1989) which virtually says, 'Christ is eschatology'. Other helpful books are Graeme Goldsworthy's *Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Paternoster Pr., Exeter, 1984), William Dumbrell's *The Beginning of the End and the End of the Beginning* (Lancer, Homebush, 1985) and Mark Strom's *Days Are Coming: Exploring Biblical Patterns* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1992).

All these elements tell us that Christ is indeed 'the Lord of glory', 'the King of glory' and that in him our glory comes to its fulfilment. In every aspect of the glory which will be revealed, Christ is at the centre, one with his Father in the climaxing of *all things*, for it is in him that they will all be summed up, filled up, reconciled and harmonised.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Return or Second Advent of the Lord**

This is a subject which has been open to more controversy than any other feature of the New Testament. Whilst all orthodox Christians believe in the ultimate coming of Christ, the resurrection of the saints and the judgment which follows, many disagree on the times and modes of his coming. Because our study is primarily on glory we will not enter into this lively debate.<sup>5</sup>

In a previous study (12), we have described that coming in the manner in which it is set out in the New Testament, so we will simply refer back to the section under the heading, 'The Glory of the Parousia in the Acts, Epistles and Revelation'.

Even so, the whole matter of his appearing is of enormous significance to us. The manner of his coming passes description, so marvellous will it be, and so liberating from the present age with its powers of darkness pressing the people of God. To see 'the Lord of glory' in all his beauty and to feel the reality of the triumph of both Kingdom and Covenant, will certainly both thrill and over-awe us. All the love that we have for Christ and the Father will find their expression in this great event.

### **The Matter of Glory Both Protological and Eschatological**

One Corinthians 2:7–10 speak of God's decree of glorification for Man, and this means Man will be glorified in the *telos*. When we look at the matter of glory we cannot understand the eschatological without understanding the protological. In the beginning Man's glory was linked with his creation. In I Corinthians 11:7 Paul says 'man' (*aner*: male) 'is the image and glory of God'. In Genesis 1:26 Man (man and woman together; *anthropos*) is the image of God. In Psalm 8:5 we have, 'Yet thou [God] hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor'. His glory and honour are in having dominion over creation, as also mentioned in Genesis 1:28. Man in the image of God has dominion over the earth, and this is reflecting the nature of God as King. Ultimately Man—in and as the last Adam—will have dominion over things celestial as well as things terrestrial. God's glory is not only dominical, but it is moral. The best description given of that glory as moral was given by the Lord Himself in Exodus 34:6–7:

The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, 'The LORD the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.'

In this case God was glorious in Israel, His glory being moral, and moral covering such attributes as holiness, righteousness, goodness, truth and love. At the same time He was firm Ruler over Israel and the world, as well as being the One Who acted according to His own law.

Given this protological action of glory and the course-of-history experience of God's glory, much in the Old Testament must be seen to be cast in eschatological mode. This should not seem altogether strange since the Old Testament speaks so much and so often of the glory of the Lord. It has its eschatological references to glory, namely in Numbers 14:20, 'but truly as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD...'; 'For the earth will

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<sup>4</sup> See Ephesians 1:10; 4:10; Colossians 1:19; cf. 3:14.

<sup>5</sup> A very good treatment is given by Adrio König in his book cited. Pages 193–244 amply cover both the debate and the reality of his coming.

be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea' (Hab. 2:14; cf. Ps. 22:27–28); 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea' (Isa. 11:9); and this along with the prayer of Psalm 72:19 which is, 'Blessed be his glorious name for ever; *may his glory fill the whole earth!*' In Zechariah 2:5 God says regarding Jerusalem, 'I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the LORD, and I will be the glory within her'. Ezekiel 39:21 says, 'And I will set my glory among the nations; and all the nations shall see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid on them'. As Paul tells us in Romans 9:4, one of the great gifts to Israel was 'the glory'. The Book of Ezekiel appears as the paramount prophecy of the glory of God in Israel and in the temple. The glory is in the temple for Israel's sake in covenant, only to be withdrawn, and then to return to that covenantal–eschatological sanctuary in 43:1–6 where 'the glory of the LORD filled the temple'. In Revelation 21:22 the temple of the *telos* is 'the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb'.

The prophetic thrust in history was always towards the acknowledging of God's glory, and this was to be especially so in doxological worship. The anticipation of the worship passages in the Book of the Revelation is seen in such a passage as already quoted—Nehemiah 9:5, 'Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be thy glorious name which is exalted above all blessing and praise'! It is also strong in the Psalms, especially in such as 29:1f.:

Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.  
Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name;  
worship the LORD in holy array.

