

APOSTOLIC SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE GLORY OF GOD
IN THE SELF- REVELATION
OF JESUS CHRIST

SUBMITTED TO PROFESSOR JEREMY PAINTER
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE5213 CHURCH HISTORY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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DECEMBER 12, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of John provides ample opportunity to see the efforts Jesus Christ made in making Himself known to his Jewish community, or in other words, his self-revelation to mankind..And to those who were acutely aware of the importance of staying alert for the coming Messiah, the revelation of who He truly was became evident..To those who were determined to hold on to the old ways, and not willing to accept anything different, they missed out on learning and receiving God's plan of redemption for mankind. Examining the numerous times Jesus performed works that only the Messiah Himself could have been capable of, it seems that the unbelievers had had their vision for spiritual things stunted. It would not have been too difficult, from the testimonies of those left behind, to believe that this indeed was the fleshly manifestation of the Almighty God. His glory was revealed time and again by the earthly signs, and John in his Gospel along with the Epistles of John not only recorded these signs, but gave clear warnings of what to do with them. Morally speaking, what one should do with them is; to study them, in prayer seek to understand them, and then under the influence of the Holy Spirit reflect on the proper actions one needs to take to obey them. It was in these signs that God performed through the man Christ Jesus, where the glory of God is revealed to the world. The underlying theme of the Gospel of John is the glory of God being made manifest in the life of Jesus Christ and ultimately in the life of his followers. We see this thread of God as being glorified through the Gospel of John; in the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and through the followers of Jesus as they learn to walk in the truth and the light of His Word.

KING OF GLORY – GLORY OF GOD – JESUS CHRIST

The magnificence of the God of creation is made manifest through the intimate relationship of His Spirit touching one's spirit. It is this glory that impacts the world, one soul at a time, either by direct connection with God's spirit or by the influence of another soul who is directly under the influence of God the Almighty. When speaking of glory, one is referring to "God and the splendor of God's perfection." The "glory of the Lord" is a "technical expression used of God's sovereign and self-revelatory actions in Creation (Isa. 6:3), history (Ex. 24:16-17) and liturgy (Lev. 9:6-24 and 1 Kgs 8:11) all of which are to be perfected in God's eschatological dominion (Dan 7:13, Ez 43:5)" (McFarland, Fergusson, Kilby, Torrance, p. 197 -198). It is in this self-revelation fashion that God was able to reveal his glory, and at the same time, not directly reveal his face: for "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (Jo 1:18). It is the two factors of revelation and this hidden sort of manifestation of God that is a "particular characteristic of the suffering servant in whom God's glory will shine to the nations (Isa 49:3, 6:53). It is his entire life that was comprised of a series of events that exuded divine glory (McFarland, Fergusson, Kilby, Torrance, p. 197 -198).

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth (Jo. 1:14); "Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him" (Jo 7:18); "and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (Jo 17:5); "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (Jo 17:22); "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (Jo 17:24). And cross-referencing verses include: "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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3); "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Who is this

King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory" (Ps. 24:8, 10); "...had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8).

New Testament Greek meanings of glory include: "honor, renown, an especially divine quality, the unspoken manifestation of God, splendor"; "exercising personal opinion which determines value" and "God's infinite, intrinsic worth (substance, essence)" (Strong's; Greek word "Doxa", #1391). This is the reflection of the Father in the man Christ Jesus, and subsequently in the children of God, the magnificence of the unspoken, yet experienced, Spirit of God in the lives of the believers. The glory originates with the Father, is bestowed upon the Son, and is given to the believers, in order to unify the body of Christ: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22). This is the power of the Holy Spirit, when one succumbs to the heartbeat of God, in loving one another as He taught; one receives intrinsic worth of honor in the new position as a child of God!

