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# CONTENTS

1. THE GLORY IN HEAVEN	Page 2
2. THE GLORY TOWARDS EARTH	Page 5
3. THE GLORY DEPARTED	Page 8
4. THE GLORY MANIFESTED IN JESUS	Page 11
5. THE GLORY DELEGATED	Page 16
6. THE GLORY RECEIVED	Page 19
7. THE SPREADING GLORY	Page 23
8. THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY – HEAVEN ON EARTH	Page 26

## Chapter 1. THE GLORY IN HEAVEN

**"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the Earth, their words to the ends of the world."**

(Psalm 19:1-3) David wrote these words as he meditated on God and as he had fellowship with Him.

Paul echoes these words when he writes, **"Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."** (Romans 1:20)

Ezekiel extols the grandeur of the presence of God and is completely overwhelmed by it. "Above the expanse...was what

looked like a throne of sapphire, and **high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.**" (Ezekiel 1:26-28)

John's vision on Patmos was remarkably similar – a picture of the glorified Christ in heaven. **"Someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters...His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance."** (Revelation 1:13-16)

Daniel's vision also was similar. "I looked up and there before me was **a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold round his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.**" (Daniel 10:5&6)

When God speaks to Job (Job 40:9&10) He asks, "Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like His? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendour, and clothe yourself in honour and majesty." (underlining ours) Proverbs 25:28 states that it is not honourable to seek

one's own glory. It is God's prerogative to bestow His honour and glory on whom He chooses.

Moses asked to see God's glory. (Exodus 33:18) God showed Moses His goodness and proclaimed, **"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."** (34:6&7) LORD, spoken twice, indicates that God desires a personal relationship with Him, and Moses understood and worshipped Him. Yet Moses had already met with God on Mount Sinai after he received the Ten Commandments. He and 70 elders, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu saw the God of Israel. Moses describes the scene. Under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai for six days. To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. (Exodus 24:9-11 and 15-17)

Malachi writes that the Lord will suddenly come to His temple...but who can endure...who can stand? He will be like a refiner's fire. (Malachi 3:1&2) In Habakkuk's vision he saw God's glory covering the heavens and His praise filling the Earth. His splendour was like the sunrise; rays flashed from His hand where His power was hidden. (Habakkuk 3:3&4) Nahum saw God's way in the whirlwind and storm. (Nahum 1:3) This was because God was executing judgment on Nineveh which had previously received Jonah and repented, approximately 150 years before.

Isaiah's vision of the glory of God convicted him of human frailty and his own sinfulness. This comparison is what a vision of God's glory is supposed to do. (Isaiah 6:1-7)

This was not God's original plan though. He made man in His own IMAGE. Man wore the glory of God as a garment. This is what Isaiah declares the anointing will do. (Isaiah 55:2-5) Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden because they no longer wore the glory. Their sin had removed the glory, and God, in His mercy, had clothed them with animal skin. The words from the Lord to Jeremiah (2:5-13) tell how the people exchanged the Glory that God had given them for worthless idols – two sins – forsaking the Spring of Living Water and instead choosing broken cisterns that cannot hold water (and thus maintain life).

Psalms 106 mentions about the Israelites who exchanged their Glory for an image to worship. (106:20) God has made us to reflect His image so we need to have a clear vision of who He is, and worship Him only.

## Chapter 2. THE GLORY TOWARDS EARTH

"O Lord, our Lord...you have set your glory above the heavens." (Psalm 8:1) "What is man that you are mindful of him...you made him a little lower than God and crowned him with glory and honour." (Psalm 8:4&5) What is the psalmist saying?

David spent many hours communing with God as he watched the sheep. "Commune" is defined as speak confidentially and intimately, feel in close touch with. In Psalm 3:3 David speaks of **God bestowing glory on him** and lifting up his head. In Psalm 4:6 he

asks God to **let the light of His face shine upon us**. In Psalm 5:12, "You bless the righteous; **You surround them with Your favour** as with a shield." In Psalm 21, "You welcomed him with rich blessings...You gave him life...You have **bestowed on him splendour**...You have made him glad with the joy of Your presence." This is David's own experience and God truly desires this with His family members.

