

## *How Shall We Then Live—Part 3* *The Unifying Principle of God's Glory*

*(Heb. 5:4-9)<sup>4</sup> And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. <sup>5</sup> So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; <sup>6</sup> just as He says also in another passage, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." <sup>7</sup> In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.<sup>8</sup> Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. <sup>9</sup> And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation*

I am a follower of Jesus Christ. I am a Christian.

This is my primary identity and this identity is informed and shaped by being reconciled to God and therefore as God's child, being under the authority of the teachings of the Bible.

That's huge.

Contrary to many modern theologians, my life and world do not inform and shape my understanding of the Bible,

... instead the Bible informs my life and shapes my understanding of the world.

In the Christian church there has been 4 major types of theology

- **Biblical /Exegetical Theology**—This is exactly what it looks like. The analysis of the contents of scripture, authorship, intent, and progression.
- **Historical Theology**—Study of how Christian theology has developed over time through the church fathers, middle ages, reformation and modern times.
- **Systematic Theology**—A systematic organization and study of the various topics of scripture such as creation, the trinity, soteriology, providence, eschatology to mention a few.
- **Practical Theology**—The is the theology of applying scripture to life. Christian ethics, the church, pastor theology, missiology.

In reality the basis for all theology was that scripture interpreted scripture ... understanding the Word of God through the mind of God.

... in simple terms, they saw the Bible as a **divine** book about God revealing God to humanity.

...but then something strange happened on the way to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

... Some theologians began to teach that the Bible was primarily a **human** book about humanity.

- The Bible was no longer the revelation of God but people writing about witnessing the revelation of God ...
- The Bible was an extraordinary book but filled with errors ...
- ... It wasn't the Word of God, but it could "become the Word of God" if it "spoke" to you. (Karl Barth said, "the bible is merely a token through which the Word of God comes to us.")
- Suddenly the measurement for truth was no longer the infallible Word of God but, experience, feeling, impact.

Now, I admit that I am painting with a pretty wide brush, glossing over a lot of details ...

... But when theologians began to handle the Bible as a human book rather than the infallible, inerrant Word of God, things changed.

From this we began to see new theologies arise.

- Liberation Theology
- Feminist Theology
- Socialist Theology
- LGBT Theology

In other words, instead of God's Word interpreting God's Word ... people are now interpreting the bible through their personal lives, experiences, and impressions.

That is a sinking ship ... but that is what has brought us to our current situation ... not only in the world, but in the modern church.

**"Scripture Alone"** means that that the bible is the lens and the standard by which we understand our world and know God.

Therefore, we know exactly what to believe we the Bible tells us that “**Christ Alone**” is the exclusive redeemer of humanity and mediator of our salvation.

Furthermore, the Bible reveals that Christ’s mission was singularly “**God’s Glory.**”

What I mean is this:

Our first sight of the glory of God is the humility and suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross.

We know God and are glorified with Christ when we take up our cross and follow HIM.

Calvary is the picture of Jesus the Son of God, bringing glory to God!

- Calvary teaches us that God is glorified when we give up our foolish attempts to save ourselves.
- Calvary proclaims that God is glorified in our salvation.
- ... God is glorified in our surrender.

Do you want to behold the Glory of God ... then see the Lord beaten, mocked and crucified ...?

... behold the agony of Jesus Christ and then find refuge **ONLY** in the cursed cross.

It does us no good to see God on His throne in glory and majesty if we do not recognize that this is the same God who died in humility and shame on the cross.

The journey to knowing God’s Glory winds through the lowliness and desolation of Calvary.

Salvation by Christ alone, through grace alone, by faith alone means that glory goes to God alone.

## **1. God’s Glory Begins and Ends with God**

*And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God – Heb. 5:4*

In 1 Samuel 15:29 God is called the “Glory of Israel”; in Psalm 24 He is called the “King of glory” and in Psalm 29 He is called the “God of glory.”

In Acts 7:2 when Stephen is preaching before the Sanhedrin he says, “The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia...”

In Ephesians 1:17 Paul writes that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ is the “Father of glory.”

In Deut. 28:58 Moses says that we should fear the “honored and awesome” name of God.

Throughout the bible we see God identify Himself as being almighty, most high, holy one, and when the Bible says that God is the father of glory it means that the very nature of God is glory and glorious.

... It means that God, and God alone deserves all praise and honor.

***“Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory!” (Psa. 115:1)***

***“I am the Lord; that is my name? I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.” (Isa. 42:8)***

***“For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.” (Isa. 48:11)***

The Word of God is saying that everything God does is for His own glory, for His own name, and for His own sake...

In Psalm 19 King David said that even the heavens declare the glory of God.

... Glory is God’s name; glorious is God’s reputation; and all of creation proclaims that God’s glory is over and above all and everything.

... that is the ultimate truth about what God does and what motivates God to act!

The Psalmist understood this, and it prompted him to pray ...

***<sup>9</sup> Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; And deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake. (Ps. 79:9)***

When you ask why did God do, this why doesn't God do that, why would God want this or not want that .... the answer is always **"For His own Glory!"**

**You and I may not always understand the logic behind God's behavior, but we can always know the motive!**

God told Moses that he would receive glory through destroying Pharaoh's army ...

God said that he formed Israel for His own glory ...

Paul tell us in Ephesians that those who believe in Christ are His possession to "the praise of His glory."

One of the reasons the church is so confused today is because we are trying to understand God from the context of our own wishes and desires ...

... and when those don't match up with what God is doing, we get confused, angry, depressed ...

