

# THE GLORY OF GOD



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## A Wonderful Truth

The wonder of the salvation made available for us in Christ never ceases to amaze us. Receiving His work on the Cross and in His Resurrection has brought every believer out of a life of sin, giving us eternal life, relationship with God and victory in our walk with Him on earth. Wonderful as all this is, the apostle Paul reveals something so glorious of what the Lord has ultimately planned for us it is almost beyond our comprehension.

*“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” 2 Corinthians 3:18 (KJV).*

When we look into a mirror we see ourselves. The “mirror” Paul describes here reveals the glory of God and His ultimate plan for us - transformed to the fulness of His glory. In order for us to grasp hold of this amazing reality of our salvation, the Word of God, with the help of the Holy Spirit, gives us glimpses of the wonder of what the glory of God is like.

## Mt Sinai

### Revelation of God’s righteousness

The revelation of God that was given to the Children of Israel when He delivered them out of slavery in Egypt, was a revelation of His righteousness. God came down on Mt Sinai hidden in a cloud and at His Presence the whole mountain shook and was covered with fire. The Cross had not yet taken place so, in His love, grace and mercy, to protect them as the sinners they were, they were commanded not to touch the mountain (Exodus 19; 20:1-20).

*“You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: ‘If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.’ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, ‘I am trembling with fear’.” Hebrews 12:18-21.*

**In contrast to Mt Sinai we have come to Mt Zion (Hebrews 12:22-24). Our guilt and judgment for sin has been taken by Jesus on the Cross. We have received the free gift of righteousness (Romans 1:16-17), enabling us to live in His Presence without any sense of fear or shame. In Christ we have become “the righteousness of God”.**

*“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” 1 Corinthians 5:21 (see also Jude 24)..*



## **2** Moses

### **Revelation of God's nature**

Moses had seen God do many wonderful things. He'd seen Him do great miracles to set the Children of Israel free from Egypt. A mighty Angel had protected them as they journeyed out and finally he'd seen the miraculous parting of the Red Sea so the people could all escape from the advancing Egyptian army. God had then led them with a pillar of cloud going ahead of them during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. Moses had experienced the revelation of a righteous God come down on Mt Sinai. At God's command, but with great fear and trembling, he had actually gone up the mountain into His Presence, receiving the 10 Commandments written by the finger of God on tablets of stone. God promised to go with him to obtain the Promised Land. With all that Moses had seen of God's power, miraculous guidance and His Presence on the mountain one would think that he had experienced it all! What else could there be?

***"Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory'" Exodus 33:18.***

Moses desired to see the fulness of God's glory - "His face". In other words, all that God is. But God knew this was too much for him to take. The Lord hid him in the cleft of a rock, covered it with His hand as He passed by, then took His hand away so that Moses could see the "hinder parts" of His glory. As the Lord passed by He proclaimed "His Name" - His love, goodness, mercy, compassion, faithfulness, forgiveness and justice (Exodus 33:19-20; 34:5-7) - everything that He is towards sinful mankind. So glorious was the trailing off of the glory of the Lord that Moses had to cover his face with a thick veil when he came down from the mountain because the brilliance of the reflection of God's glory was too blinding for the people to look at.

**This is the background to Paul's wonderful declaration in 2 Corinthians 3:18. In Christ we can behold the glory of God. There is no veil needed now to separate us from the glory of God. The Amplified Bible translates it this way...**

***"...whenever a person turns [in repentance and faith] to the Lord, the veil is taken away...And we all, with unveiled face, continually seeing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are progressively being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit" verses 16-18.***

## **3** Dedication of the Temple

### **Revelation of God's Heart**

The purpose of the Temple was not for God's sake. As Acts 7:48-50, quoting from Isaiah 66:1-2, declares...

***"...the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?'"***

The purpose of the Temple, as was previously the Tabernacle, was so that God could

dwell in the midst of His people, and they would be shielded from the blinding and overpowering fulness of His glory that would otherwise have destroyed them. It was only when Solomon offered the burnt offering and the sacrifices, pre-picturing the work of the Lord Jesus, that God descended and His glory filled the Temple.

*“When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshipped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, ‘He is good; his love endures for ever’” 2 Chronicles 7:1-3.*

**Since the finished work of Christ we are now the Temple of God. The glory of God now fills us and through us He is revealed to the world around us...individually and corporately.**

*“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies” 1 Cor. 6:19-20.*

*“...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” Ephesians 2:20-21.*

## **The Prophets**

Three of the Old Testament prophets saw amazing and wonderful visions of God.

### **Isaiah**

*“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne...” Isaiah 6:1.*

The vision Isaiah receives of the Lord is two-fold...