The Ark of the Covenant was designed so that the Israelites would know the presence of God with them. (Exodus 25:10-22) The atonement cover or mercy seat was on the top and "guarded" by two cherubim. God told Moses, "There above the cover between the two cherubim ...I will commune with you and give you all my commandments." It was as if, because of the atonement, God would begin His relationship with mankind all over again as He had first intended with Adam and Eve. In God's presence the glory which had clothed Adam and Eve would transfer and cover those who commune with Him. This is what happened when Moses spent time in God's presence. (Exodus 34:29-35) David must have understood this because he wrote (Psalm 34:5), "Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame."

Isaiah visualised that even as Jesus suffered during His passion He would see "the light" and be satisfied. It was as if His Father deliberately gave Him a vision and encouraged His purpose in going to the Cross. (Isaiah 53:11) In His prayer before going to the Cross Jesus says that He has given His disciples, and all those who will believe in Him through their message, the glory that the Father had given Him. (John 17:20&22)

Paul reminds his readers that "whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away...and we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:16-18)

Even under the Old Covenant God intended His people to carry His glory, His splendour, visibly. David's psalm of thanksgiving when the Ark was brought into Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16:8-36) rings with power and jubilation.

- ◆ make known among the nations what He has done
- ◆ glory in His Name
- ◆ seek His face always
- ◆ proclaim His salvation day after day
- ◆ declare His glory among the nations
- ◆ the Lord made the heavens. Splendour and majesty are before Him
- ◆ ascribe to the Lord glory and strength
- ◆ ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His Name
- ◆ bring an offering and come before Him; worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness
- ◆ give thanks to your holy Name, ...glory in your praise

It is not surprising that David could also prophesy concerning Messiah. The weight of the glory of Messiah helped David identify with His coming pain and suffering. (Psalm 22) Having identified with Messiah, David was able to imagine what the Father spoke to Jesus in the future. (Psalm 110)

Perhaps the most amazing prophecy concerning God's glory directed towards Earth is in Isaiah 61. It begins a few verses before. (Isaiah 60:20) "The Redeemer will come...to those who repent of their sins. This is my covenant with them. My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of your descendants from this time on and forever." (For this reason, because of this promise) **"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you...and His glory appears over you...Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy."** This glory is to honour God, because He has endowed us with this splendour. (Isaiah 61:9)

### Chapter 3. THE GLORY DEPARTED

All the preceding chapter was God's plan and desire, so what went wrong? Mankind was afflicted with a rebellious nature and chose its own way. Adam was made in the image of God and clothed with His glory, which departed when he hid from God. No longer was Adam reflecting God in His splendour and glory because he did not repent. He blustered and blamed. This nature, this iniquity, continued because the seed was tainted, until God "was grieved that He had made man on the Earth, and His heart was filled with pain." (Genesis 6:6)

"Repent" is a misused word. In the Old Testament it always means "to change the mind AND act on that." The word is used to express regret and sorrow for having done some deed but is not always used



for godly repentance. (Cruden's Concordance p540) Godly repentance always causes a change of heart and mind and transfers into action. Repentance is purpose-driven towards doing things God's way. When we are led to confess our sins we should not be thinking that now we have said them aloud God is obliged to forgive us and "purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) It is true that because of the death of Jesus for all sin, for all time, that our sins are forgiven, but if we intend to continue with a particular sin of which the Holy Spirit has convicted us, then by our own choice, we have effectively told God, who sees our hearts, that we do not want to change. We could also define this word as "turn away from our own opinions, practices and mind-sets and turn towards God's ways and agree with His word." The Latin is "*mores suos mutare*" – to change your manners, your disposition, your morals and even your character. This is of course not possible without God's help, but He promises to complete the work He begins in us. (Philippians 1:6)

The Bible tells us to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14) This statement has two thrusts – we will not see the Lord and others will not see the (glory of the) Lord in us. Throughout the Old Testament God's people did not demonstrate God's glory (with just a few exceptions) and God continually sent prophets to ask them to repent, but they did not. In fact they failed badly even though God had the Ark of the Covenant made which would represent Him to the people. This had to be placed behind a curtain to emphasise the Holiness of God. (Exodus 40:2&21) When this Presence was valued the glory of the Lord was present, but when

there was any irreverence that person died instantly. (2 Samuel 6:6-11)  
 God is primarily Love so He cannot make us repent.

