

R.T. Kendall: Why Jack Hayford's Church Grew After He Saw Shekinah Glory

The glory of God is the nearest you get to the “essence” of His being. Consider the various attributes of God: omniscience (He knows all), omnipresence (He is everywhere), omnipotence (He is all powerful; He can do anything), sovereignty (He has mercy on whom He will have mercy on), justice (He is fair and is determined to punish evil), mercy (He does not want to punish us), holiness (He will not tolerate sin), love (He is tender toward all His creation) and wrath (He feels anger toward sin).

The total of all these attributes is glory. The glory of God is the sum of all His attributes. It is the one word that embraces all these attributes simultaneously.

The Shekinah

The rabbis used this word to describe what is supernatural—that is, what is beyond or above the natural. It is the transliteration of a Hebrew word that means dwelling or settling of the divine presence of God. It is a word used to describe what is truly miraculous, that which defies a natural explanation. For example:

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. When the cloud was lifted up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel would set out in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not lifted up, then they did not set out until the day that it was lifted. For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight

of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys (Ex. 40:34–38).

The Shekinah on Good Friday

From noon until 3:00 p.m. on Good Friday, “there was darkness over all the land” (Matt. 27:45). This was not an eclipse of the sun, as some have conjectured. It was the Shekinah—the cloud that came down as a divine witness to Jesus’ shed blood.

When God introduced the Day of Atonement to Moses, He promised to “appear in the cloud over the mercy seat” (Lev. 16:2). That cloud was a dark cloud. When the cloud filled the temple upon the arrival of the ark of the covenant, the priests could not perform their service: “the glory of the Lord filled the house of God” (2 Chron. 5:14).

Then Solomon said, “The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness” (2 Chron. 6:1). The darkness on Good Friday was precisely this—a seal of God upon the atonement of Jesus’ death on the cross.

The Shekinah in More Recent Times

I once heard Pastor Jack Hayford tell of an event that took place in his church years ago on a Saturday. He looked inside the auditorium and saw a haze.

“It’s what you think it is,” the Lord said to him.

This happened when his church was young, with an attendance of perhaps three hundred. After that day his church began to grow and grow until it reached thousands. Jack traces this growth to that Saturday when he saw the haze.

Do you want more of God? If so, you must love the glory of God, which means you must appreciate the way He chooses to show up—however uncomfortable it makes you feel—but also accept His will—no matter how disappointed you may be.

Jonathan Edwards taught that the one thing Satan cannot do is give one a love for God's glory. If you love the way God shows up, it is a good sign that you want more of God; if you love what God chooses to do, it is a good sign that you want more of God. {eoa}

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 25 years. Born in Ashland, Kentucky, he was educated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (.) and Oxford University (.). Kendall is the author of a number of 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?