

Reflecting His Glory

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Regular Baptist Press
Building Lives by the Book
www.RegularBaptistPress.org

Dedicated to my sister, Janet.

Reflecting His Glory

© 2014 Regular Baptist Press • Schaumburg, Illinois

www.RegularBaptistPress.org • 1-800-727-4440

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RBP5146 • ISBN: 978-1-60776-936-1

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Created for His Glory

“For what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (Psalm 8:4, 5).

WHAT IS *glory*? Have you ever seen it? How would you describe it? We might find ourselves offering an example: the glory of autumn or the night sky, the Taj Mahal or the Swiss Alps.

For Christians, the word *glory* instinctively turns our thoughts toward the Lord God, for He is the epitome of glory. The Hebrew word for glory used in the Old Testament means “dignity, honor, and praise.” We would agree that all these words apply to our God. Glory is the sum total of His being and attributes, a description of His essence.

But can we *see* that glory? And if so, where can God’s glory be found? In His written Word, the Bible, we learn where God’s glory may be seen.

Come to His Word

Read Psalm 8.

Look into His Word

“In the beginning God.” The first words of Scripture introduce us to the Being Who existed in eternity past. God needs nothing. But unless He had created, who could know of Him, enjoy, and admire Him? So the Lord God created angels, worlds, mankind, and creatures. And His existence and attributes were displayed to and through all He made.

The *glory* of God is this manifestation of His greatness; it flames out into the whole universe, declaring His existence and majesty. The intelligent beings He has made should see His awesome attributes and worship Him in response. Do you see His glory?

Glory All around Us

1. According to Psalm 19:1, 97:6, and Isaiah 6:3, where may we view God's glory?

2. Read Romans 1:19 and 20. What does the creation around us reveal about God? (Refer to Acts 14:14–17 as well.)

3. Read Exodus 33:17–23 and 34:5–8. Answer the questions below.
 - (a) What request did Moses make of God in 33:18?

 - (b) In response to Moses' request, what did God allow Moses *to see* (33:23; 34:5)?

 - (c) What words did God proclaim to reveal His glory (34:5–7)?

 - (d) How did Moses respond to the revelation of God's glory (34:8)?

God has displayed His glory in all creation, but He has also chosen to reveal it specifically by acts He has done and words He has spoken to men, especially in the Scriptures. (Read Matthew 4:4 and 2 Timothy 3:16.) What should man's response be to God's

glory when it is revealed? We might take note of Moses' attitudes and actions in the presence of the glorious God!

4. Because of God's glory and worth, He is to be glorified by His created beings. When we glorify God, we draw attention to His greatness by our words and actions. In each of these passages, what reasons are given to glorify Him?

Romans 11:33–36

1 Timothy 1:17

Revelation 4:11

5. Ultimately the revelation of God's glory should result in what? Read Psalm 150.

The Glory Imparted

So far we have seen that God is a God of glory; that glory rests in His being, His name, and His attributes. He has revealed His glory through His creation and through His proclamation of Himself in words that He has spoken to us so that we may know Him. God's desire is to continually display His glory, to make it known everywhere, to everyone, by every means. That is why He endowed all He has created with His glory so that it may reflect Him. And *we* are part of that creation!

6. Read Genesis 1:26 and 27.

- (a) What was unique about God's creation of the man and woman?

- (b) Explain what you think this means.

God created Adam and Eve to bear His image; they were

intended to mirror Him in some ways. Since no part of God lacks glory, we may conclude that the aspects of God's image that were imparted to the man and woman contained something of His glory. So, mankind reflected the very glory of God!

7. According to Psalm 8:5, what was God's plan in creating people?

The Glory Departed

As God's ambassador on earth, man was to reflect the wonderful attributes of his Maker: holiness, goodness, love, compassion, justice, and so on. Living every day on perfect planet Earth, the man and woman would mirror His character and shine forth His attributes. But something went terribly wrong!

8. Read Genesis 2:15–17 and 3:1–12. Write three sentences summarizing this account.

9. What three-letter word describes the calamity that befell Adam and Eve?

Genesis 3 relates the human fall into sin and the catastrophic results that came upon the man, woman, and creation. Suddenly the very things that had been intended to reflect God's glory became a shattered mirror! And sin has continued to warp that reflection since.

10. King David wrote his psalms under the inspiration of God.

(a) In Psalm 51:5, how did he describe himself?

(b) Explain what he meant by these statements.

(c) Do you think his statements apply to all people?

11. The Hebrew word for iniquity carries the idea of a tendency to go away from God, a moral perversity. How do these verses describe man's iniquitous nature?

Psalm 14:2, 3

Isaiah 53:6

12. What does Romans 3:23 declare about you, me, and all human beings?

13. Explain what "come [fall] short of the glory of God" means.

Sin is a problem, a big problem! Man has endeavored to deny his sinfulness as well as the destructive consequences of his sin. But the Bible is truthful and pointed about our problems and failures. Until we accept the bad news about ourselves, we will not be receptive to God's good news.

And yes, there is good news! Because God is good, He chose not to leave us to our fatal destiny. Man rejected God, but God was not finished with man!

Reflect on His Word

14. What aspects of creation speak to you about the glory of God?

15. Do you think people exhibit qualities that are superior to animals' and that confirm that people are uniquely designed by God? Explain.
16. How do you find God's glory contained in His Word?
17. As Christians view the creation, consider God's acts, and learn His Word, they should be praising and glorifying Him before others. Do you think this is the case? If not, why do you think they fail to glorify God?
18. As a result of man's sin, the creation "groans" under God's curse (Genesis 3:17, 18; Romans 8:22). What do you see in the world around you as proof that we are living in a broken world?
19. Does mankind reflect any of God's image despite his sinful condition? Explain.
20. How do you see the results of God's image warped through man's attitudes and actions?

Respond to His Word

- Do you glorify God for His works in the world and in your own life? Have you ever taken time to reflect upon His many blessings to you? What do you learn about Him as you look back on your life?
- Do you see God's glory in His Word? Do you spend time daily in the Scriptures and learn of Him? If not, what should you do?
- Moses worshiped when confronted by God's glory. How do you worship Him when you see His glory? How can you worship more meaningfully?
- Write here any other insights you have gained through His Word.

Meditate on His Word

Read Psalm 8 once more, a psalm that focuses upon God's glory as revealed in all creation. David, the writer of this psalm and many others, was a man who took time to reflect upon God's glory all around him (see Psalm 19:1–6). David saw God's glory in His Word (Psalm 19:7–11). And in response to that glory, he worshiped the Lord his God.

Dear sister in Christ, the ultimate purpose of your existence is tied up in the glory of God. Indeed, God being glorified is the central issue, the premier purpose of the universe and all that has been done in it. We exist to acknowledge Him in all our ways (Proverbs 3:6). We exist to know Him, and enjoy Him, and worship Him forever. We were designed and created to *reflect His glory*. But, as sinful people, how can we now do so? Our next lesson will take us a step further toward the answer to that question.