There is an interesting story of the wrong and superstitious respect for the Ark as the presence of God. (1 Samuel 4&5) The Israelites suffered a defeat in war and decided that they needed God's presence to keep them safe, so the two priests took the Ark of the Covenant into their camp, where all the men got very excited. The enemy thought that a god had come into the Israelite camp and were terrified, because they had heard about the mighty acts of the God of the Israelites. They fought their best and managed to kill the two priests and capture the Ark. Asaph, in writing his psalm, recognised that God had allowed His splendour into the hands of the enemy. (Psalm 78:61) The wife of one of the priests was so grief-stricken by her husband's death and the disgrace of the capture of the Ark that she named her son "Ichabod", meaning "the glory has departed." The Bible describes the time of the Ark with the Philistines as "the Lord's hand was heavy upon the people. He brought devastation and affliction." Even their god, Dagon, had to bow to God's power. (1 Samuel 5:4) They were desperate to get rid of the Ark and moved it from one place to another but their troubles continued and many people were dying. After 7 months the Philistines returned the Ark on a new cart pulled by cows who were feeding young. They loaded the cart with gold and tied up the young calves. They did this to prove whether the God of Israel was punishing them. The cows went all the way back to some Israelites who received it with joy and rejoicing, but some were curious and looked into the Ark and promptly died. (1 Samuel 6)

Our God is often referred to as consuming fire. (Deuteronomy 4:24 & Hebrews 12:29) His Holiness will burn up all our sin if we come near to Him. This fire of holiness is the wrath of God against all sin and its presence in our lives means that God cannot come close to us. This is as painful to God as it is fatal to us – separation and spiritual death from the Source of Life. He had promised that He would send "the seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15) to crush the power of the devil who had caused this, so that relationship with God could be restored according to His original plea.

Jesus began His ministry with one message. "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near. (Matthew 4:17) Mark adds "believe the good news." (Mark 1:15) It is recorded that Jesus denounced the cities in which He had done miracles because they did not repent. (Matthew 11:20-24) Paul writes that God's kindness is supposed to lead us towards repentance. (Romans 2:4)

Without this relationship with God we can never reflect Him and Jesus has been anointed to be the Way to God. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)

## Chapter 4. THE GLORY MANIFESTED IN JESUS

God had a plan as soon as Adam sinned. The Christ was there in Heaven from the beginning. (Colossians 1:15-17) Yet He was born of Mary to be the second Adam, to represent man. (Romans 5:12-19) The first Adam brought sin into the world; the second was sinless so He brought life. Not only was the glory of God available to mankind again, Jesus told His disciples to be clothed with power from on high.

(Luke 24:49) God even gave a demonstration on the Mount of Transfiguration. (Matthew 17:2) Jesus was still in the world as a man, but the glory of God was on Him as described in heavenly visions which we wrote of in chapter one.

For this cause, the desire of the heavenly Father to be reconciled to mankind, Jesus laid aside His glory and waited until the Father glorified Him (made Him glorious). Jesus submitted Himself to the will of the Father on every occasion. He only did what the Father wanted Him to do and in the power of the Holy Spirit. (John 5:19) Jesus is now crowned with glory and honour because He was totally obedient to the Father's wishes and plans. (Hebrews 2:10) As we identify with Jesus and determine to be totally obedient with the help of the Holy Spirit we are granted this glory too. (John 17:22)

There are many references to the glory of the Heavenly Father on Jesus and these give us a better idea of God's original plan for Man.

- ◆ His birth was announced by angels, who are ministering spirits sent by God to serve those who will inherit salvation. (Hebrews 1:14)
- ◆ He is proclaimed by God to be the radiance of the Father's glory and the exact representation of His being. (Hebrews 1:3) (Colossians 1:15) God demonstrated this on the Mount of Transfiguration as we have previously mentioned. (Matthew 17:2)
- ◆ "God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." (Hebrews 1:9)
- ◆ "You crowned Him with glory and honour and put everything under His feet." (Hebrews 2:7&8)

