

## From Glory to Glory

Glory is an elusive concept, difficult to define and even more difficult to appreciate and apprehend. In part, this difficulty relates to our inability to think of glory as anything other than an attribute of God. As such, it often is conceived of as merely being some vague manifestation of splendor and light, a glowing ambience that shines forth from God and the believers. Glory, however, is the very mode of God's Divine Being. The glory of God is just the God of glory. He is the source from which glory emanates because He is glory itself.

The ontological aspect of glory, the mode of His Divine Being, is humanized in the person of Jesus Christ, and through Him human beings can find entry into that glory to become bearers of it. The eschatological aspect of glory in the New Testament is very much an incarnated glory, manifest not simply in the person of Christ but also in those who have been incorporated into Him through redemption and faith. Those who have been brought into union with Christ participate in His glory and are, by this participation alone, glorified in Him.

In eternity He is their glory, and they are His. It is important to see that glory as a mode of the Divine Being is the primary significance of the concept throughout the Bible and that glorification of the believers in the New Testament, the eschatological aspect, derives from this primary sense. The believers will have no glory of their own but will instead participate in and manifest the glory of God. He alone is glorious and is alone glory itself, and the glory of the believers is simply to make that manifest.

It is mysteriously wonderful, therefore, that even though humanity falls short of God's glory, God's desire is that we manifest His Divine Being. The ultimate concern in Romans 3:23 is not our sinful condition but rather God's desire to bring His chosen and redeemed into glory. *From Himself as glory*, God is being dispensed *into* vessels of mercy who have been prepared beforehand for glory, and

in this dispensing He is reproducing Himself in His Son as glory in the believers.

The simple phrase *from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit* (2 Cor. 3:18), written under the inspiration of the Spirit, reveals the source, the means, and the goal of the eternal plan, the economy, of the Triune God. God desires to bring many sons into glory, and His plan to accomplish His desire begins with Himself as the source of glory, involves the Spirit as the glorification of the resurrected Christ, and consummates with the participation of the believers in the glory of God and in the God of glory. From the God of glory to believers of glory and from the glory of God to the glory of the believers, the Lord Spirit is subjectively operating in those who have been chosen and called to reproduce the God of glory within the redeemed and regenerated.

God desires to bring many sons  
into glory, and His plan to accomplish  
His desire begins with Himself  
as the source of glory, involves the Spirit  
as the glorification of the resurrected  
Christ, and consummates with the  
participation of the believers  
in the glory of God  
and in the God of glory.

The process of His being glorified in His saints ultimately involves the subjective operation of the Lord Spirit. Glorification is a process whereby the God of glory dispenses Himself into our spirit, spreads into our soul, and eventually saturates our body. As we remain in this organic process, eventually our mortal bodies will be "swallowed up by life" (5:4) and transfigured by the Lord

at His coming "to be conformed to the body of His glory" (Phil. 3:21). Thus, when Christ our life is manifested, we "also will be manifested with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). Christ is now our life, and when He is manifested, we will be manifested with Him in glory. This is our unique hope, the one hope of our calling (Eph. 4:4). To have Christ as our hope of glory implies that He will permeate and saturate our tripartite being with His glorious element until we are glorified in Him and He is glorified in us. As the pneumatic Christ, the Lord Spirit, permeates and saturates us with Himself, we will "exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8), a joy that is immersed in glory and full of the expression of God.

by the Editors