

Study 3 - THE LORD OF GLORY CAME TO EARTH

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.” (1 Timothy 3:16)

Introduction

Though mankind turned its back on its Creator, God was “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). He provided a way for us to be restored to Him and His glory, implementing a plan of action to rescue us that included: (1) God the Son, Jesus Christ, coming to earth to be born as a human being and to live a completely sinless life; (2) Jesus dying in our place as our substitute, taking our punishment for sin; (3) Jesus being raised from the dead and ascending to heaven, thereby conquering sin and death. With the shedding of His blood, Jesus redeemed us from sin and sickness; and with His resurrection, He gave us access to eternity, bringing our spirits from death to life. God’s glory is in us! Jesus’ atoning blood gives us access to the Father and reconnects our spirits with His presence, while our bodies wait to be completely redeemed from death, as well. (See 1 Corinthians 15:42-45.)

The plan of salvation demonstrates that, even though mankind sinned, God’s purpose will be carried out according to this cycle: the glory of God was present at the beginning of creation, and it will manifest powerfully in the last days – it will be seen in our time. The redeeming work of Jesus allows us to live once more according to God’s glory in spirit, in soul (mind, will, and emotions), and even to a large extent, in body. It may not be easy, but we will go “from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18) if we believe and persevere.

Study Questions

Part I: Jesus’ Glory in Eternity

1. Shortly before Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross, with what glory did He ask the Father to glorify Him? (John 17:5b)

2. (a) When was Jesus foreordained in His divine mission to come to earth as a Man and to be the Redeemer of humanity? (1 Peter 1:20a)

(b) At what point did Jesus come to earth to fulfil His mission, and for whom did He come? Complete the following:

Verses 20b-21a: “...[He] was manifest _____ .”

(a) What did God do for Jesus after He completed this mission? (Verse 21b)

3. With what title did the apostle Paul refer to Jesus, acknowledging His divine origin and glory? (1 Corinthians 2:8b)

REFLECTIONS ON JESUS AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY

When Jesus Christ came to earth as our Saviour, He was the ultimate expression of the manifestation of God's glory in the world. "Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrew 1:3).

Jesus made the following statements: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). "The Father is in Me and I in Him" (John 10:38). "He who has seen Me has seen the Father.... The Father who dwells in Me does the works" (John 14:9-10). Jesus led us to know the Father through His character, virtues, and behaviour. To see Him was to see the splendour and image of the Father. His substance (essence) was His glory, and to hear Him was the same as hearing the Father.

KEY DEFINITION: When referring to Jesus, the Greek word *doxa* in the New Testament, which means "glory", alludes to the majestic royalty of the Messiah – this being the highest level of exaltation and the condition to which the Father raised Jesus after He had fulfilled His purpose on earth, defeating Satan and death.

Part II: Jesus' Glory on Earth

4. (a) What did Jesus' birth as a human being bring to God, as the angels expressed after announcing the birth to the shepherds? Complete the following:

Luke 2:14a: "_____ to God in the highest..."

(b) What did Jesus' birth bring to men?

Verse 14b: "... and on earth _____, _____ toward men!"

5. In what way did Luke describe the works of Jesus, such as healing and delivering people from Satan's oppression? Complete the following:

Luke 13:17b: "... and all the multitude rejoiced for all the _____ things that were done by Him."

6. What did Jesus receive from God the Father when He was transfigured before His disciples Peter, James, and John (see Matthew 17:1-9; Luke 9:28-36)? (2 Peter 1:17a)

7. What did the people proclaim when Jesus made His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, an event we now commemorate on Palm Sunday? (Luke 19:38)

8. What did Jesus say about Himself shortly before His crucifixion? (John 13:31)

9. Why did Jesus ask the Father to glorify Him? (John 17:1b) Choose one of the following by circling the letter:

- (a) So He could feel good about Himself
 - (b) To prove that He was better than those around Him
 - (c) So He could glorify the Father
 - (d) So He could escape crucifixion
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The temptation to prove yourself Is not a valid reason to manifest the power and glory of God

10. (a) What had Jesus accomplished for the Father through His ministry? (John 17:4a)

(b) In what way did He do this? (Verse 4b)

Part III: Jesus' Glory Given to Men

11. What was Jesus crowned with for suffering and dying for us? (Hebrews 2:9)

12. What happened to Jesus after He was resurrected from the dead? Complete the following:

1 Timothy 3:16: "God was manifested in the flesh,... believed on in the world,

_____."

13. (a) Before Jesus ascended to heaven, what authority had the Father given Him, and for what purpose had He given it? (John 17:2)

(b) What is eternal life? (John 17:3)

Jesus is the highest expression of God to mankind, the complete revelation and manifestation of the glory of the Father.