Here the terrestrial Psalmist calls in the celestial creatures with all their skill of worship and adoration.

When it comes to the New Testament the matter of God's glory floods over from the Old Testament. The angels burst out with the glory of the Lord at the birth of Jesus; the Word becomes flesh and in the covenant-glory of God dwelling among us; the disciples behold his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The glory of Immanuel is seen in what he does and says in his earthly ministry, though its glory is for the most part a veiled one. It is seen in special, unveiled form at the Transfiguration (cf. II Pet. 1:16–18). Here the Father has glorified him, but it is particularly *as the Son* that he desires the Father to glorify him—especially so at the Cross—in *order that he might glorify the Father*. The Father glorified him in his Incarnation, his Transfiguration, at his death on the Cross (John 17:1–5; Heb. 2:9–10), and then at the Resurrection (Rom. 6:4), for there he 'was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father'. He had prophesied his coming 'in the glory of the Father' at his second advent. At his ascension he was 'taken up into glory'. Stephen saw the glory of the glorified Son of God at the Father's right hand (Acts 7:55). For such glorification the Son had prayed in his prayer of John 17.

Paul saw this glory of the risen Christ. In Acts 22:11 he said, 'I could not see for the glory of that light'. Stephen at his death, as we have said, saw 'the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7:55), and we assume Jesus also was shining with glory. Certainly in Revelation 1:12–16, John the Seer saw him in his full glory—'his face was like the sun shining in full strength'. We have a right to assume that although this was a vision, yet it properly portrayed the heavenly glory of Christ, where, according to Philippians 3:20–21, his heavenly body is a 'glorious body'. Of course, 'glory' here is that of the Second and Last Adam—Christ—whose body is a spiritual body (I Cor. 15:45). This glory is accorded to the Slain Lamb in Revelation 5:12 and 13, and in Revelation 15:3–4 in 'the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb'. This glory is also accorded to the Father in 4:11 (cf. 7:12). The glory in these contexts of both the Father and the Lamb consists of dominion

and authority over all creation, as well as the moral and redeeming power spoken of in Exodus 34:6–7 and Revelation 7:10–12. The glory of the Father and the Son was understood by the apostolic community. They saw it to do with their own, ultimate glorification.

The apostolic community knew that it had been resurrected from Man's loss of glory through the Adamic fall, for 'those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified'. This is proleptic glorification—the glory which is yet to be fulfilled at the *telos*, so that the statement is eschatological. Yet, in the present time, redeemed Man is being 'changed from one degree of glory to another', for his present 'slight momentary affliction is preparing for [him] an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison' (II Cor. 3:18; 4:16–18).

Having traced this action of glory from the giving of it to Adam, the loss of it by Adam, the Glory (God) working in history in Israel and through to the Ascension and Reigning of Jesus Christ as the Second and Last Adam over all the creation—'You are the King of glory, O Christ!'—we are now free to see the working of the glory in the *eschaton*, as the apostles proclaimed that working. What we wrote above is so; that all eschatological elements are, in one way or another, linked with God's action of glorifying Man and Creation.

### The 'End Things' That Are of the Hope That Is within Us

Before we discuss those things which we have said are related to the ultimate glory we need to see that *they are things of hope*. Hope is based on the promises of God, that is, of the God who is faithful to His promises. In Hebrews 6:13–20 these hopes are based on God's covenant promise with Abraham. Of course God's covenant is eternal, based on the nature of the Trinity, for God is first covenantal within Himself, and then to the creation which has been brought into being for His purposes. The *telos* is really that of the covenant, yet through the Davidic covenant it is also linked with the Kingdom of God. Those eschatological things which we discuss below are all of hope. As Paul says in Romans 8:23–24, we were saved in 'the hope' of 'adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies'. As yet we do not see this, but then 'hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?'. Hope, then, is in the promises made by God (Acts 26:6), the gospel which was 'the hope of Israel' (Acts 28:20), and of course all is eschatological for it is 'the hope laid up for you in heaven' (Col. 1:5). Hope that is true hope 'hopes all things' (I Cor. 13:7). It is linked with faith, because 'faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things *not seen*' (Heb. 11:1). Hope is not afraid or ashamed to hope because 'the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us'. That is why 'faith, hope, and love abide' (I Cor. 13:13). They never end and since love supports hope (Rom. 5:5), and faith works through love (Gal. 5:6), then the greatest of these virtues is love, for God Himself is love (I John 4:8, 16).