- ◆ God bestowed on Jesus the honour and glory of becoming a High Priest even though He was not from the Levitical tribe. (Hebrews 5:5 & Hebrews 6:20)
- ◆ Jesus is the chosen mediator of the New Covenant which God promised originally through Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 31:31-34 & Hebrews 9:15)
- ◆ Jesus has the right and authority from the Heavenly Father to make us holy through His sacrifice. (Hebrews 10:16) When He took our sin on Himself He had the right and authority to impute, to those who believe and receive, a righteousness and holiness in God's sight. Although this is a process throughout our lives, in God's sight it is already done.
- ◆ God affirmed Jesus' submission to water baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River; He sent a visible sign of the dove and spoke aloud from Heaven. (Matthew 3:13-17)
- ◆ Jesus' teaching had such a ring of authority that the hearers were amazed. (Matthew 7:28)
- ◆ Jesus healed the sick and delivered those who were demonised to fulfil God's Word through the Prophets. (Matthew 8:17)
- ◆ Jesus stilled the storm with His words. (Matthew 8:26) Paul testifies that all things were created by Him and for Him, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16&17)
- ◆ Jesus noticed that power had gone out from Him when the woman touched Him. (Luke 8:46)

- ◆ All things had been committed to Jesus by the Father.  
(Matthew 11:17) For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus. (Colossians 1:19) For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. (Colossians 2:9)
- ◆ One greater than the Temple is here...the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:6&8)
- ◆ "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matthew 12:28)
- ◆ In Nazareth the people were amazed at Jesus' teaching. "Where did this wisdom and these miraculous powers come from?" (Matthew 13:54) But the disciples in the boat worshipped Him, "Truly you are the Son of God!" (Matthew 14:33) Later, near the Sea of Galilee, the crowd "praised the God of Israel" when they saw Jesus do the miracles. (Matthew 15:31)
- ◆ The heavenly Father publicly confirmed that Jesus is His Son. (Matthew 17:5)
- ◆ Jesus spoke about His return in glory, (Matthew 25:31) and angels confirmed this to His disciples. (Acts 1:11)
- ◆ Paul witnessed the glory of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13)

This glory had been prophesied many years before. "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse...a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 11:1&2) "The Spirit of the

Sovereign Lord is on Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners (the blind), to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance for our God, to comfort all who mourn..." (Isaiah 61:1&2) In the synagogue in Nazareth Jesus announced that He had come to fulfil this prophecy. (Luke 4:20) Later John writes that Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God. (John 13:3) John had also written that no one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only (Begotten) who (came from the Father) is at the Father's side, has made Him known. (John 1:14&18)

This glory, this anointing, is like a magnet which draws and "attaches" a person. It is like a bubble which encloses the anointed one with the focus of His attention. When Jesus ministered it was like there was no one else around except Him and the one to whom He was speaking. For example, when He was at the pool near the Sheep gate at Bethesda (John 5:1-9) He and the crippled man were totally engaged with each other until God's work was finished. This preoccupation and focus is apparent in nearly every healing where a specific person is mentioned. There was obviously an invisible power present. This is why Jesus warned His disciples to wait until "you have been clothed with power from on high". (Luke 24:49)

## Chapter 5. THE GLORY DELEGATED

This is God's original plan for mankind! God made man in His own image. (Genesis 1:27) There are many synonyms of the word "image" in the dictionary.

Representation – reproduction, portrayal.

Character – the collective qualities, especially mental and moral.

Reflection – demonstration, evidence, testimony.

Likeness – resemblance, sameness, agreement.

Duplicate – exactly like something already existing, and for the same purpose.

Embodiment – incarnation, personification, incorporation.

Vision – conception, foresight, sagacity.

These words give us a broad understanding of God's idea and expectation for mankind. It was such a wonderful plan – to populate the beautifully prepared world with many "children" after His own kind. God exercised such trust and love as He delegated His authority over the created world to these, His highest creation. It was compassion that made God decide to delegate again when He called Moses to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt. Was it Moses' misplaced zeal for the Hebrew people (Exodus 2:11&12) that encouraged God to decide that it was time for Moses to rise into the purpose for which he was saved from the Pharaoh's decree? (Exodus 1:16) God is amazing in whom He chooses because He always looks at the heart attitude. (1 Samuel 16:7) David was a worshipper of God, loving Him simply like a child, and trusting Him because of His faithfulness in David's experiences. (1 Samuel 17:34-37)



