

R.T. Kendall: Do You Live for Man's Praise or God's?

The word "glory" embraces both the tangible and the intangible. The tangible means something that can be visible and experienced; it became known as the *shekinah*, a word that appeared first in rabbinic literature. The intangible refers largely to the source of one's approval, praise and honor. In a word, do you want the praise that comes from men or the praise that comes from God?

We should examine two words in the ancient languages that translate "glory."

Kabod

In the Old Testament, it is *kabod*. It is a word that means heaviness—as in weight or stature. It is like when people throw their weight around. That is partly the idea of *kabod*. However, this can be applied to times when the Holy Spirit comes down in power—the result being a holy heaviness in the atmosphere.

Mrs. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who personally experienced the Welsh Revival (1904–1905), used to talk to me about it. Her father put her on a train at Paddington Station, London, after taking her out of school so she could witness the Welsh Revival.

"She can always go to school," her father said, "but she may never see revival again."

She spoke of an atmosphere in which she would at times slightly gasp for breath, even though she was a child of 6 at the time of the revival. Others, experiencing the phenomenon of the Toronto Blessing, have testified to a weight on them so that they could not move. A number of people have recounted to me very similar experiences.

Having fallen to the floor under the power of the Spirit, they said, "I told this person to get off my back so I could get up, but there was no one there."

Doxa

The Greek word *doxa* translates "glory." It is the word from which "doxology" comes. It means praise or honor. It comes from a root word that means "opinion." By this rendering, the glory of God is His opinion or will. This fits with Paul's words:

"In Him also we have received an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will, that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, should live for the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:11–12).

Taking our cue from *doxa*, the glory of God is the dignity of His will. Those who choose the glory or praise from people forfeit the honor or praise that would have come from God—which is precisely what the Pharisees of Jesus' day did. They loved the praise that came from people more than the praise that comes from God (John 5:44; 12:43). The consequence of this was that they missed their Messiah.

Kabod and *doxa* combined means the way God chooses to manifest Himself. He is sovereign; we cannot twist His arm to make Him do what we may wish for.

The Word Made Flesh

God manifested Himself in the flesh—Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He is *kabod* and *doxa* combined. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory," said John, "the glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Ever since, God has manifested His glory in countless ways.

This article is adapted from More of God: Seek the Benefactor, Not Just the Benefits (Charisma House 2019) by R.T. Kendall. Kendall was the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, England, for twenty-five years. Born in Ashland, Kentucky, he was educated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (.) and Oxford University (.). Kendall is the author of many books, including Total Forgiveness, Holy Fire, It Ain't Over Till It's Over, Prepare Your Heart for the Midnight Cry and Whatever Happened to the Gospel?