The following elements, then, compose our hope:

'the hope of glory'; 'the hope [of] the resurrection'; 'our hope of sharing the glory of God'; 'the hope of righteousness [justification]'; 'the hope of salvation'; 'Christ Jesus our hope'; 'our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ'; 'the hope of his calling'; along with 'his glorious inheritance in the saints'; 'the hope of the gospel'; 'the hope of eternal life'. It is because God is 'the God of hope' and our hope is 'laid up in heaven' that hope 'hopes all things', and even 'in hope believes against hope'. As Paul says, 'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men to be pitied'. It is hope that is for here and eternity—how could it be otherwise and be hope?—for Christ himself is our hope, and within us (among us) he is 'the hope of glory'. That is why we are enjoined to 'seize the hope that is before us' and to 'hold fast the confession of our hope'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Because we wished this particular paragraph not to be interrupted by references so that straight reading of it might prove more effective, we have stated the references in this footnote. They can be checked against the text. They are Colossians 1:27; Acts 23:6; 24:15; cf. 28:20; Romans 5:2; Galatians 5:5; I Thessalonians 5:8; Titus 1:2; 3:7; I Timothy 1:1; Titus 2:13; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4; I Thessalonians 2:12; II Peter 1:3–5; Colossians 1:23; Titus 1:2; 3:7; cf. I Peter 5:10; Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:5; I Corinthians 13:7; Romans 4:18; I Corinthians 15:9; 10:23; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 6:18; 10:23.

We have every proof we need, then, in seeing that the apostolic truth was eschatological in its thrust, that as the early community lived in the love of God, in His faithfulness and 'the faith of Jesus Christ', so they lived in great hope. That is why Peter could urge them, 'Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ', for things we will now discuss widen our view of the eschatological basis of hope and its marvellous contents. An example of how hope is the dynamic for Christian living can be found in I John 3:1–3:

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

The great principle is this, 'Whatever a man hopes for will affect him now, so that he will live as far as possible in conformity with what he is assured he will be'. Let none say hope is mere wishful thinking, a dreaming about what is to come. 'What is to come' bears powerfully upon him in the present. We mean that if he sees he will be pure, he seeks to be that now. If he sees he will be loving, he sets about being loving now—and so on.

### **The 'End Things' Which Are the Climax of the Apostolic Truth**

#### ***'The Hope of Glory'—The Glorification of Man and Creation***

We saw in I Corinthians 2:7–10 that the apostolic teaching was 'a secret and hidden wisdom of God' and that it was 'decreed before the ages for our glorification'. As we shall see in Romans 8:18–25, this includes the creation. In I Thessalonians 2:12 Paul speaks of 'God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory'. Peter tells us that he 'called us by his own glory and excellence' (II Pet. 1:3–4) which would mean the redeemed would 'become partakers of the divine nature'. Paul speaks of calling and glorification in the one breath, 'those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified' (Rom. 8:30). Paul also makes it clear that the glorification of the saints means they will have a glorified body 'like his glorious body, by the power working which enables him even to subject all things to himself' (Phil. 3:21). In I Corinthians 15:44 this is a spiritual body. This present body of flesh is 'sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory'. To be raised is 'to put on immortality' and that, if anything, must mean it is 'glorified', especially in the light of I Timothy 6:15–16 where immortality belongs only to God. Immortality is gifted to us at glorification. This must be the 'eternal life' of which Jesus spoke so often in John's Gospel.

#### ***'The Hope of Glory'—Glorification and Sonship***

All the time we are thinking of God as Father—'the Father of glory' (Eph. 1:17), who 'brings many sons to glory' (Heb. 2:10; cf. Rom. 8:29–30)—and of His eternal covenant, His plan for His sons to do His will of the creational covenant, given in Eden (Gen. 1:28), so that they subdue the earth and have dominion over it. This is their glory. It is also the meaning of Revelation 21:7, 'He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son'. In one sense Christ was only, ever, this true Son, yet all God's sons are in him and as such are 'more than conquerors', true subduers of the earth.

In Isaiah 43:1–7 the Lord addresses Jacob, and speaks of how He has cared for the people. He closes with these words:

Fear not, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you;  
I will say to the north, Give up,  
and to the south, Do not withhold;  
bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the end of the earth,



every one who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.

God's covenant children are to be to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:12). This thought is repeated often in the Old Testament and in the New. It is taken up in Ephesians chapter 1 where God in love predestines His elect to be His people, firstly, 'o the praise of the glory of his grace', and then 'to the praise of his glorious grace'. To bring them to this point He brings them to be His children by 'the riches of his grace'.

