

## **The Glory Of God (Part 2): In Christ**

**Full of Grace and Truth**

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I have to start by apologizing to those of you on the West Coast and Hawaii, because I'm going to continue with the second part of a series that started on the morning of the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. You guys missed out on the first part of this.

But I plan to use a fair amount of my material from last sermon in this sermon, and so hopefully by the time it is all done, you will be all caught up.

Of course, you may want to go back and listen to the first one for the extra details that I won't bring back out here. That one had a specific subject, which was the Shekinah—the glory of God—that is shown in the Old Testament, primarily in the wilderness wanderings. Also as a shining cloud that came onto the temple and the tabernacle, and sat between the cherubim on the mercy seat, which is the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.

So, I went through a great deal of scripture and explanation to talk about what that Shekinah glory really is, and what it means.

I want to go on with a bit of review, and talk about this glory of God more fully. When I got finished with this sermon, I looked at all the material, and said to myself that there is at least one more sermon here. So, I plan to have a third part the next time I speak.

"Glory" is one of those words that seem to have passed its prime in English. It is still a fine and quite usable word. We actually use it a fair amount. But, over the years the word "glory" has become somewhat diminished by its use in, I might say, less than glorious ways.

It used to be applied almost exclusively to God, or to works or acts of renown that were really special. But, now it has been degraded. For instance, in the euphemism, or some people call it an interjection, "Glory Be!" Some folks believe by doing so, they honor God, but it is used really as a minor cuss word, where somebody is acting surprised, or pleasantly pleased. They use it in situations where there is no glory given to God at all.

Another way in which it has been degraded is in saying things like (pardon me, you Mark McGuire fans), "Mark McGuire was in his 'glory days' just a few years ago." Were they really "glory days?" Humanly, they might have been stellar as far as a baseball player goes. But, in terms of what we're talking about, in terms of the glory of God, it is really nothing. It means nothing in light of eternity. What did the guy do? He swung a bat, and hit a ball over a fence 72 times.

That's fine; it was a wonderful baseball accomplishment, but in the long run, it doesn't mean a whole lot. What glory he had has already begun to fade. Now we think about Barry Bonds and him hitting home runs over the fence. Even though people will remember Mark McGuire's great year or two that he had, well, in the long run it is just another sporting event.

These are fine usages. I don't mind them being used at all. But, they kind of degrade the idea of glory when it is applied to God.

We even use the expressions like, "What a glorious day it has been!" All we mean is that it is a bright, sunshiny day! This example actually brings a great deal more glory to God, who is the creator of that wonderful glorious day, than some of these other ones.

But the concept of glory, particularly God's glory, contained in scripture is so much higher than these things that there is really no comparison.

Our everyday definition of glory, according to a dictionary like Webster's, would be: "Glory is great beauty or splendor, magnificent," like a king or a monarchy has a certain glory. It is the magnificence and majesty of their office. Or, like I mentioned earlier about the beautiful, sunshiny day—its glory is in its great beauty or splendor.

There is also a human usage of glory that applies to men and women who do great things, and that would be praise, honor, or distinction—renown—that is given to a person for something that they have done. We could say that there is a certain glory in Rome, or let's say the Caesars, or Charlemagne, or other people of history who have done what is considered to be great things. And so, they have received praise, honor, or distinction for what they've done.

Of course, there is the application to God, where you would have to add the adjective "worshipful"—worshipful praise, honor, and thanksgiving. It would be used in terms of giving glory to God.

There is also the idea of a distinguished quality or asset, such as "her glory is in her grace." This might be like a skater like Michelle Kwan, or someone of that distinction. She has a glory in her skating. She has this distinguished quality or asset that sets her apart from other skaters.

There is also, as I mentioned in terms of Mark McGuire, a height of achievement that is also a glory.

And, we shouldn't leave this one out, because we'll come across it later in the sermon, the after life—eternity—is often called "glory." Even the bible uses the term in that sense that we will come into glory in the resurrection. These are all normal, understood meanings of the word "glory."