Jesus chose, as His disciples, men who did not have academic qualifications. (Acts 4:13) Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Luke 18:17) The Apostles and also the 70 were sent only on the authority of Jesus and by His appointment. (Luke 9:1-6 and Luke 10:1-9) The only "training" they had was to watch Jesus. They were to represent Jesus and the Father, (Luke 10:16) and the people they met would be judged by how they received these representatives. In Jesus' prayer He tells the Father He has brought Him glory by completing the work that the Father gave Him (John 17:4) "and glory has come to Me through them". (John 17:10) "I have sent them into the world." (John 17:18) He goes on to pray that He has given them the glory that the Father gave Him. (John 17:22) Jesus has actually said He has delegated His glory to His disciples and to all who believe their message. (John 17:20-23)

The disciples who gathered in the upper room to wait and pray (the Bible adds that women were there too) were there because they wanted the power of the Holy Spirit Who had been promised. They believed Jesus that they would receive, and that this power was the same as Jesus had when He did His miraculous works. They believed that the Christ (the Anointed One) had imparted His power, delegated His very being to them for this purpose. They had previously heard Jesus say, "I tell you the truth, unless you can eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you." (John 6:53) This was a hard saying and many left from following Jesus because of it. (John 6:60&66) Jesus explained to His close group, "the Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing." (John 6:63)

John writes later, "In this world we are like Him." (1 John 4:17) Isaiah had prophesied, "In that day the remnant...will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel". (Isaiah 10:20)

The prophecy in Isaiah (61:3) goes on with the reason the glory was on the Christ. "Provide for those who grieve – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and a garment of praise instead of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord for the display of His splendour."

God is Spirit and desires a body to move on the Earth. Paul wrote to Timothy about the mystery of godliness. He appeared in a body (the flesh)...was taken up in glory." (1 Timothy 3:16) Jesus came as Immanuel, God with us. (Matthew 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14) John writes that "no one has ever seen God, but God the Only Begotten, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known." (John 1:18) In other words Jesus came so that we could represent God because we know Him, His heart, His nature, His will. Jesus came so that we could be a new creation, with a new heart towards God, and to be reconciled to God so that we can be Christ's ambassadors. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) We have participated in the Divine exchange, our sin for His righteousness. Christ is in us, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

Christ Jesus has accomplished the Father's will because He completed the work He agreed to do in and with the Father, by the Holy Spirit. This is the very greatest example of the Three-in-One Godhead in action. Yet the most amazing thing is that now Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven and wants us to continue His work on the Earth until He returns. This "Trinity" is

Father, Holy Spirit and each of us in Jesus Christ. "On that day you will realise that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you". (John 14:20)

Peter writes about our calling and the reason why God has chosen us. "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness." (2 Peter 1:3) He goes on to exhort us. "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. If we possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5-9)

## Chapter 6. THE GLORY RECEIVED

In the first chapter we named some who loved God and sought Him to see His glory. These experiences were real enough to keep those who had the visions in love with God and expectant of His "fullness" eventually. But Jesus received the fullness of the Godhead bodily on our behalf. (Colossians 2:9&10) This is the gift offered for us to receive or even reject. But who would reject such a gift if it were clearly known?

The Psalms and the experiences of David and other psalm writers give such an exciting picture.

- ◆ Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His Name; worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness. (Psalm 29:2) The Lord gives strength to His people. (Verse 11)

- ◆ Let Your face shine on Your servant. (Psalm 31:16)
- ◆ Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His Name together...Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. (Psalm 34:3&5)
- ◆ (This one is to the daughter of the King) All glorious is the princess within. (Psalm 45:13)
- ◆ I have seen You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and Your glory....my lips will glorify You. (Psalm 63:2&3)
- ◆ Sing the glory of His Name; make His praise glorious. (Psalm 66:2)
- ◆ Praise be to the Lord God...praise be to His glorious Name for ever; may the whole Earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. (Psalm 72:18&19)
- ◆ You are resplendent with light, more majestic...(Psalm 76:4)
- ◆ You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth...make Your face shine upon us. (Psalm 80:1&3,7&19)
- ◆ You are all sons of the Most High. (Psalm 82:6)
- ◆ Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in the land. (Psalm 85:9)
- ◆ Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all peoples. (Psalm 96:3)

But Paul describes the glory of God which is planned for God's family in even more extravagant terms. God has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ...to be holy and blameless in His sight...adopted as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ...redemption through the blood of the One He loves...forgiveness of sins by His lavish grace...the mystery of His will

to bring all things in heaven and on Earth together under one Head, Christ, the Anointed One and His anointing. (Ephesians 1:3-10) All this is to reflect God's glory and for His praise.