His aim is to bring them to their glorification, that which Paul in Romans 8 calls 'The liberty of the glory of the children of God'. This is a wonderful description of what His sons will be. It means that the whole, groaning creation will be freed from the futility to which it has been subjected—though, mercifully, '*in hope*'—so that it comes to share in the sons' 'liberty of the glory', which is liberation from the 'bondage of corruption', 'corruption' being the opposite of 'incorruption', or 'immortality'. This God will achieve by conforming each person 'to the image of his Son', so that His Son 'might be the first-born among many brethren'. If we ponder this statement we see that just as Christ is the Son glorified, so the sons—his 'many brethren'—will likewise be creatures of glory. This will be 'the liberty of the glory of the children of God', a heady concept! When the elect cry, 'Abba! Father!', then that is glorious liberty under 'the Father of glory'. So John's comment, 'It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is', tells us the glory which the sons shall be given. Was this what Jesus was praying about in John 17:22–26? Only when they saw his glory could they be glorified by it.

### ***'The Hope of Glory'—Glorification, Sonship and Inheritance***

Peter is excited about 'an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you'. He talks, in this context, about 'a living hope' that is based on Christ's resurrection. Sonship always implies 'the inheritance'. It was 'the God of glory' who appeared to Abraham (Acts 7:2), so that Abraham was to be the heir of the whole world (Rom. 4:16). Romans 8:14–16 talks about sonship and the next few verses say, 'and if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him'. The glorified sons are heirs. Likewise Galatians 4:4–7 connects sonship with the inheritance, that sonship being *in* the Son, a sharing in the Son's inheritance on the principle of Revelation 21:7. The inheritance has always meant a lot to those in Israel. The *son* of Revelation 21:7 'shall have this heritage', that is, he will inherit all things, those things which are 'a new heaven and a new earth'! Two thoughts need to be kept in mind;

- (i) that all the promises of inheritance are covenantal, and come to us clearly from God's covenant with Abraham. They concern not only Israel, not only David and his covenant, but all within the New Covenant, and
- (ii) that we can take it that they were there before time as part of the nature of God, for just as the book of life and the intention of the Cross were present, so the fruits of the Cross included all the covenantal promises of God that His people would inherit eternity; yes, and would inherit God (Rom. 8:17; 5:2), which is the same as saying we would inherit God Himself: the glory of God—with all its meaning of dominion and moral reality—and so inherit the very Kingdom of God, a statement found often in the New Testament. It may be that Romans 8:21 'the [*glory of the liberty*] of the children of God' and Ephesians 1:18 'the riches of his *glorious inheritance* [inheritance of glory] in the saints' are synonymous in meaning. The first of these is God's gift to His people and the second can mean His people are God's inheritance—a term often used for Israel being His inheritance. Both are



connected with glory.

### ***The Resurrection and Glory***

All of these *'telos'* things overlap so we will, perforce, keep repeating ourselves. Paul calls the resurrection 'the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies'. We noted that Paul referred to the resurrection as Israel's hope, 'with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead', 'having a hope in God . . . that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust' (Acts 23:6; 24:15). In Acts 2:25–28 (cf. 13:35, *passim*), Peter quoted Psalm 16 of Christ and his hope of the Resurrection. It is Paul who speaks at length of the manner and mode of the Resurrection in I Corinthians 15:42–56. He speaks of the body—'It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory'. He points out that the body to be is a spiritual one, not meaning it is composed of invisible spirit, but that it is a body befitting its eternal, heavenly nature, the immortality that it has put on. So in Philippians 3:20–21 he says, 'But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself'. So, then, the *telos* of the body will be all glorious.

### ***The Glorious Hope of Eternal Life***

All that we have said immediately above bears out the fact that eternal life is glorious. The term 'eternal life' is used over thirty times in the New Testament. Paul speaks of 'the hope of eternal life' in Titus 1:2 and 3:7. In Romans 2:7 he speaks of 'those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life'. We could deduce logically from this saying that 'glory and honor and immortality' equal 'eternal life'. It could also be equalled with 'his eternal glory' of I Peter 5:10. From other points of view we can conclude that those who have eternal life have come into possession of an immortal body, have an eternal weight of glory, an eternal inheritance and have a building, a house that is not as a perishing tent (body) is here but is 'eternal in the heavens'. So eternal life is the gift of things eternal and all these things are those of glory.

