



# *The Glory That Is To Come*

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## *Introduction*

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Is it possible for we believers to have wrong priorities in our church life? We generally measure spiritual success in terms of membership growth, church programs, buildings and finance. We place more emphasis on what we do for God than on what we are becoming in Him.

This tract is an attempt to briefly describe a more correct priority, a priority more in harmony with the heart of God.

## *The Glory of His Person*

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The word “glory” denotes, a highly commendable distinction in things such as achievement, stature or splendor. For example, the glory of a champion weight-lifter would be his strength, and the glory of a music composer would be the beauty and harmony of the music he has written.

How does God define His glory since He is infinitely great in power, wisdom, knowledge and all other measures of capability? The answer to this question is key to understanding the great truth of salvation. God has chosen to define His glory in terms of His Person and character; in other words, by who He is, rather than what He can do. This does not minimize the glory of His power; it does emphasize the glory of His Person. God is love; His glory is in His character!

Moses asked God to show him His glory (Exodus 33:18). God honored this request by replying that He would proclaim His name, and make all His goodness pass before Moses. In doing so God described His glory to Moses, for it is not possible that man in his flesh can behold the fulness of God’s glory and live (Exodus 33:20; 1 Timothy 6:16). The fulness of God’s glory is manifest in His face, something that we believers can only behold in the spirit realm.

The Father’s glory was evident in the face of Jesus during His earthly ministry.

*For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)*

Our face can reflect what is in our heart. The glory of a godly, Spirit-filled believer can be seen in the compassion, sincerity and love that is expressed by his countenance.

This relationship of glory and character was what God proclaimed to Moses when He passed before him. He defined His glory in terms of seven character virtues (Exodus 34:6-7). These seven qualities are as follows: compassion; grace; slow to anger; full of mercy; full of truth; willing to forgive iniquity, transgression and sin; and His judgments are righteous and just. God’s glory expresses His transcendent holiness. This is the glory that will one day fill the earth; it is the glory that we are to seek.

## *The Glory of His Purpose*

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*God has declared His intention to fill the earth with His glory (Psalm 72:19).*

*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14)*

This does not imply that the atmosphere will be filled with some ethereal, impersonal brightness; it does mean that a radiance of God's holy presence will be evident wherever men are present. Sin, death and sickness will have passed away. The presence of God will be sensed everywhere. This is the glory that is to come!

Before Adam and Eve fell into sin they were without clothing. After their sin they discovered their nakedness, and were ashamed. We infer from this that they were clothed in God's glory when they were created in His image, and that this glory was removed when they sinned.

The purpose of God to redeem man is a story of regained glory. He intends to display His glory in a great family of sons (Romans 8:29-30; Hebrews 2:6-7). This is where our hearts are to be focused. The redemption of lost mankind began when God, moved by love as defined in the qualities of His glory, came to earth as a man, lived a sinless life and then died a substitutionary death to atone for our sin. When a person accepts this sacrifice for his sin by faith and repentance, he is reconciled to God as His child, and Christ comes to abide in his heart. This is the first step in regaining glory. It is a mystery that is hidden in the gospel.

*. . . God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)*

*. . . the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifest to His saints . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:26-27)*

The inner hope of glory is birthed in the hearts of those who experience God's saving grace.

*. . . we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)*

God seeks to encourage us and develop our hope for the glory that is to come. This involves making decisions to obey the Lord and to mature into His likeness. Maturity is a lifelong process of trials, tribulation and testing. Just as fire purifies, so also does suffering and persecution carry a promise of great glory.

*For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison. (2 Corinthians 4:17)*

*For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18; NKJ)*

Our goal in this life is to become more like Jesus. We must always keep our eyes on Him so that we can share His sufferings in any fiery ordeal that may come upon us.

*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 from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

Where do we go from here? What do we look for, and how do we prepare for the glory that is coming? Two climactic manifestations of glory lie before the church. The first one will be the glory of Christ that rises upon the church to bring in a great harvest of souls and to close this age of grace. The second one will be the resurrection of righteous believers into their bodies of glory at the return of Christ.

## *The Glory of Harvest*

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The early church, as described in the New Testament, was a spiritually organic entity under the headship of Christ. It grew rapidly as local expressions of the body of Christ were planted throughout the then known world. Within a century after the death of Paul, the apostle, leaders in the church began to teach doctrines that masked the centrality of Christ while promoting their own authority and preeminence. This falling away led into the apostasy of the dark ages.

