



God is spirit, and those who
worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship
with Pastor Steve

The Glory of God

Early one morning around 5:00 o'clock I was sitting on the love seat in our living room having a time worship and prayer. During my prayer time I was intensely praying for God to show me his glory. Just as I got the words out of my mouth the room lit up with a bright light. My heart felt like it would explode from the force of the pressure. I could feel it beating rapidly in my throat. Fear gripped me as I sat frozen to the love seat. Never in my life have I been so afraid. It is almost indescribable.

Almost as soon as the fear gripped me I began to feel very foolish. I realized that just as I had prayed those words that a car pulled out from the road across from our house and the headlights had shown through the window and illuminated the room. As foolish as I felt it still took several minutes for my heart to get back to normal.

God spoke to me, "Do you still want to see my glory?" I answered, "I'm not sure if I am ready to see your glory. If the headlights of a car scare me that bad I can't imagine if it had really been you." I changed my prayer that morning from, "Lord, I want to see your glory." to "Lord, help me get ready to see your glory." That light, even though it came from a car, exposed the condition of my heart. I think God set me up.

What is the glory of God? Let's begin to answer that question by looking at a number of occasions when the glory of the Lord appears in scripture.

Now it came to pass as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

Exodus 16:10

Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. . . .

Exodus 24:16

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Exodus 40:34-35

Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared.

Numbers 16:42

And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

1 Kings 8:10-11

Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory.

Ezekiel 10:4

Some time back I received an e-mail from a lady asking me if I knew of a word to describe a cloudy haze she witnesses hovering over people as they worship. I replied that I wasn't sure of any word to describe it, but that it could be some manifestation of God's presence. Often people describe God's glory as a cloud. However, the cloud itself is not the glory of God. God appears in the cloud to hide man from his glory; the cloud is a protection.

The Apostle Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy concerning God. In 1 Timothy 6:16 he said, . . . *who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.* The Apostle John wrote, *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.* (1 John 1:5-6) God is perfect light. Should man in his natural state look at the unveiled glory of God he would die.

When Moses asked God to show him his glory God replied, *I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But He said, You cannot see my face; for no man shall see me, and live. And the Lord said, Here is a place by me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while my glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with my hand while I pass by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.* (Exodus 33:19-23)

God explained to Moses that no one could see his face and live and offered to hide Moses as his glory passed by. God also equated his glory with his goodness. According to Strong's Concordance the Hebrew word for goodness is *tuwb* which means good in the widest sense. It also carries with it the idea of beauty, gladness and welfare. God also proclaimed the name of Jehovah before Moses. Jehovah is the Jewish national name for God and means self-existent and eternal.

To define the glory of God we must go further than the light. The light is the brilliance of his glory. When Moses asked to see God's glory he used the Hebrew word *kabowd*. *Kabowd* means weightiness, splendor and honor. God's glory is everything that makes up God; his authority, power, and sovereignty. Psalmists wrote that the heavens declare the glory of God and that his glory is above the heavens and earth (Psalm 19:1; 113:4; 148:13). His glory is much more than we can comprehend; the depth of his goodness exceeds our grasp.

Though God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock at Sinai and did not allow him to see his face, God did allow Moses to see his glory face to face many years after Moses had died. This took place on a mountain we call The Mount of Transfiguration. The following tells that story:

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him! And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

Matthew 17:1-6

The Apostle Paul wrote, *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* (2 Corinthians 4:6) In other words; In the face of Jesus Christ was the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. It was Jesus of whom Isaiah prophesied would be the great light (Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:15-16); the light Simeon prophesied would come to the Gentiles and Israel (Luke 2:32); the light John said had come into the world (John 1:4-9); and the one who said, *I am the light of the world.* (John 8:12; 9:5) It is Jesus (the Lamb) who will be the glory of God that illuminates the eternal habitation of God's people (Revelation 21:23).

The revelation of the glory of God was in the face of Jesus. There is no better expression of the glory of God. Jesus embodied all that is God. Paul exhorted the Colossians that in Christ was all the fullness of the Godhead in body form (Colossians 2:9). Every characteristic God revealed about himself to Moses at Sinai was true of Jesus.

The revelation of Jesus as the glory of God began at his birth. John declared, *And the Word became 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.* (John 1:14) Isaiah had prophesied this many years before when he said a virgin would bear a son and his name would be called Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14) meaning with us is God.

The way Jesus lived his life and performed his ministry exemplified the attributes or glory of God. When Jesus preached to the poor and received all that came to him by faith he portrayed God's love and grace. When he healed the sick, cast out demons and raised the dead he portrayed God's mercy and compassion. When he calmed the seas, multiplied the bread and turned water into wine he portrayed God's power. When he taught the people, cleared the temple and outwitted the religious leaders he portrayed God's authority.

Before Jesus ascended to the Father he left the church a mission to continue his Father's work; a mission for the continuation of the presentation of God's glory (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18).

The church is desperate for the glory of the Lord to once again fill the temple. When his glory comes, his manifest presence, people change. Once we have experienced the wonder of his glory we will be ruined to everything we have known as church. In the presence of his majesty man's agendas disintegrate. Only in a place where self has died can God take up habitation. Let us clear our schedules and make a place for the God of glory to call home.