

# GLORY OF GOD

Question: "What is the glory of God?"

Answer: The glory of God is the beauty of His spirit. It is not an aesthetic beauty or a material beauty, but it is the beauty that emanates from His character, from all that He is. [James 1:10](#) calls on a rich man to “glory in his humiliation,” indicating a glory that does not mean riches or power or great aesthetic or material beauty. This glory can crown man or fill the earth. It is seen within man and in the earth, but it is not of them; it is of God. The glory of man is the beauty of man’s spirit, which is fallible and eventually passes away, and is therefore humiliating—as the verse tells us. But the glory of God, which is manifested in all His attributes together, never passes away. It is eternal.

[Isaiah 43:7](#) says that God created us for His glory. In context with the other verses, it can be said that man “glorifies” God because through man God’s glory can be seen in things such as love, music, heroism and so forth—things belonging to God that we are carrying “in jars of clay” ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)). We are the vessels which “contain” His glory. All the things we are able to do and be find their source in Him. God interacts with nature in the same way. Nature exhibits His glory. His glory is revealed to man’s mind through the material world in many ways, and often in different ways to different people. One person may be thrilled by the sight of the mountains, and another person may love the beauty of the sea. But that which is behind them both (God’s glory) speaks to both people and connects them to God. In this way, God is able to reveal Himself to all men, no matter their race, heritage or location. As [Psalm 19:1-4](#) says, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands; day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world.”

[Psalm 73:24](#) calls heaven itself “glory.” It used to be common to hear Christians talk of death as being “received unto glory,” which is a phrase borrowed from this Psalm. When the Christian dies, he will be taken into God’s presence, and in His presence will be naturally surrounded by God’s glory. We will be taken to the place where God’s beauty literally resides—the beauty of His Spirit will be there, because He will be there. Again, the beauty of His Spirit (or the essence of Who He Is) is His “glory.” In that place, His glory will not need to come through man or nature, rather it will be seen clearly, just as [1 Corinthians 13:12](#) says, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

In the human/earthly sense, **glory is a beauty or vibrancy** that rests upon the material of the earth ([Psalm 37:20](#), [Psalm 49:17](#)), and in that sense, it fades. But the reason it fades is only that

the material things do not last. They die and wither, but the glory that is in them belongs to God, and returns to Him when death or decay takes the material. Think of the rich man mentioned earlier. The verse says, "The rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away." What does this mean? The verse is admonishing the rich man to realize that his wealth and power and beauty come from God, and to be humbled by the realization that it is God who makes him what he is, and gives him all he has. And the knowledge that he will pass away like the grass is what will bring him to the realization that God is the one from whence his glory comes. God's glory is the source, the wellspring from which all smaller glories run.

Since God is the one from whom glory comes, He will not let stand the assertion that glory comes from man or from the idols of man or from nature. In [Isaiah 42:8](#) we see an example of God's jealousy over His glory. This jealousy for His own glory is what Paul is talking about in [Romans 1:21-25](#) when he speaks of the ways people worship the creature rather than the Creator. In other words, they looked at the object through which God's glory was coming and instead of giving God the credit for it, they worshiped that animal or tree or man as if the beauty it possessed originated from within itself. This is the very heart of idolatry and is a very common occurrence. It is probably safe to say that everyone who has ever lived has committed this error at one time or another. We have all "exchanged" the glory of God in favor of the "glory of man."

This is the mistake many people continue to make: trusting in earthly things, earthly relationships, their own powers or talents or beauty, or the goodness they see in others. But when these things fade and fail as they will inevitably do (being only temporary carriers of the greater glory), these people despair. What we all need to realize is that God's glory is constant, and as we journey through life we will see it manifesting here and there, in this person or that forest or in a story of love or heroism, fiction or non-fiction, or our own personal lives. But it all goes back to God in the end. And the only way to God is through His Son, Jesus Christ. We will find the very source of all beauty in Him, in heaven, if we are in Christ. Nothing will be lost to us. All those things that faded in life we will find again in Him.

### Question: "What does it mean to glorify God?"

Answer: To "glorify" God means to give glory to Him. The word *glory* as related to God in the Old Testament bears with it the idea of **greatness of splendor**. In the New Testament, the word translated "glory" means "**dignity, honor, praise and worship.**" Putting the two together, we find that **glorifying God means to acknowledge His greatness and give Him honor by praising and worshipping Him**, primarily because He, and He alone, deserves to be praised, honored and worshipped. God's glory is the essence of His nature, and we give glory to Him by recognizing that essence.

The question that comes to mind is if God has all the glory, which He does, how then do we "give Him" glory? How can we give God something which is His in the first place? The key is

found in 1 Chronicles 16:28-29, “Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.” In this verse, we see two actions on our part that make up the action of glorifying God. First, we “ascribe” or give glory to Him because it is His due. No one else deserves the praise and worship that we give to glorify Him. Isaiah 42:8 confirms this: “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.” Second, we are to “bring an offering” to God as part of the worship that glorifies Him. What is the offering we bring to God to glorify Him?

