

Study 26 - EARTHEN VESSELS CHOSEN TO CARRY HIS GLORY

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Introduction

From the beginning of creation, God intended men and women to live and walk in His glory—to be carriers of His presence. As we have seen, His purpose has always been to dwell in us. That is why He deposited in us His breath of life and why He regards us as the supreme beings among His creation, crowned with glory and honour. (See Psalm 8:5.)

Human beings were the first tabernacle of the presence of God. Yet, from the moment man sinned and fell away from God’s glory, God no longer had a physical dwelling place in which to reside. Then came the unfolding of His plan of restoration. He made Jesus—who was fully human as well as fully God—a dwelling place, a home, a tabernacle for Himself. Jesus walked on earth as “Immanuel,” which means “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). God the Father dwelled in His Son, who came to heal the sick and deliver those who were oppressed by the devil. Then, after Jesus paid the price for humanity’s sin on the cross and rose again, the spirits of humans were made new to receive the gift of God’s Holy Spirit within them. And it is God’s plan that we “carry” His glory wherever we go.

Study Questions

Part I: The Former Glory

1. What did the Lord declare through the prophet Haggai about the manifestation of His glory on earth? (Haggai 2:9a)

2. Under what period was the former glory? Complete the following:

Luke 16:16a: “ _____ were until John [the Baptist].”

3. Briefly summarize some of the supernatural acts that took place during the former glory, several of which we looked at in previous studies:

(a) Exodus 14:21–22, 29:

(b) Exodus 13:21:

(c) Exodus 15:23–25:

(d) Joshua 6:20:

(e) 1 Kings 17:9–16:

(f) 2 Kings 5:1–14:

(g) 2 Kings 13:20–21:

(h) Daniel 3:13–27:

Part II: A New Dwelling Place for God’s Glory

4. When the Word (Jesus) “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14a), what did His disciples witness in Him? Complete the following:

Verse 14b: “...and we beheld _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
_____ full of grace and truth.”

5. Jesus’ life and ministry, including the healings and miracles He performed, bridged the former glory and the latter glory, but He lived under the law until His resurrection. What reason did Jesus give John to explain why He needed to be baptized by him? (Matthew 3:15b)

6. What did Jesus say He came to do in relation to the Law and the Prophets? (Matthew 5:17b) Choose one of the following by circling the letter:

- (a) fulfil them
- (b) destroy them
- (c) reject them
- (d) ignore them

7. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ marked the first time since the fall of humanity that God had dwelled in a Man. Recall what Jesus declared when He prayed to the Father regarding those who had believed—and would believe—in Him. (John 17:22)

8. On what day did the latter glory fully arrive on earth with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:1a)

We are carriers of God’s presence through His indwelling Spirit.

Part III: The Latter Glory

9. The glory of the “latter temple” (Haggai 2:9) is greater than the former because of what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection.

- (a) What did Paul say a believer’s physical body is? (1 Corinthians 6:19a)

- (b) What Old Testament prophecy did Paul quote when emphasizing that the church as a whole is also “the temple of the living God”? (2 Corinthians 6:16b)

10. What did Paul say all the members of the body of Christ —together—grow into? Complete the following:

Ephesians 2:21–22: “...in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into _____
_____, in whom you also are being built together for
_____ in the Spirit.”

- 11. (a) What do believers have as an inheritance through Jesus under the latter glory? (Ephesians 1:18b)

- (b) In Paul’s metaphor, where do we currently have these riches, or “treasure”? (2 Corinthians 4:7a)

- (c) What is the reason for this? (Verse 7b)

12. (a) What did Paul call the vessels on whom God has bestowed “the riches of His glory”? (Romans 9:23a)

(b) For what had God prepared these vessels beforehand? (Verse 23b)

13. The following Scripture explains further why the latter glory, which comes from the ministry of Jesus, is “more excellent” than the former glory. Complete the following: Hebrews 8:6: “He [Jesus] is also Mediator of _____, which was established on _____.”

14. What did Jesus say believers would do under the latter glory, because He was going to the Father? (John 14:12b)

To be continued next week...

Prayer of Activation

Father of glory, we are earthen vessels, ready to carry Your glory to those around us. May Your glory rise upon us now, so that we may awaken, arise, and shine as reflections of Your grace, power, and majesty to the world. Bring multitudes to faith in Jesus and pour out Your healing and miracles in the “greater works” Jesus promised. Glorify the house of Your glory, now and for eternity. Amen!

Action Steps

- ▽ Your body is the “*temple of the Holy Spirit*” (1 Corinthians 6:19). Consider if there is any way in which you are mistreating this “*temple*”— through overeating, substance abuse, neglect of exercise, and so forth—and stop doing it. Determine to honor the Lord with your entire life, including your physical body.
- ▽ We must learn to walk circumspectly and wisely in these last days, and to redeem the time, “*because the days are evil*” (Ephesians 5:16). Write down what you can do this week and this month to redeem your time to better fulfill God’s purposes of manifesting His glory to the world. Each week, review what you have written and renew your commitment to redeeming your time.