Biblical glory has elements of many or all of these. You will find that the translators have used it in these senses in the Bible. It is perfectly all right. But, I want to trace the concept of glory in the Bible and spend most of the time today exploring the New Testament understanding of it.

For those of you who didn't hear the first sermon, I think you might be a little bit startled by what this glory actually is. It is not what most people think it is. Most people think of the glory of God, or our coming into glory as a kind of splendor, as a kind of radiance that we will have when we are given the body of Christ, or the body like Christ's resurrected body in the kingdom. But, that kind of glory is just the culmination of the glory I will be speaking about today.

Let's turn to Exodus 3 to begin. This is where I get a running start into the rest of the sermon, because we are going to trace this glory of God somewhat through the Old Testament and transition into the New Testament understanding of it.

Many of you just upon hearing these verses would know what we're talking about. This is the Burning Bush incident on Horeb.

**Exodus 3:1-4** Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush. [Talk about surprise! Not only does the bush burn with fire and isn't consumed, now there is a voice calling him by name out of it's midst, saying,] "Moses, Moses!" And he said, [gulp!] "Here I am."

**Exodus 3:4-6** Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

This is the first real known appearance of the glory of God in the scripture. There are a couple of others that have elements of this in the book of Genesis. Some have even thought that the cherubim placed at the East of the garden of Eden may be one of these—the flaming sword guarding the way back to the tree of life. As well as Abraham's sacrifice that he made there in Genesis 15 in which there was a great darkness that came upon him when he was with the offering. And then God made the promise to him, God appears between the offerings, which had been cut and separated, as a torch—which is a flame and is a lot like the flaming sword. Here, we have a bush that burns and does not get consumed.

So, everywhere else in Genesis, when God has appeared, He had appeared as a man, or as an angel. At other times, He had merely been a voice, or a vision of some sort. Jacob saw the ladder (staircase) going up to heaven, and saw the angels going up and down, and God spoke to him. In another place God appeared to Abimelech and told him, "This is Abraham, My servant. You better let his wife go." There were various other times when God had appeared, but this is really the first time where, what later became the Shekinah, is shown clearly in the Bible.

So, to Moses here, He appeared in a flame of fire within a bush that did not burn up. Notice the wording here: It says that the Lord (in verse 2) appeared to him in a flame of fire in the midst of the bush. It does not say God was the flame of fire, but it says He was *in* the flame of fire. He was not the fire.

I want you to get that clear. In every instance in which God appears as something other than a bodily form, or angelic form, or human form, He is *in* that thing. He is not that thing. For instance, He goes through the wilderness with the Israelites as a pillar of cloud and fire. He was not the cloud. He was not the fire. He was in it. It was just a physical representation of His presence.

So, this flaming bush was not some projection of God from Heaven—like in Star Trek where somebody is beamed down, here and there at the same time, and projecting himself into this bush, or this flame.

We have God *in* that. He is there. He is not somewhere else and here. He is there, right in front of Moses. How do I know this? Because it says in verse 5,

**Exodus 3:5** Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

The only way it could be holy ground is if God was there. Only God can make anything holy. And so, this place where God was, is holy; wherever God *is*, that place is holy because God is there. It is God's presence that makes something holy. And so, God is actually there in the thing, whether it's a flame, a bush, or a cloud, a fire or whatever else He appears in.

So, here we have this first representation, which is a precursor to the actual Shekinah glory that appeared later (in Exodus 40). This is not the first time it appears, but it is a good summation of this pillar of cloud.

**Exodus 40:34-38** Then the cloud [this is right after they had finished the tabernacle and set it up] covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

I want you to notice here that in verse 34 there is a parallelism directly within this verse. The first part of the parallel is "then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting," and the parallel statement is, "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

What this does is that it creates an equation. It equates the cloud and the glory of the Lord. The Jews picked up on this. They equated the cloud with God's glory only. As I showed in the last sermon, it got to the point where they had narrowly defined it down that the Shekinah glory of God was only that when it appeared in the tabernacle or Temple between the cherubim on top of the Mercy Seat. And that was the only way that God could basically express Himself—as a cloud, or fiery cloud in that particular place.