LAW OF LOVE

It is revelatory and pleasing to see how it is that this love, which has been exemplified in the Father/Son motif, and now is the model whereby we are instructed to live our lives. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another" (Jo 13:34-35). Jesus admonished his followers with this "obedience to the law of love". One can see this thread of loving one another carried from the Gospel of John into the Epistles: "Menw" is the Greek word for remain or abide, which means enduring commitment and personal relationship (Wilbanks lecture). So we are charged by Jesus, hence by John and the Epistles of John to love as Jesus loved, which is only possible by abiding in Him:

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 Jo 2:6); "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 Jo 2:10); "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." (1 Jo 3:24); "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (1 Jo 2:24); "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 Jo 3:17)

The love Jesus demonstrated on the Cross of Calvary was the love that could have only come from our Heavenly Father, and by implication, demonstration, and impartation, one is now responsible for carrying that same love to the world. By doing this, the Father, the Spirit of God is being glorified in and through individual lives and the Church body. It is the charge Jesus left the body of believers, to continue to fight a spiritual war to maintain this abiding relationship with God and fellow-warriors. One must continue to abide in His Word. For this is the proof of who are His disciples, and how can one love, and have the mind of Christ without this steadfastness of letting the Word renew one's mind? Jesus said in John 8:31 ". If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed". It is proof to God, to oneself and those around one's circle of influence whether or not one is abiding in Him and His Word. The reflection of His glory is what is being made manifest to others by one's; absorption of His light and glory and then the outward response, or reflection, of a God-fearing and God-loving life. When others see love in the life of the believer, they are in essence seeing God: for "no man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 Jo 4:12): "we "do good" according to the truth and we "do evil" according to untruth. We can see who is who (truth or lie) according to their manifest actions". (Wilbanks, 2015)

REFLECTION OF GOD'S GLORY

A challenge is presented to believers to be the reflection of God's glory that He purposes in order for the salvation message to be carried to the world. It begins with the time of conversion and then continues to be that for which we strive, as the spiritual torch that has been handed to his followers. Once Jesus ascended, the torch of carrying the global picture as to why humanity has been placed on earth is now up to the believers: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18). Laura Tack composed an entire exegesis of this particular verse and had some interesting findings and conclusions. This open face is representative of an unveiled face, the face of one who believes in the "death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ." It is the face of an unbeliever, however, which remains veiled: "Paul's Gospel is veiled for the unbelievers because the god of this world has blinded their minds. Consequently, they can not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (Tack, p. 103). It is not the face that has been veiled, but in essence, it is the heart. When speaking of the Israelites, Paul claims that "the Israelites have a veiled heart." It is a symbol for their alleged incapacity to bear the sight of the overwhelming divine glory". Paul, in his efforts to encourage the Jews to receive sight, "wants to describe how all Christians are capable of manifesting God's glory, just as Moses did at the time" (Tack, p. 92). As can be seen by this piece of acknowledgment, it is not a face veiling that is at issue here, but the heart. It is a heart issue. Once one's heart is right with God, it is unveiled and thereby begins to reflect the glory of God at conversion. Moses was the beginning of the demonstration of God's glory in Exodus: "And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh to him" (v. 34:30): "The text emphasizes Moses' face that is radiating glory. The common feature in the comparison

between Moses and all Christians is exactly the face that manifests God's glory. In this context therefore the unveiled face does not refer to the ability to see God's glory but instead refers to the ability to make visible God's glory by means of the face" (Tack (Dupont), p. 93). Tack also uses insight from Dupont in the article "Chretien" regarding the unbeliever: "the unbelievers are not able to see the glory of the gospel because they did not convert, their hearts are not enlightened by God." (Tack, p. 93). What is exponentially almost incomprehensible is the degree to which the world can witness the glory that is outwardly manifested by groups of converted believers. When glory meets glory, there is a witness in the spirit that ignites an even brighter countenance: "The facial manifestation of glory is evidence for this process of transformation, because Christians who reflect God's glory on their faces resemble Christ whose countenance also shone with glory" (Tack, (Dumont), p. 101). This transformation is likened to a "metamorphosis", "influenced by the divine glory" (Tack, (Prumm & Fitzmeyer), p. 101) and Tack notes Van Unnik in his publication "Unveiled" that it is "the Spirit that enlightens the faces" (Tack, Van Unnik, p. 101). What is concluded is that it is the "Lord who is the Spirit that brings the transformation", the "cause of the metamorphosis" (Tack, (Back),p. 102). As the Spirit transforms a child of God, it gives an openness, which is the unveiling of the Truth that is now embodied in the children of God. (Tack, p. 102). As long as one lives a "morally just life" (Tack, (Hooker, p. 103), one will be following the example of Paul, who imitated Christ in his ministry.