The offering we bring to God as we come before Him in the splendor or beauty of His holiness involves **agreement, obedience, submission, and rehearsing His attributes or extolling Him.** Glorifying God begins with agreeing with everything He says, especially about Himself. In Isaiah 42:5, God declares, “I am the Lord God. I created the heavens like an open tent above. I made the earth and everything that grows on it. I am the source of life for all who live on this earth, so listen to what I say.” Because of who He is, holy and perfect and true, His proclamations and statutes are holy and perfect and true (Psalm 19:7), and we glorify Him by listening to and agreeing with them. God’s Word, the Bible, is His Word to us, all that we need for life in Him. Listening to and agreeing with Him, though, will not glorify Him unless we also submit to Him and obey the commands contained in His Word. “But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts” (Psalm 103:17-18). Jesus reiterated the idea that glorifying and loving God are one and the same in John 14:15: “If you love me, you will obey what I command.”

We also glorify God by rehearsing His attributes and His deeds. Stephen, in his final sermon before he was killed for his faith, retold the story of God’s dealings with Israel from the time Abraham left his country in obedience to God’s command, all the way to the coming of Christ, the “Righteous One,” whom Israel betrayed and murdered. When we tell of God’s work in our lives, how He saved us from sin, and the marvelous works He does in our hearts and minds every day, we glorify Him before others. Even though others don’t always want to hear our glorifying God, He is more than pleased by it. The crowd who heard Stephen hated what he said, covering their ears and rushing at him to stone him. “But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55).

To glorify God is to extol His attributes—His holiness, faithfulness, mercy, grace, love, majesty, sovereignty, power, and omniscience, to name a few—rehearsing them over and over in our minds and telling others about the singular nature of the salvation only He offers.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

JOHN 11:40-44 "Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you **would see the glory of God?**" So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11 "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to **the glory of God** the Father."

## **THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE NEW JERUSALEM**

The New Jerusalem is where believers in Christ will spend eternity. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate fulfillment of all God's promises. The New Jerusalem is heaven, paradise, God's goodness made fully manifest.

REVELATIONS 21:22-27 "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the **glory of God** gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

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Glory to God - His Creation and Works

Honor, praise, renown, distinction - all are words synonymous with glory. As a manifestation of the work of His hands, all creation brings glory to God. In Genesis 1:31 we read, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day." Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." God's very work praises Him and brings Him glory.

Glory to God is displayed through His mighty actions. Psalm 111:3, "Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever." In Psalm 138:5 we read, "May they sing of the ways of the LORD, for the glory of the LORD is great."

Exodus 15:11 says, "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" No one can accomplish what God can. He is above and beyond our comprehension.

Glory to God - The Life and Death of Jesus Christ

Bringing glory to God was the life purpose of Jesus Christ. Following His birth, the angels declared the glory of God: "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'" (Luke 2:13-14).

Glorifying God, the Father, was Jesus' role on earth. In John 8:54, Jesus said, "Jesus replied, 'If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.'"

Strange as it may sound at first, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is perhaps the greatest display of God's glory. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." In order that God's purposes from the beginning would be fulfilled, Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice. He died and rose again three days later in victory over sin and death. In that act, He set us free from the slavery of sin, so that we might enjoy eternal life with God in His eternal kingdom by grace through faith in Him.

Glory to God is expressed by John as he describes the eternal heaven. Revelation 21:23 says, "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." What a miraculous place heaven will be, illuminated by God's glory!

#### Glory to God - New Life in Christ

Believers are called to bring glory to God. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, the Apostle Paul exhorts, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Believers are called to give glory to God by what we say and do. It does not mean that we are adding to the glory God already has. It means we are revealing the glory of God to the world through our words, lifestyle, and behavior. It also means that we are giving God our praise and adoration.

How can believers bring glory and praise to our God? We can submit to God's will in all things, and be willing to suffer for Him (John 21:18-19). We are to be content with what God has given us (Philippians 4:11) and not worry, knowing God will take care of us (Philippians 4:19). We can rely on God for strength instead of relying on ourselves (Philippians 4:13). We can help others and give the glory to God by praising Him with our mouths. We are called to be selfless and humble (Philippians 2:3-4). We show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23). None of these things is easy, nor do they come naturally. But through faith in Jesus Christ, the transformation of our lives is possible. When we submit to His will, we bring glory to God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

#### Glory to God - Does Your Life Show It?

What do others think when they look at your life? Are they likely to give God glory for what they see? This is the heart of the matter: does your heart belong to Jesus Christ? If you have not yet made that step, if you have yet to ask Him in, we invite you to **do that now**.

Next, recognize that nothing you have is yours apart from the will of God. All your talents, abilities, even your possessions, are yours because God has allowed them into your life. When you use those resources for HIS kingdom, then God receives all the glory... just as it should be.