Paul also writes, "If the ministry that brought death came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory...will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness?" (2 Corinthians 3:7-11)

And what is the ministry of the Holy Spirit? John said that Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Matthew 3:11) Jesus said, "no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Holy Spirit." (John 3:5) The ministry of the Spirit is to give us the new birth. The ministry of the letter of the law convicts and sentences us to death, but the ministry of the Spirit gives us new life. (2 Corinthians 3:6) This new life, this living water, is supposed to flow out from us to a desperate world. (John 7:38) We have become Jesus' ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20) This is the glory to be received by the Spirit. Jesus says that anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these. (John 14:12)

Our righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. (Romans 3:22) But believing, according to God, is actually receiving all His promises. God wants us to be transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory to reflect Him. (2 Corinthians 3:18) He never intended His Church to continue to be sinners, grovelling before Him each week. Paul writes, "Who will rescue me

from this body of death?" But he immediately goes on: "Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!... Therefore there is now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit has set me free." (Romans 7:25 – 8:1&2)

We have become to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved (the fragrance of life) and those who are perishing (the smell of death). (2 Corinthians 2:15&16) This witness is why God has delegated the glory.

It is really sad to see the witness of the church in these days – busy with fund-raising to build bigger buildings in the hope of catering to more people, when the reality is that in materially-rich nations there is such spiritual poverty and in many, a serious objection to a prosperity message. In many countries where there is real poverty there is much more seeking after God. Jesus did warn that "it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:23) It is the experience of the writers that many who attend church are complacent with what they know about Jesus, but do not have a personal relationship with Him, which is dependant on repentance and belief in the One who was sent. Jesus said to Martha, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40) Belief is taking God at His word and obeying it to demonstrate that we love Him. It will involve seeking Him in prayer, reading and studying His Word and then acting on it. Because Jesus has broken down the barriers to fellowship with God we should avail ourselves at every opportunity to cultivate this relationship. If we are serious about

receiving His glory, He has already offered it, and we can "drip" with His joy, health, insights and wisdom. What a privilege!

## Chapter 7. THE SPREADING GLORY

In the previous chapter we quoted the psalmists' poetry and vision as they sought the presence of the Lord. The glory was always meant to uplift us, sending our thoughts and emotions towards God. His presence certainly gives life. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (abundantly)." (John 10:10) This is not just existing and breathing, but a life of joy and satisfaction so that those who see us know there is something different, which they are attracted towards and come to desire it too. Many believers do not experience this level of life which the Bible describes as "seated with Christ in the heavenly realms". (Ephesians 2:6) The whole reason that Jesus died in our place was so that God would have a family who reflected His glory, that in everything we do we prosper, to show how generous, loving and caring, how powerful, majestic and just, how holy, beautiful and righteous He is. This is the great secret of Christ in us, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27) This is not a vague hope but a certainty if we choose God's way all the time, as Jesus did. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful." (Hebrews 10:23) God says He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

There are also many psalms visualising the spreading glory. In David's prayer "all the nations You have made will come and worship before You, O Lord; they will bring glory to Your Name." (Psalm 86:9) "May Your deeds be shown to Your servants, Your splendour to their children." (Psalm 90:16) "Declare His glory among the nations ... splendour and majesty are before Him, strength and glory are in His sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength ... the glory due to His Name ... worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness." (Psalm 96:3-9)

The history of the Church tells of many who took God seriously and did mighty things. Alongside of corruption there were those whose light shone brightly and they are remembered and honoured. Interestingly they are often portrayed with haloes. Was the light of God visible?