... even worse we get frustrated when we can't change the world to go along with how we think things should be.

This is not our work to do or our worry to bear ...

No matter what you think ... everything that is happening will ultimately turn out for the Glory of God!

## **2. God's Glory is Fully Revealed in Jesus Christ**

*So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON – Hebrew 5:5*

Throughout the Old Testament we are reminded over and over again that God's glory will one day return to Jerusalem.

In 2 Samuel 7:12-16 God promised that David's lineage to rule over Israel forever ... but then David's son Solomon turned away from God and in time the Jerusalem was destroyed.

... what about God's promise?

The prophet Isaiah tells us not to fret because in time *"a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit."* (Isa. 11:1)

*Isa. 53:1 "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He will grow up before Him like a tender plant..."*

Who was this "stem of Jesse" ... who is this "tender plant?"

... None other than our Lord Jesus Christ!

Even back then 2500 years ago God was saying, "No matter how things look, the ultimate conclusion of all things will be for My glory."

... and according to Hebrews 1:3 **Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory!**

In 1 Cor. 2:8 Paul calls Jesus *"the Lord of Glory."*

James 2:1 called Jesus *"our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."*

Now here is what is astounding me ... Jesus, the image of God's glory became flesh in order to share our miserable weak condition.

Isaiah prophesied that the glory of God would dwell among us ... and when that happened, we would not desire it.

Jesus "knew no sin" and yet Paul tells us in Romans 8:3 he tells us that God sent Jesus, *"in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering."*

Jesus Christ the Lord of glory came in the flesh and yet the *"rulers of this age crucified the Lord of Glory."* (1 Cor. 2:8)

Listen to me ... Jesus didn't just reveal the Glory of God in his person and purity ... Jesus Christ revealed the glory of God in his sacrifice.

Certainly, Jesus was glorified when He turned the water into wine, raise Lazarus from the dead, walked on water ...

... But Jesus didn't seek glory ... God the Father gave it to Him.

*(John 8:50, 54) "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges... Jesus answered, 'If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'"*

Jesus didn't take on Himself the glory of becoming a High Priest ... God the Father said to Jesus, *"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."*

God reveals His glory in and through His son Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Father and the Son mutually glorify each other.

After the triumphal entry Jesus is praying ...

*<sup>28</sup> "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John 12:28)*

After the last supper Jesus said,

*(Jn. 13:31-32)<sup>31</sup> Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; <sup>32</sup> if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.*

Now I know exactly what you are thinking.

... In the Old Testament God said that He would not give His glory to another, so why is God giving Jesus His glory?

The answer is simple. **Jesus is not another, Jesus is God!**

That bring me to my last point.

### 3. Jesus is the place where God's glory is made available to inglorious man.

*(Hebrews 5:8-9) Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. <sup>9</sup> And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.*

If you are not careful you will forget that the ultimate end of all things will be for God's glory.

... you'll get discouraged

... you will think all is lost

**Covid-19** not only the virus but the fear, the disinformation, the mask or no mask debates ...

**Chaos** in the great cities of America

- With the reduction of law enforcement in NYC ex-Gov. George Pataki is saying that NYC is in jeopardy and New York is going to die.
- Washington Gov. Jay Inslee stated yesterday that downtown Seattle is devastated.
- Portland, Chicago, Atlanta ... the list goes on.

**Social Justice groups**, in the name of justice are spreading division, hate and anger .. inciting rioting, looting, mayhem, murder, as well as lawsuits of every kind ....

The world is in an upheaval ... now is not the time to underestimate the wonder and power of God's glory.

*(2 Cor. 4:15-18) <sup>15</sup> For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. <sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

God has not kept His glory within Himself ... God has chosen to reveal His glory in and throughout the world that He has created.

As we saw earlier, “the very heavens declare the glory of God.”

Hebrews tell us that in the “fullness of time God sent forth His son, the brightness of His father’s glory...”

Jesus name is Immanuel which means “God with us.”

Yes, Jesus died but God raised his Son from the grave and exalted him to the throne in heaven.

... there is a man of our own flesh and blood who now sits enthroned in the glory of His Father.

... But that is not God’s final goal ... that is not the end of the story.

God’s plan is not completed until Jesus Christ is joined with the multitude of his brothers and sisters in glory.

***(2 Cor. 3:18) <sup>18</sup> 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.***

The glory of God doesn’t just run through Calvary ... it runs through Christ’s transformation of sinners into His own image!

That was the plan all along!

Listen to what Jesus prayed the night before his betrayal and crucifixion.

***(Jn. 17:22-23) [Father] "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; <sup>23</sup> 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 have loved Me.***

When people speak of “the gospel” they usually mean the good news of forgiveness of sins through Jesus ...

... and that is not inaccurate, but it is incomplete.

Ultimately the Gospel is about God's own Glory which is revealed in Jesus and finally in us.

“HOLD IT NATHAN! Again, God said he would not give His glory to another but now you are saying God is going to give His glory to us.

... Yes, but in Christ we are not another ... we are ONE WITH HIM!!

Jesus prayed ...*I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity,*

**Scripture is the only** reliable, infallible, inerrant source of truth and authority ...

... and Scripture tells us that **Christ alone** is the redeemer of humanity and mediator of salvation

... Now we see today that God's motive behind our redemption is to extend and magnify **HIS Glory alone!**

This should change how we respond to the chaos that is happening throughout the world.

This take our focus off the headlines and put it on the Heavenly Father.

This should take away our foolish dreams of an earthly utopia ... we don't need it ... we are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.