

# The glory of God

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## God appears in His glory

Moses and the Israelites saw the glory of the Lord. *There was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.* Exodus 16:10. But what is God's glory? How does He reveal Himself in glory? Can we see and experience this glory? Let's explore the glory of God!

### See Exodus 33:12-23.

- Moses said to God *If You are pleased with me, teach me Your ways so that I may know You and continue to find favour with You.* v13.
- The Lord replied *My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.* v14.
- Moses recognized that he needed the presence of God to be with him otherwise he would be ineffective. *What else will distinguish me and your people from all other people on the face of the earth?* v16.
- The Lord said that His presence would go with Moses *because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.* v17.
- Moses then said to God *Show me Your glory.* v18.
- God replied that He would *cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My Name.* v19.
- God was surrounded with glory - the light of His presence - so that Moses knew He was there. Moses could see the light and hear God speaking to him, but he was not allowed to see God's face.

The Hebrew word for glory here is *kabod*. It means *splendour, honour, dignity, reputation, riches, abundance.* (as compared to *tiperet* which is used in 1 Chronicles 29:11, which means *beauty, ornamentation, distinction*).

So God's glory is the splendour or light of His presence. When God appears to people He appears in His glory. He is surrounded by splendour and light. Those who see the glory know it is God; know He is there, and recognize that they are in the presence of Almighty God. They may not see God's face, but they certainly can see His glory. Here are some examples when God showed Himself in glory:

- To the Israelites in a cloud. Exodus 16:10; Deuteronomy 5:22-26
- To Moses on the mountain. Exodus 24:15-17
- In the tabernacle. Exodus 40:3-5
- During worship. Leviticus 9:6,32
- When God spoke to His people. Numbers 16:41-44
- When God revealed Himself. Ezekiel 10:4,18, 19
- When people were specially empowered for a task. Ezekiel 3:22-27; Numbers 20:6
- At the dedication of the Temple. 1 Kings 8:10,11; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3
- When the angels announced the coming of Jesus. Luke 2:8,9
- At the transfiguration of Jesus. 2 Peter 1:16 (Luke 9:28-36).
- As Stephen was being martyred. Acts 7:55

God hasn't stopped revealing Himself to people in His glory. Have you seen the glory of God?

We always find it hard to describe God because we are limited by human words, pictures and feelings. When the Jewish rabbis tried to describe God they used terms like *shekinah* - the majestic presence or manifestation of God; *memra* - or word of God (equivalent to *logos* in Greek) or *Yeğara* - glory of God (*kabod* means glory). Later it was



considered improper to use anthropomorphic (human) expressions to describe God so nowadays He is referred to as G\_d in Jewish literature.

Perhaps the best way of describing the glory of God is as “the light of His presence”. When you see the glory you know it is God, and you sense His presence!

## Jesus is now crowned with glory and honour

If you want to see the glory of God, look to Jesus!

Jesus is *the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.* Hebrews 1:3.

*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.* Hebrews 2:9

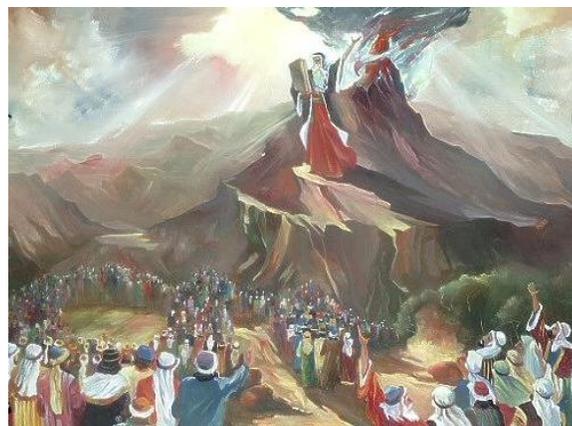
Jesus is crowned with the glory of God. That's why in Revelation He is described in terms filled with light: *His face was like the sun, shining in all its brilliance.* Revelation 1:16.

**See John 17:6-25.** Here Jesus prays for His disciples. He shows that He has received glory because the disciples followed and obeyed Him, and that He has passed this glory on to them. They are now to go out and shine for him (and so are we!).

## The glory of God can come on people

When people are in the presence of the Lord they can take on some of His glory.

When Moses came down from the mountain he glowed with some of the glory he had seen. See Exodus 34:29-35. *He was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord.* v29. See also 2 Corinthians 3:7.



The same thing happened with Jesus. At the transfiguration *His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.* Matthew 17:2.