One of the things that has inhibited professing Christians from spreading the glory of God is that they are constantly reminded that they are sinners. Jewish leaders defined sinners as those outside of Covenant, (Matthew 9:11; Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30) and therefore not worthy of associating with Jesus. Jesus corrected this in each synoptic gospel. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." When sinners repent they are made clean by the blood of Jesus. John is very plain. "He (Jesus) appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him is no sin. No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning...he who does what is right is righteous, just as He is righteous. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed (Jesus) remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God." (1 John 3:5-9) To be Christ's ambassador,



God making His appeal through us, we need to embrace the fact that in Christ we are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:17-20) This is not Paul just talking about himself. He uses the word "anyone". Jesus died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again. We who are alive are always being given over to death (of self) for Jesus' sake, so that His life may be revealed in our mortal body. (2 Corinthians 4:11)

The responsibility of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers is to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...and become mature. (Ephesians 4:11-13) The writer to the Hebrews warns that those who are not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness are not yet mature. (Hebrews 5:13) Jesus said, "Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me...and I will show Myself to him." (John 14:21)

God has never changed His original plan. His desire was always that His children would represent Him on this Earth, spreading His love, and drawing those who are born in the flesh and under the curse of Adam, into the family of God. The requirement is to confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. (Romans 10:6) We are to become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which we shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the Word of life. (Philippians 2:15&16)

There is no room for lukewarmness towards God and His Word. Jesus said, "he who is the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater

than the greatest (John the Baptist) among those born of women." Why? "The Kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful (passionate) men lay hold of it." (Matthew 11:11&12) Jesus goes on sadly, "to what can I compare this generation? They are like children...playing." For God's plan to come to pass His Church needs to lift its "game".

## Chapter 8. THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY – HEAVEN ON EARTH

Jesus taught His disciples to pray. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

In the first chapter we wrote what the prophets saw regarding heaven. When Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection the angels told the apostles that He would come back in the same way. (Acts 1:11) After the coming of the Holy Spirit in power on the apostles, Peter preached that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit on all people and there would be many supernatural signs. (Acts 2:17-21) Since the wonders and signs began on that day and have continued throughout the history of the Church age, although somewhat spasmodically, we need to look afresh at what Jesus asked us to pray. We have established what God's will is but it is up to each of God's family members to commit to this. Every act of Jesus was to glorify the Father, and on the Day He comes back He is to be glorified in His holy people and to be marvelled at among all who have

believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:10) Every act prompted by our faith is to glorify the Lord Jesus. People are supposed to see Jesus in everything we do, and everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

Many who call themselves Christian mostly please themselves and use their money and possessions to indulge themselves. All these "works" will be burned up. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15) Jesus said the flesh counts for nothing. (John 6:63) Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Paul's letters are full of admonitions as to the standard we are to aspire to.

- ◆ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children... to share in His glory. (Romans 8:16&17)
- ◆ "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My Name might be proclaimed in all the Earth." This had been said to Pharaoh but Paul is using it as an example for all "objects of God's mercy" whom He prepared in advance for glory. (Romans 9:17-24)
- ◆ Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1)
- ◆ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...and we use it/them for the benefit of the body of Christ. (Romans 12:5-8)

- ◆ Love must be sincere; be devoted to one another; honour one another; never be lacking in zeal; be joyful, patient and faithful in prayer; share with those in need; practise hospitality; bless those who persecute you; empathise with one another; live in harmony; do not be proud (racist and elitist); overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21)
- ◆ Put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of Light...clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 13:12-14)
- ◆ Follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:5-7)
- ◆ Live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might...joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the Kingdom of Light. (Colossians 1:10-12)
- ◆ God has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation – if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. (Colossians 1:22&23) You died with Christ to the basic principles of this world. (Colossians 2:20) [Worldly wisdom is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. – James 3:15]

- ◆ Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above...for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God...to appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature.  
(Colossians 3:1-5)
- ◆ As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive...as the Lord forgave you. Over all these virtues put on love. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the Name (according to the nature and character) of the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 3:12-17)

This is a small sample of all the advice Paul and other New Testament writers give the Church, the Body of Christ. We have outlined the principles of God's plan, His wisdom, which is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. (James 3:17&18) He is also incredibly generous and faithful to His commitment to us to help us, working His plan out in our lives as we cooperate with His Holy Spirit. He knows we cannot do His work in our own strength, but for Him nothing is impossible. If we work with Him anything is possible for us too. He has promised, "He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us – to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever." (Ephesians 3:20&21) Every precedent that has been written in His revelation is as much possible this very day as it was in

the time of the Bible. But will we believe, receive and cooperate with Him? This is the modern day church's greatest challenge.

**"As for me and my house we will serve the Lord!"**

(Joshua 24:15) This is the testimony of the writers of this book.