Since the reformation there have been many occasions of revival and restoration from the presence of the Lord in the church. However, the greatest revival is to come as the Lord prepares His church for a great end-time harvest of souls! We are living in a time of restoration as Christ is restored to His rightful place in the church.

First of all, to know what lies ahead, we need to recognize that His Father promised Jesus a great harvest of souls from all nations.

*Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. (Psalm 2:8)*

*I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations . . . . (Haggai 2:7)*

*Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people. (Zechariah 2:11)*

Secondly, we also need to understand that this age of grace will close with a mighty demonstration of the gospel to all nations.

*This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end shall come. (Matthew 24:14)*

Thirdly, only the complete gospel can bring in a final harvest so great that nations are changed. In the last days difficult times will come. Satan will bring darkness into the world through doctrines of demons and deceitful spirits. New Age literature and the DaVinci Code are current examples. Some will fall away from the faith, but the Lord will gather in a great harvest from all nations. God will use His word, the sword of the Spirit, to overcome the darkness. The sharp leading edge of this sword is the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). This gospel proclaims and demonstrates the love of God in compassion, healing miracles and deliverances. There will be persecution, but the powers of darkness will be broken as men behold the forgiveness and love of God in Christ. The gospel is not a list of rules on conduct; it is not a user friendly, entertaining gospel; it is not a gospel that builds religious kingdoms around preachers. It is a gospel that proclaims the glory of Christ; it exalts Him alone. When He is lifted up, men and nations are drawn to Him, and they will be changed. This gospel will not divide believers into groups, it will unite them around the Person of Christ.

The key word is glory; a glory that will be a final demonstration of God's love for a lost world. All the virtues of His glory that God described to Moses will draw multitudes from darkness to Christ. And this includes Islamic nations. The prophet Isaiah describes the glory of this harvest, that even today is beginning to take place.

*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord will rise upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you and His glory*

*will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3)*

The gospel of the glory of Christ is the message that the world so desperately needs today

## *Resurrection Glory*

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Every child of God is promised that in the resurrection, he or she will inherit the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:44; Philippians 3:20-21). However, there will be differences in the resurrection, a difference that concerns the clothing of glory that believers will receive.

*There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead . . . (1 Corinthians 15:41-42)*

While we believers live in our flesh, we long to be clothed with our house from heaven; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God!

*For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, in as much as we having put it on, will not be found naked. (2 Corinthians 5:1-3)*

The last great event in God's plan to fill the earth with His glory is the return of Christ. He is coming in the clouds to be revealed in glory! At that time both the dead and the living saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and given their glorified bodies. Our hope is that when we receive our new, immortal bodies, they will not be naked but clothed with God's glory. Apparently our character and deeds in this life will be reflected in the glory that we will receive. Old Testament saints believed that torture and martyrdom could lead to a better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35).

When Adam sinned and lost his clothing of glory, all of creation fell into corruption. Ever since then creation has been eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God in glory, who will regain the oversight of the earth that Adam had lost (Hebrews 2:5-8)

*For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God . . . that the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:19, 21)*

Creation is longing for the glory to come, and so should we! The resurrection is not something to passively wait for; we are to prepare our hearts, our relationships, our ministry and our vision for the glory of harvest that will bring the glory of resurrection.

## *Conclusion*

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The church is the total of all people who have become children of God through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is most encouraging to see how great the number of believers is, and how fast this number is growing, especially in nations of the Far East.

On the other hand, it is discouraging to see the lack of unity between many Christian bodies. The unfortunate emphasis is to promote the visibility of their own organization rather than to seek unity with other groups. These church bodies are usually structured after institutional models of the business world with hierarchical levels of oversight and programmed agendas.

However, it is encouraging to see the exploding number of believers who are gathering in small group environments (i.e. house churches). Their vision is to regain the intimate relationship with the Lord and with one another that is taught in the New Testament. They seek to become functioning expressions of the body of Christ in righteousness, gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:3-13; 1 Corinthians 14:26).

It is also encouraging to see the growing number of Spirit baptized believers in the church, and how miracles of healing and deliverance are becoming more common in evangelism.

Considering all of these good trends, there is a growing conviction that the Lord is restoring His church; the restoration that is promised before He returns (Acts 3:19). One component of this restoration will be the salvation of Israel.

Before the church can gather in the great end-time harvest, the unity that is implicit in her being the body of Christ, must be restored. Only the glory of God can accomplish this!

*The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one. I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You loved Me. (John 17:22-23)*

When we understand the purpose of God in the earth and the role that the church plays in His purpose, the greatest priority we can have is being prepared for the glory that is to come. Our vision for tomorrow determines how we will live today.