### ***The Marriage of the Bride and the Lamb***

The marriage of the Bride and the Lamb is the culminating event of all history. It is given protologically in Genesis 2:24 as the 'profound mystery' which Paul takes up in Ephesians 5:32, *passim*, and John the Seer sees in a vision in Revelation 19:6–10 and 21:9–27. From these passages we see the beauty of the Bride. We see that she possesses all 'the glory of God' (21:11), is clothed in glorious garments (19:8, 'it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure'—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints'. The Bridegroom brings out the truth of I Corinthians 11:7 where the man (*aner*) is 'the image and glory of God' and his wife is 'the glory of the man'. Her glory reflects that of the Bridegroom. Together—as in Genesis 1:26—they constitute the image and likeness of God, the Father. The Bridegroom has already been described in Revelation 1:12–20. He is the one whose glory overcomes the devised but false glory of the evil powers and destroys them. No wonder they are blessed who are invited to this great denouement of history. As the description of the Bride in Revelation 21 continues, we see that the Bride is really the Holy City, 'comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners' (Song of Sol. 6:4). The Unholy City, Babylon, is the consort of the Beast and, like the Beast, goes to an unholy and inglorious end, whereas the Holy City is a thing of beauty, of unspeakable glory, and is eternal.

### ***The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the True Paradise***

We have covered much of this subject in the paragraph immediately above. It is the City which is the Church, and into her are brought 'the glory and the honor of the nations', and 'the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it'. The City has no need of a temple for the

Temple are God and the Lamb. It has no need of a light 'for the glory of the Lord is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb'. Paul's words come to mind here, 'to [him] be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever' (Eph. 3:21). Obviously the City is also the place of Paradise, since the beautiful sparkling water of life flows as a river from the throne of God. In this Paradise of which Eden was the prototype live the glorified people of God. The wonders of this glorious Paradise are the glory of God, of the Lamb, of the Bride, of the kings of the nations and of the nations, the river 'bright as crystal', and the marvellous beauty of the Holy City itself. The outcome for the resurrected, glorified saints, and all the shining, celestial creatures, angels and archangels in their myriads, is the wonderful worship and praise of glorious creatures and glorified humanity ascending to the throne of God and the Lamb; the Sevenfold-Spirit, the Spirit of worship, being in the midst—all of this is the Eternal Glory and the eternal worship, the covenant of God come to its *telos*.

## **CONCLUSION: THE CLIMAX OF THE PROMISE AND FULFILMENT OF GLORY**

It is no wonder that Paul, speaking of the decree for our glorification, that indescribable glory, said 'no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'. He said this decree was a mystery, and all God's mysteries are unfolded to the elect but kept from those who do not have an ear to hear. The terms 'indescribable' and 'unspeakable' are apt. The Holy Spirit must unfold them. Somewhere, in our hearts, the Spirit has imprinted knowledge of what is to come, and so by this he has created hope which he constantly replenishes.

We can rightfully come to the conclusion that in the New Testament, which is the apostolic truth, all the elements of hope were—are—strongly taught. Without them the teaching would have been flaccid and weak. It was certainly not this, but full of power. To know that the extent of glory is not exhausted in this life, but has its major part in 'the age to come', is what lifts our sights from merely thinking of our mortality to seeing the glory that is yet to be, our glorious immortality. No wonder Peter wrote, 'Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, *set your hope fully upon the grace* that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ'. The 'grace that is coming' is, in one sense, even greater than the grace which He has so generously lavished upon us in this life. It is the grace of glory, the grace which ordains that we shall be 'partakers of the divine nature'. It means we shall live at the very heart of glory, at the heart of the Triune God, for by being the Bride of Christ we shall be inducted into the mystery and the life of the Divine nature, the Triune Godhead. All of this means that whereas the first Eden under the first Adam did not even begin to Edenise the whole of this world, yet the true, last and second Adam did so. Through his incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension and reigning at the Father's right hand he has set the future age and brought Paradise into being, and sealed it for all his creatures, those both celestial and terrestrial.

No wonder the apostles and all the others of the early church were so occupied in living hope as to proclaim the glorious news of the love and grace of God. They lived proleptically in the 'end of the beginning' as they lived actually in 'this present evil age [*aeon*]'. They lived daily in the cognisance of the good news, the *kerugma*, the everlasting gospel. In truth, they lived in covenantal relationship with the God of the covenant, the God who grants the eternal inheritance, 'the God of all hope', 'the God of all grace', the God of the everlasting covenant of peace.

For ourselves, the whole of the 'Story of Glory' becomes intelligible. God's creation of Man with a view to his ultimate glorification (I Cor. 2:2ff.) makes what we call 'history' seem a beautiful matter, no matter how much suffering there has been along the way. That suffering has been incorporated into the process and development of glory. We can only stand back with Paul and exclaim:

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!  
'For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?'  
'Or who has given a gift to him  
that he might be repaid?'