

Behold His Glory

Throughout the ages, God has progressively revealed Himself to humanity. Now He seeks to display His splendor through us.

Early one Sunday morning I found myself pacing back and forth in front of the altar in my church's sanctuary, crying out to God. With a heavy heart I wept, asking God to send His glory to my church. "Please send Your glory to us," I pleaded.

That was when the Holy Spirit spoke these words to me: "Fuchsia, what are you looking for?"

I responded emphatically, "The glory."

He continued, "When the glory comes, what will it look like?"

"I don't know," I answered sheepishly.

Then He asked, "What color will it be?"

"I don't know."

"What shape will it be?"

"I don't know," I responded again, almost embarrassed.

Then He said, "If you don't know what the glory looks like, how will you know when it gets here?"

I didn't know how to respond to that question, but His communication was clear. We have heard for years that the glory is coming. We sing songs about God's sending us His glory. We quote Bible verses such as "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27) and Jesus' prayer, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory" (John 17:24). But unless we study the Scriptures to understand how the Bible defines the glory of God, we may never experience the reality of it in our lives and churches.

What Is the Glory?

“Glory” refers to a quality of God’s character that emphasizes His greatness and authority and involves beauty, power and honor. It is used in three senses in the Bible. First, it may refer to God’s moral beauty and perfection of character, which is beyond man’s understanding (see Rom. 3:23). Glory may also refer to God’s beauty as a visible presence (see Ex. 13:21). And glory sometimes refers to the praise and honor that God’s creatures give to Him (see Ps. 115:1).

God wants to reveal His glory—in all its aspects—in and through the church today. For that reason it is vital that every Christian grasp the significance of what the glory of God is. Being filled with the glory of God is the priority of the Holy Spirit’s work in the church corporately and in our lives individually. Only as we focus our lives to become one with the priority of God will we position ourselves to be changed into His image “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

As we become glory-bearers, the glory of God reflected in our lives will ultimately bring the lost to Him. We will be a part of the great end-time revival and ingathering of souls that God will bring to those who are seeking His glory.

The Old Testament is filled with pictures, or types, that are meant to reveal to us the nature and character of the glory of God. For example, oil, clouds, fire and rain are all Old Testament symbols for the Holy Spirit that reveal one or more aspects of His Person—of God Himself.

The patriarchs saw His glory on a number of occasions. God revealed His glory to Abraham when He made a covenant with him and promised to make him a great nation. He revealed His glory to Moses in the burning bush and again when Moses cried out, “Show me your glory” (Ex. 33:18).

But it is in the New Testament that we find the ultimate act of God to reveal His glory to mankind: “And the Word became

flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NASB). God Himself became man in order to perfectly reveal His glory to us and redeem mankind to Himself.

If you and I are to experience the glory of God revealed through our lives, we must relate properly to this incarnate glory of God manifested in Jesus Christ. Though He was God, Jesus walked as a man filled with the Spirit of God, having emptied Himself of His divine powers in order to fulfill the Father's will of redemption. Because He walked this earth in utter dependence on the Holy Spirit (see John 5:30), He can now ask us to do the same in order to manifest the glory of God through our lives.

We can't look at Jesus' victorious life and object, "Yes, but He was God." As a complete man, Jesus taught us by example that the source of victory—the source of His glory in us—is being filled with, empowered by, and obedient to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit at Work

For this reason, it is important for us to understand the integral relationship of the Holy Spirit to the person and ministry of the incarnate Christ. We can trace the Holy Spirit at work through seven steps in Jesus' life:

1. His birth. Of course, Christ did not have His beginning in the manger in Bethlehem. He existed before eternity, back in the eons of the ages before time began. It was the Holy Spirit who facilitated His coming.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, he declared, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35, NKJV). Without the Holy Spirit, the incarnation of Jesus through

conception would not have been possible. Likewise, in our regeneration, our new birth is impossible without the Holy Spirit's creating the life of God in us.

Jesus grew and developed just as any child does (minus the detriments of a sinful nature). As a boy he was already filled with such wisdom that He astonished the temple rabbis of Jerusalem (see Luke 2:42-47). Jesus' understanding of the Scriptures was not just a result of childhood studies common to Jewish boys; it was the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in Him.

