

# The Real Reasons God Deserves Our Praise and Honor

In this season of secular acclaim for Grammy Award recipients and Super Bowl athletes, Jesus' followers need to pause and ask ourselves, who *really* deserves our praise and honor?

Many Protestants learned the Westminster Shorter Catechism as children. It summarizes mankind's purpose when it teaches, "Man's chief end is to glorify God."

But how can we mortals do that in the middle of the political, economic and religious chaos around us? What is meant by the related words "glory," "glorify" or "glorious"? And how do these words relate to us, who have all sinned and fallen "short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23b, NKJV)?

The prophet Isaiah calls us to "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (Isa. 60:1, ESV).

God's glory may shine upon us as we draw near to Him (James 4:8), but we must never take any glory that belongs to God to ourselves or to His enemies (Isa. 42:8, 48:11).

## God's Glory and Honor

The New Testament teaches us Jesus is "*the radiance of the glory of God* and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3, ESV, emphasis added). His work of redemption was finished at the cross, and afterward He sat down in heaven at the Father's right hand.

The late Pastor Jack Hayford was the author of the classic worship song "Majesty." The lyrics actually flowed from the

splendor he and his wife observed in various castles, museums and churches during a private trip to England.

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Some theologians attribute the illumination in the first verses of Genesis to the radiance of God's very presence and glory. It wasn't until Day 4 that God created the sun and moon to "give light on the earth" for repetitive days, seasons and years (Gen. 1:14-19).

### **God Desires to Manifest His Glory Among His People**

The Hebrew word translated "glory" is also the word for "weight." Glory in Scripture is not so much something aglow as it is something with substantial weight or force.

Hayford taught that "when the glory of God is in a place, something forceful, weighty or mighty is present in the spiritual realm. People can recognize it. They will want to be there."

In the miraculous exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt, "the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light" (Ex. 13:21). These supernatural, visible pillars were manifestations of God's guiding presence and power. The people of God were led by the glory cloud and protected by the pillar of fire.

Later, "the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai" and the supernatural brilliance of it "was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Ex. 24:16-17, NKJV).

The psalmist David called for the "glorious name" of God to be blessed forevermore and declared "the whole earth be filled

with his glory” (Ps. 72:19). When David’s son Solomon built the temple and brought the ark of the covenant into the new holy place, the presence of God again manifested as a radiant cloud of His *Shekinah* glory and “filled the house of God” (2 Chron. 5:13-14).

## **New Testament Glory Occurrences**

1. At the Transfiguration, Jesus’ face shone like the sun, His clothes “became white as the light” and a “bright cloud overshadowed them” (Matt. 17:1-5).
2. This same display of God’s special glory is likely what the disciples saw at Jesus’ ascension to heaven (Acts 2:1-8). Jesus “was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” Angels told the disciples Jesus will come again “in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11b).
3. Unsurprisingly, then, at the glorious return of the Son of Man to earth, He will be seen by everyone on earth “coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30b).
4. **In** Revelation 4, John recounts a vision of a future event in heaven when the 24 elders will fall before “him who sits on the throne.” They will lay their crowns before the throne and say, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Rev. 4:11, NIV).

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## **God’s Glory Is Associated With Worship**

Notice, the elders said God is “worthy ... to receive glory and honor and power.” Our Creator, Sustainer and Savior is abundantly worthy and deserves all glory and honor from His

people!

We are to worship Him for who He is and praise Him for what He has done. Those who follow these priorities and patterns of worship can expect to experience His presence and power.

Pastor Hayford has explained, "Worship-fied praise invites the rule of His glorious Kingdom and He enters with loving blessings and liberating power. Honoring God's Word in our lives, exalting God's Son with our lips and giving the Holy Spirit a place to work by the love we show God and man allow distinct and marvelous blessings to pour forth."

### **'Let Us Lift Up Holy Hands, Magnify His Name and Worship Him'**

Homes, families, people and places may welcome God's glorious presence through our "worship-fied praise." We magnify our Lord when we make Him large in our sight and expansive in our praise.

We need to "forget about ourselves and concentrate on Him!" We should "brag" on God in our thoughts and words and songs!

Let us find occasions and purposefully make room in our daily calendars to worship and praise Him, before whom "every knee should bow ... and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:20-11, MEV).

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