#### **Revelation of God’s Dominion**

The king of Israel, Uzziah, has just died and Isaiah sees the Lord seated on His Throne, “high and exalted”. Living amidst a people who had forsaken God and who were surrounded by godless nations, the Lord now calls Isaiah as a preacher of righteousness and of the judgment to come.

**The revelation that God is on the Throne is all-important for Isaiah in his mission. So it is for every believer in Christ. Each one of us has been gifted and called for our special purpose on earth. (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-12; 14:12; Ephesians 4:11-16).**

#### **Revelation of God’s Character**

Isaiah also experiences a revelation of the very character of God, so vital in his preaching

of the righteous standard God desires of His people.

*“...the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’” Isaiah 6:1-3.*

Holiness is the expression in life of righteousness. As believers in Christ, having received the free gift of righteousness, we are now called to walk in holiness. This is the wonderful ministry of God’s grace in us and of the Holy Spirit.

*“He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time” 2 Timothy 1:9.*

The train of the Lord’s robe filling the temple pictures God’s purpose for His temple on earth to be the revelation of His holiness (see also Exodus 40:34-35; 2 Chronicles 7:1). Believers are now the “temple” of the Holy Spirit and the revelation of the holiness of God to all around (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:19-22).

## Ezekiel

### Revelation of God’s Power and Authority

Ezekiel’s vision of the Lord Himself and of the “living creatures” surrounding the throne is so radiant and glorious that strength leaves him and he falls facedown. Like Isaiah, his vision is the preliminary to his call to minister to a rebellious people. God is revealing to him His greatness, glory, power and absolute authority and that he is not alone in his call. The “living creatures” stand ready to be sent by God to answer every situation.

*“I looked, and I saw a violent storm coming out of the north – an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The centre of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures...Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went...The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning...high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell face down...” Ezekiel 1:4-28 (read all verses).*

How wonderful it is to know God is totally involved in every aspect of our lives. The four faces of the Living Creatures represent everything we need...

- \* The face of a man (empathy and compassion)
- \* The face of the ox (bearing our burdens)
- \* The face of a lion (warring against the enemy)
- \* The face of the eagle (bringing us to the heights with the Lord)

# Daniel

## Revelation of the Eternal God

In the midst of great times of trouble Daniel sees not only God at work against the enemy in his times but is also given a revelation of the times to come, right down to the end of the ages.

**For us, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the angelic beings are also sent by God to help us in time of need and bring us to the fulfilment of all that God has planned for us.**

*“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” Hebrews 1:14.*

**God knows the end from the beginning.**

*“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” 2 Peter 3:8.*

## 5 Mt of Transfiguration

### Revelation of Who Jesus is

When three of His disciples - Peter, James and John - go with Jesus up to the mountain to pray, Jesus is transfigured before them. The glory that is His is revealed to them (Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9: 28-36). As well as this, Moses and Elijah appear with him. They, too, are in “*glorious splendour*”. They discuss with Him what is about to take place on the Cross! The appearance of these two figures is of dramatic importance to these disciples. Their whole history and faith is based on them - Moses representing the Law and Elijah representing the prophets. On wanting to keep them there by building three tabernacles for them, as Peter suggests, is dramatically interrupted by the Father descending in a cloud and loudly proclaiming...

*“This is my son. Listen to him!” (Matthew 17:5)*

When the cloud lifted, Moses and Elijah had disappeared and only Jesus was standing there. The Father’s message to the disciples and, in them, to all Israel, was the proclamation that the promised New Covenant had arrived (Jeremiah 31:31-34). It was about to be sealed on the Cross (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25).

**The underlying message being proclaimed to all believers is that Jesus is the central figure of God’s covenant with mankind. In every aspect of life and relationship with God, Jesus is the one and only mediator. He is the chief cornerstone by which all things come in line to the Father’s righteousness, holiness, faithfulness and glory (1 Peter 2:6-7).**

*Jesus declared...*

*“..I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” John 14:6.*



## His Ascension Glory

### Revelation of the Glory to Come

John had walked, talked and lived with the Lord Jesus for over three years; with Peter and James he had seen Him transfigured in glory before his very eyes. However, the vision of the Lord in His full ascension glory was so awesome he fell at His feet as though dead..

*“I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead” Revelation 1:12-17.*

None of us can fully comprehend the glory that is awaiting us in Heaven but John describes the wonder of it in 1 John 3:2...

*“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”*

**This is why Jesus came. This is why He died on the Cross. This is why He rose again and this is why He ascended into Heaven. The whole wondrous work of salvation is so that He could bring “many sons into glory”! (Hebrews 2:10).**

### Our Glorious Hope!

*“To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore! Amen.”*