14. (a) Recall the specific glory Jesus had given His followers. (John 17:22a)

(b) What does Jesus' desire for all whom the Father has given Him? (Verse 24a)

15. What did Christ become for us when we received Him? Complete the following:

1 Corinthians 1:30: "Christ Jesus... became for us _____
_____ ; and _____ and _____"

_____ and _____."

16. For whose glory did God ordain the "hidden wisdom" that He revealed in Christ? (1 Corinthians 2:7b)

17. In a previous lesson, we learned that when God made the captain of their salvation (Jesus) perfect through sufferings, He was doing something specific for His "many sons." What was He doing? (Hebrews 2:10)

REFLECTIONS ON RECLAIMED GLORY

At the cross, Jesus became the recipient of all the sins committed by humanity. He became like every other human being – carrying our iniquity and rebellion. Though He was born without sin and never sinned, He became sin of His own free will because of His love for us, in order to conform to our nature, so that we could “*become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Corinthians 5:21). He left His heavenly glory behind to reach us in our fallen nature. Yet, when He was resurrected, He reclaimed His glory and then gave it back to His people so they could be transformed and shaped according to the glory of the Father.

Jesus conformed to our image so we could be transformed into His likeness!

18. For what reason has God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shone in our hearts? (2 Corinthians 4:6b)

19. What should we desire for others to experience, in the same way we have? Complete the following:

2 Corinthians 4:4b: “... [that] *the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,* _____.”

20. What statement did Paul write in His second letter to the Corinthians, emphasizing that it is the glory of God living within His people that does the work, and not themselves? (2 Corinthians 4:7)

21. What comparable statement from the Old Testament did Paul quote in his first letter to the Corinthians? (1 Corinthians 1:31)

22. What is “*the hope of glory*”? (Colossians 1:27b)

23. As the Ephesians’ understanding was enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God, what did Paul want them to know? (Ephesians 1:18b-19a)

Conclusion

God the Son set aside His rightful glory in heaven to come to earth as a Man, only to receive that glory again as He obeyed the Father, did miracles and other works in the Father’s name, and fulfilled His earthly mission. Jesus did this so that, in a parallel way, the glory we had been given in creation – and subsequently lost – might be returned to us as we live in Him and He in us.

In Christ, we are all carriers of a “portable Eden”; wherever we go, we carry with us His glory through the indwelling Holy Spirit. We have access to our original environment – God’s presence – through the blood of Jesus. When we return to our true environment, we have true life. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6), and “*He who abides who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5)

Remember, you are *made* for glory – for existing continually in God’s presence as you live your life. Although the Holy Spirit already dwells within believers, we need to actively seek God and His glory through worship, praise, surrender to His will, and faith. Why? Jesus said, “*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38). Until the day when we will once again live in uninterrupted glory, we must seek God’s glory daily!

Prayer of Activation

Father of glory, we praise You that, through Jesus, we live in Your presence and walk once more according to Your glory. Let our whole lives glorify you, just as Jesus’ did, as we complete the work You have given us to do on earth. To have eternal life is to know You as the true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. Jesus is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. Impart to us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Be glorified in us, O Lord. Let us see Your glory. We say as the angels said, “Glory to God in the highest!” Amen!

Action Steps

- ▽ Ask God to enlighten the eyes of your understanding, so that you will know the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power toward you. (See Ephesians 1:18-19.)
- ▽ Pray for several people today whom you know need Jesus, asking the Father to soften their hearts, so that they may receive the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Then, ask God to create an opportunity for you to share the gospel with them, and trust Him to reveal Himself to them.