In His humanity, Jesus developed and increased in His abilities by the power of the Holy Spirit. In that same way, the glory of God—His divine nature—is developed in us as we yield to the work of the Holy Spirit to teach us the wisdom of God.

2. His baptism. When John baptized Jesus, the Spirit of God descended like a dove and lighted upon Him, and a voice from heaven confirmed that Jesus was His beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased (see Matt. 3:13-17). In that baptism the Holy Spirit was equipping Jesus for the earthly ministry that was to follow. We too are equipped for ministry through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in Acts 1:8.

3. His temptation. Not only did the Holy Spirit lead Christ into the wilderness after His baptism, but all the time Christ was there, the Holy Spirit was with Him, enabling Him to overcome the severe temptations of the evil one (see Matt. 4:1). By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' human nature was given the strength to withstand the enemy and to overcome the temptations placed before Him.

When we find ourselves in a place of testing or temptation, it is important to remember that Jesus was not cornered by the devil. He was led by the Holy Spirit to meet the enemy.

There are times in life when we must face the tempter, as Jesus did, with a clear response: "It is written." As we allow ourselves to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we have the same capacity for victory He possessed.

4. His ministry. As we've said, the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus with power for His earthly ministry. Jesus Himself attributed His works to the Holy Spirit working through Him when He stood in the temple and read from the prophet Isaiah: "'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor'" (Luke 4:18).

Peter also preached this truth to the house of Cornelius, saying that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).

Clearly, it was through the divine power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus was able to do the miracles He did on this earth. His entire ministry was performed by the power of the Holy Spirit—the same Holy Spirit who is resident within us today, giving us power to minister in Jesus' name.

5. His transfiguration. When Jesus took Peter, James and John up on a high mountain and was transfigured before them, the unveiling of the glory of God that was in Him was seen in His human vessel (see Matt. 17:1-2). That unveiling was done by the Holy Spirit. How awesome that the manifested presence of the glory of the infinite God was seen for a few moments by the disciples! Is it any wonder that Peter wanted to build three tabernacles on the spot?

I believe God is going to take the church to the Mount of Transfiguration and reveal the glory of God in her to the world. Jesus prayed for His disciples: "'And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one'" (John 17:22).

As we've said, it is the nature and divine attributes of the Father and of Christ that reveal His glory. That glory is going to shine through the lives of His people. As we learn to yield completely to the Holy Spirit, He will perfect the life and character of God within us and reveal it to the world.

6. His death. It was not enough that Jesus suffered and died for our sins; He had to do so in the proper manner. In his book *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, Abraham Kuyper expresses this fact so clearly: "Christ did not redeem us by His suffering alone, being spit upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified, slain. This passion was made effectual to our redemption by His love and voluntary obedience.

"Hence there was in Christ's suffering much more than mere passive penal satisfaction. Nobody compelled Christ. He who partook of the divine nature could not be compelled but offered Himself voluntarily. 'Lo I come to do Thy will, Oh God, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me.'"

The perfection of Christ's sacrifice in His obedient, loving attitude was made possible by the eternal Spirit of God (see Heb. 9:14). Without the enabling of the Holy Spirit, the Man, Jesus, could not have offered Himself a perfect sacrifice to God. Neither can we "take up our cross daily" except by the Holy Spirit's power at work in us.

7. His resurrection. Sometimes the resurrection of Jesus is attributed to the Father (see Acts 2:24). Other times it is said to be the work of the Son Himself (see John 10:17-18). But the resurrection is also, in a special way, the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes: "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11). The Spirit of God working with the Father gave resurrection life to Jesus. He still offers

that same resurrection life to every believer who will receive from His hand the things of Jesus.

In fact, the same Holy Spirit who was at work in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus has come to reveal the life of Christ to us, in us and through us. As we allow Him to do this precious threefold work, Christ will be able to live His life in us and reveal the glory of God through us.

Our union with Christ will determine how perfectly we reflect the glory of God in our lives. Let us yield ourselves completely to the Holy Spirit, who will enable us to be changed into the image of the incarnate Christ and become bearers of the glory of God in the earth.

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