**Lesson 1: The Glory of God**

Romans 11:36

36For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

If you are a believer in the God of the Bible, you have a good sense that He is a glorious God. The idea of the glory of God is pervasive in the Bible. Whether it is stated blatantly or simply implied, you can hardly walk through its pages without encountering God's glory. This may be because the glory of God is a statement of who He is. Some theologians define the glory of God as "the sum total of all His attributes as well as any one of His attributes."[[1]](#footnote-1) Robert Reymond writes:

For the creature to deny to him any one of his attributes is to attack the very glory of God and to deny him that without which he would no longer be God. Or to ascribe to him any attribute which he himself does not expressly claim to have, which ascription can only cancel out some attribute which he does claim to have, is again to represent him as something less than he is and thus is to attack his glory.[[2]](#footnote-2)

There are various facets to a biblical understanding of God's glory so it is imperative that you examine all that the Bible says regarding it. First, the glory of God oftentimes refers to the honor that He deserves. The main Hebrew word for "glory" is *chabod*, which means "heavy or weighty." This term emphasizes the "weightiness" or "muchness" of God. The Hebrews sometimes associated glory with wealth or beauty (Esther 1:4; Job 19:9; Ps. 45:13; cf. Gen. 31:1). It is related to a person's worth, value, or importance. The Greek word for "glory" is *doxa*, which comes from the root word "to think" or "to seem." This word conveys the thought that we ought to highly esteem God when we glorify Him. It has to do with His exalted reputation and honor. He is glorious and so ought to receive due glory (cf. Exod. 14:4, 17, 18).

The Scriptures clearly teach that God does all things for His glory (Isa. 60:21; cf. Rom. 11:36; Phil. 4:20) and will not share His glory with anyone (Isa. 48:9-11). This sense of God's glory has to do with His worthiness of our awe and devotion.

Second, the glory of God is also represented as His divine presence (cf. Exod. 29:43). John Frame writes, "In the Glory-cloud . . . God is with his people, immanent and covenantally present. So glory can refer . . . to God Himself, present with his people."[[3]](#footnote-3) Consider the praise of the seraphim in Isaiah 6:3, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" Though the glory of God could communicate His transcendence, the Bible emphasizes God's glorious immanence. This is a biblical idea that we would do well to consider carefully and a thought that deserves our meditation.

Third, the glory of God refers to the visible manifestation of God to His people. When Moses completed the tabernacle and when Solomon completed the Temple, the cloud of the glory of God filled the place of worship (Exod. 40:34-35; 2 Chron. 5:11-14). The glory of God appeared to the Israelites in the wilderness as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exod. 16:6-10; 40:38).

This third idea of God's glory is also seen in the New Testament with the Lord Jesus Christ. When the angels came to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus, they shone with the glory of God (Luke 2:9). Jesus shone with the glory of God at His transfiguration (Luke 9:32). And one day, in the heavenly city, there will be no need for the sun or moon to shine their light because the glory of God and of the Lamb will be its light (Rev. 21:23).

All three of these ideas about the glory of God help us to understand better who God is. He is a marvelous God who is deserving of all praise and honor, but He has condescended to us that we might dwell in His presence.

*Questions for Discussion*

1. Since the glory of God is who He is in His "godness," sometimes His glory is associated in Scripture with His specific attributes. How is God's glory described in the following passages? What attributes of God are indicated in each passage?

a. Exodus 14:4, 17, 18; 15:6, 11, 21.

b. Exodus 33:18-20; 34:4-7.

c. 1 Samuel 15:29.

2. Sometimes the glory of God indicates the visible manifestation of His presence. How does the Lord reveal Himself to His people in the following passages?

a. Exodus 16:6-10.

b. Exodus 24:16-17.

c. Leviticus 9:23-24.

3. Why is it significant that the New Testament speaks of the glory of God in Jesus Christ? What do these passages say concerning Jesus and the glory of God?

a. John 1:14.

b. 2 Corinthians 4:6.

c. Hebrews 1:3.

4. The glory of God is oftentimes associated with the gospel message. What do these verses say concerning the glory of God?

a. Romans 1:23; 3:23.

b. John 12:23-28.

c. 1 Peter 1:21.

d. 2 Corinthians 4:6.

e. Matthew 25:31.

5. In light of what the Bible teaches concerning the glory of God, how does it impact your understanding of 1 Corinthians 10:31?

**To God Be the Glory**

To God be the glory – great things He hath done!

So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,

Who yielded His life an atonement for sin

And opened the Life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,*

*Let the earth hear His voice!*

*Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,*

*Let the people rejoice!*

*O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,*

*And give Him the glory – great things He hath done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!

To every believer the promise of God;

The vilest offender who truly believes,

That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,

And great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son;

But purer and higher and greater will be

Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.

*Thoughts for Application*

1. How were the Israelites held accountable by their proximity to the glory of God (Num. 14:21-23)? What does it mean for your life to treat God as holy (cf. Deut. 32:51)?

2. How did the Israelites respond to the glory of God (Deut. 5:22-27)? In what ways is this similar or different to the way Christians today should respond to God's glory?

3. Read 1 Chronicles 16:23-25. What are the people of God called to do in light of God's glory? How does this verse help you as you consider the believer's call for evangelism?

4. Paul writes to the Corinthians that as believers we shine with the glory of God more and more as we walk in Him (2 Cor. 3:18). How does the glory of God shine forth from your life (2 Cor. 3:18)?

5. How can you more consistently live to do all things to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)? Try to list at least five things.

1. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: P&R Publishing, 2002), 593. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)