ANTICHRIST SPIRIT - SCHISMS

The Epistles of John seem to have been written in response to schisms that had been going on in the church, and warnings against the antichrist spirit were emphatic: "The word antichristos occurs only in the Johannine epistles in the New Testament" (Ladd, 1974, p. 661).

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." (1 Jo 2:18); "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 Jo 2:22); "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 Jo 4:3). "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 Jo. 1:7).

One cannot help but believe that the spirit of antichrist is still prevalent in the world today as it was when those words were penned. It is not unimaginable to think that the influence of this spirit is what is at the root of most schisms, in and out of the church. When one is under the influence of this spirit, one is not being influenced by the spirit of God and is not capable of loving as God would have them to love. Barker's commentary on 1 John that by implication, when the Jews "denied that Jesus had come in the flesh", they denied the "authority of Jesus' commands." This, in essence, pointed to many other facts that this denial would encompass: "their own sinfulness", "the absolute demand that believers love one another"; the authority of the writer of the Epistles as the proclaimer of the message that had been from the beginning" and they "denied that the members of the community who did not follow them were in the truth" (Barker, 1981, p. 297).

Unbelief is the root of sin and by discounting Jesus, and the entirety of the message of Jesus' love, one is acting under this realm of unbelief. Consciously, or unconsciously, one is denying the whole gospel message, which is sinful and is a "further manifestation of a basic hatred for God". Unless one believes "they will perish" and the "wrath of God rests upon them" (1 Jo 16:9, 3:16, 3:36) (Ladd, 1974, p.265,). There is no glory to be had in a life filled with sin, hate and unbelief, for there is no God or Holy Spirit dwelling in the life of an unbeliever. The

contrasting schools of thought regarding the gospel message have been going on since the birth of Jesus, but it is extremely curious as to why, given the momentous, extraordinary measures He exacted to make Himself known.

Kysar notes that the Hebraic terminology for glory is to "designate the manifestation of God" (Kysar, 2007, loc. 2074). Reflecting back on the magnificent historical events that have led up to now in the Christian eschatology of Jesus, one can see numerous occasions that would need to be explained to be in error, if one would take the stance of discounting Christianity. In 2010, a Jewish Rabbi was asked by the author about the many prophecies that had come to pass from the O.T. in the N.T. in Jesus Christ, to which he replied "we believe it all to have been staged." To the naysayers one must ask them to: explain in detail how the dozens of O.T. Scriptures came true; the location of Jesus birth (including the angels, and the star that led the shepherds and wise men right to the very spot of the baby Jesus); how Jesus was able to perform the many miracles of healings; how the dove and voice of God appeared at Jesus' baptism; at Jesus' crucifixion, his ultimate enthronement of Him as King; how He came alive after three days in the tomb (angels present to testify), and many dead came out of the graves, the sky was darkened, the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom; how Jesus ascended into the heavens after his last words of instruction; how the day of Pentecost happened with dozens receiving the Holy Ghost; and how people today still continue to receive the Holy Ghost. If glory means God is present, and glory was present at all of the aforementioned events, does not it stand to reason that God's signature of approval, love and acceptance was upon each one? God was glorified through Jesus Christ each time he participated in his self-revelation to the world and continues to be glorified as He is lifted up in the life of a believer. He is lifted up as a repentant sinner comes to terms with his/her need of God, is baptized in the precious name of

Jesus Christ, and is filled with the gift of the Holy Ghost because God is present at each of those significant events in their life.