The Hebrew word for “radiant” in Exodus 34:29 is *qaran* which means *to shine out, send out rays, be radiant, dart forth like horns*. The Vulgate - Latin-version of this verse is *He did not know his face was horned*. As a result many early painters portrayed Moses with horns. This is where the idea of halos came from, where there is a glow around the head of saintly people.

Interestingly some Muslim, Chinese and Hindu religions also have halos for their saints. They got the idea from the manifestations of God in the Old Testament, and copied from Judaism and Christianity! Superstitions like this can easily arise when cultures are passed on by word of mouth, and gradually change with time).



## We can partake in God's glory

Human beings are all sinners and *fall short of the glory of God*. Romans 3:23.

When Christ comes into our lives we have *the hope of glory*. Colossians 1:27. The Holy Spirit then works in our lives so that we become more and more Christ-like, and start to shine out with more of God's glory.

- God's purpose is *to bring many sons to glory*. Hebrews 2:10
- He does this by sharing His glory with us. *He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory, even us, whom He called*. Romans 9:23,24.
- God pours His light into our lives so that we shine with His glory. *For God, who said "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*. 2 Corinthians 4:6.
- This may involve suffering. *We share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worthy comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us*. Romans 8:17,18.
- We are *to live for the praise of His glory*. Ephesians 1:12. This means that in everything we do we bring Jesus glory. *Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*. 1 Corinthians 10:31.
- We have an eternal glory which is yet to come. Our troubles are *preparing us for an eternal glory that far outweighs them all*. 2 Corinthians 4:17. When Jesus comes He will come in glory and *you also will appear with Him in glory*. Colossians 3:4.

We can partake in the glory of God glory in the same way that Moses did: by spending time in His presence; gazing upon Him, and looking to Jesus, *the author and perfecter of our faith*. Hebrews 12:2.

### See 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

- The Holy Spirit works in our lives to make us more like Jesus.
- When we turn to the Lord and gaze upon Him we are gradually changed into His likeness.
- It's as if we look into a mirror and instead of seeing ourselves we see more and more of Jesus!
- We start to reflect the glory of Jesus who lives in us.
- We shine with a lasting and ever-increasing glory.
- The glory comes from the Lord by the Holy Spirit.



## It is possible to lose the glory of God

See 1 Samuel 4:19-22. A child was named "Ichabod" meaning *the glory has departed*. This was because the glory left the Tabernacle when the Ark of the Covenant was removed. The Ark contained the Law and was a central part of Israel's worship.

We, too, can lose the glory of God if we depart from His word, and cease to worship Him.

## There is eternal glory for God's people

When Jesus returns He will set up an eternal kingdom which will be filled with His glory.

- The glory of the Lord will be seen by all. *And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind will see it*. Isaiah 40:5.
- The whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. *... as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the earth... For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. His glory covered the heavens and His praise filled the earth*. Numbers 14:21. Habakkuk 2:14, 3:3.
- In heaven there is *no need for the sun or 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 splendour into it. There will be no night there*. Revelation 21:22-25.

The result of this is that Jesus will always receive the glory.

*To whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen*. Hebrews 13:21. What a glorious hope!

So glory is the light of God's presence.

He has revealed Himself in His glory many times down through the ages and has supremely revealed Himself in Jesus, His Son.

*The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.* John 1:14.

When we receive Christ as our Saviour God shines His light into our lives so that we can partake of His glory. The Holy Spirit then works in us to make us more and more like Jesus:

*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.* 2 Corinthians 3:18.

As we receive more and more of God's light He then asks us to shine for Him, bringing His light into the darkness in the world.

*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 5:14-16.

This is just what God wants to happen. We will be *bringing many sons to glory*. Hebrews 2:10.

And when this happens God is glorified!

***To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and ever-more. Amen Jude 24.***

## Discussion questions

What is the glory of God? Why do you think God always reveals Himself in glory? Why are we only able to see His glory and not see His face?

What happened when people in the Bible saw the glory of God? How were they affected by it? Have you seen the glory of God? If so, how did it happen? What was the effect on you?

How do we partake of God's glory? What can we do to help and hinder this process? Why does God place His glory on us? How can we share His glory? What happens if we don't share it?

2 Corinthians 3:18 describes us as being *transformed into His (Jesus) likeness, with ever increasing glory*. How does this take place? Why does it take place? What are the effects in us as it takes place? How will we know whether or not it is happening?

What is the difference between the glory of God and His being glorified? How can we glorify God? What does this do for God? What does it do for us?

Describe what the Bible says about the glory of God in eternity. What will it be like? How will we be involved in it?

What have you learned from your study of God's glory? How will you apply this in your life?