SELF-REVELATION OF JESUS, THE CHRIST

Jesus has been found to have identified himself as; "the bearer of divine glory with the Son of man, the self-designation that is associated with the absolutely transcendent character of Jesus' messiah-ship." (Ridderbos, loc. 11614) Jesus came into the world for two reasons; to make the Father known to the world, and to offer up salvation to those who would believe. He made a concerted effort to enlighten the eyes of the Jews to the new orientation of moving from the pole of unbelief to the pole of belief (Wilbanks lecture). John demonstrates an active use of self-revelation to counter-act unbelief in the disciples and the Jews by documenting the miracles of Jesus. It was in the use of miracles that Jesus attempted to get the attention of the world to show that He was no ordinary man, that He was, in fact, the King and Messiah who they had been waiting for. Self-revelation was manifest by: his numerous miracles, as well as the significance of them; the voice from heaven when He was baptized; the sacraments; salvific conversations with the Jews and John's eschatological prompts. No one can ever say that they were not sufficiently warned. The God-given conscience is the ever-more admonition that one is to orientate oneself to the light that is reaching for one's soul: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb.9:14).

CONCLUSION

Those who choose to partner with Jesus Christ, acquire the privilege of sharing "in the glory of His accomplishments (Rom. 8:18-30). Johnson states that; the "Father is glorified as He governs

the purpose of creation until it is accomplished", the "Son was glorified when He took on human flesh and was born as one person with two natures" and the Spirit of God "is glorified as He works in believers to accomplish their roles in God's purposes". He goes on to say that the work "includes regeneration, baptism of believers to establish the identity of His body, the church, and empowerment to accomplish their roles." (Johnson, 2012). Speaking on the all-encompassing self-revelation of God and everything that that entails, it is important to understand that the bigger picture is God manifesting His glory through the self-revelation He has projected and is continuing to project to the world. (Johnson, 2012). The dispensations, with which God has related to mankind in since man's creation, are what reveal to the World, who He is, and it is up to each individual to either accept them in belief or to deny them. A strong admonition is sent out in Philippians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (v.2:12): this is pertinent to not only those who have not made their way into the church, but to those in the church as well.

This conversion experience toward glory can only be "experienced by contemplating the invisible" (Tack, (Matera), p. 109): "Only those who are able to look beyond the visible can perceive the traces of the inward renewal of a person who gradually reflects as a mirror the divine glory in a weak body" (Tack, p. 110). One is a mirror of the glory of God, as one is purposed to exist in a life filled with faith, and obedience to His Word. The Holy Spirit is responsible as the catalyst to moving a non-believer toward the pole of belief, where God's glory resides (Gal. 4:5-7, 2 Cor. 3:18): for "the grace given human beings on earth is the seed of heavenly glory" (2 Cor. 4:17, Rev. 21:11) (McFarland, Fergusson, Kilby, Torrance, p. 198). In brief, Kysar states it simply: "glory is given to Jesus (Jo 17:22,24); Jesus gives that glory to the believers (Jo. 17:22); therefore, the believers manifest the glory of God (Jo. 17:23)" (Kysar, 2007

loc. 2074) . John the epistle does not expound the meaning of glory as in the Gospel, but “what the author has in mind is the believer’s immersion in God’s presence, even as Christ and the divine presence are one” (Kysar, 1986, p. 75). This is the “now” eschatology that the Gospel of John seeks to get across, in the fact that we are now able to have a relationship with Jesus, even though He may have ascended, and even though He has not yet returned to take us to our heavenly home. One is **now** able to enjoy this “intimate, immediate relationship with God”, as one is glorified by the Spirit of God: one experiences divine glory when one experiences the love of God, and thus becomes empowered to then radiate His glory to the world (Kysar, 1986, p. 75).

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