So they had taken something that God had done for a very good reason, and they narrowed it down, and narrowed it down, and narrowed it down till they limited God to an ephemeral nothingness almost—He was only a bright cloud to them.

They limited Him specifically to that small little place—2 cubits by 1 cubit—on top of the Mercy Seat. They had narrowly defined Him down. They just tried to place Him in a box so that their mind could contain Him. They basically made Him into nothing, in contrast to what Solomon said in I Kings 8, "The universe cannot contain You! The Heaven of Heavens cannot contain You!" And this was said in the same place where He had shown Himself in the cloud coming down upon the temple.

We also see here in Exodus 40 that this miracle of God's presence in the cloud was with the Israelites continually for 40 years. It didn't go off and come back; it stayed there every second of the time between their initial journey out of Rameses all the way till the time they were crossing the Jordan River. Forty years of God's symbolic presence—He was actually there. He was not just a symbol. It was the cloud that was a symbol of His presence for 40 long years through the wilderness.

As was mentioned in the last sermon, in it's time this Shekinah glory—pillar of cloud, or the fiery pillar—was Emanuel: "God with us." Just as Jesus Christ was in the New Testament—Emanuel: "God with us."

For forty years, Israel saw the representation of God. If they were at any time unsure of themselves, or wondering, "where was God?" all they had to do was look toward the tabernacle and see God was there—which is one of His Names. God was present in the cloud, in the pillar of fire. So, the people could be constantly reminded with just a look over the shoulder, or orienting themselves in their direction toward the tabernacle that God was there, and He led them, and that He protected them.

And you wonder why, with all of this going on, how they could lose faith so frequently! How they could grumble and complain! How they could tell Moses, "We wish you had left us in Egypt!" "We would have rather died there than out here!" At any time day or night, they could have seen the presence of God.

It was just as spectacular as Moses seeing a bush burning, and not being consumed. Here was this glorious cloud, which in my own mind I think of in terms of a thundercloud, or a storm cloud with just an intense, fiery light coming out of it, you could see the strength of God and His permanence with them in this representation of Him.

Yet, their whole history is one of going away from Him—doing the exact opposite of what God wanted them to do.

We see that He actually did not leave them. There were times when they thought that God had left them, but He actually had not.

In I Kings 8 we will see this Shekinah glory stayed with Israel. It did not appear, as far as we know. I couldn't find any examples of it between the time of them crossing the Jordan to this time, but this certainly is an indication that God was always there with them.

**I Kings 8:1** Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion.

**I Kings 8:9-13** Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. Then Solomon spoke: "The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud. I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever."

Here we have the Shekinah glory coming visibly to everyone who was there, settling on top of the temple, showing God's presence. As I mentioned before, it was this form that the Jews narrowed down to explain what the Shekinah was. The Shekinah thus became this cloud that filled the holy place in the temple on the mercy seat.

We can see that this continued on in Psalm 132, which was probably later than the time of David. As a matter of fact, within the psalm itself it mentions David as an historical figure. So this may have been a post-exilic psalm. But that's really neither here nor there. Just wanted to show some history of this.

**Psalm 132:7-8** Let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool. Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.

**Psalm 132:13-14** For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

The word "Shekinah," as I explained in the last sermon, means "dwelling." It is actually a non-biblical word. The Jews used it after the canon of the Old Testament was closed to describe this dwelling presence of God. They limited it to the Most Holy Place behind the curtain between the cherubim. We see the history here, that by the time that this psalm was written, that was where God was.

I remember in the class, "Ancient Israel" at Ambassador College, the instructor reminded us that there was a widespread belief in the Middle East at the time that a god lived only in a certain place, and he had power only in a certain place.

You can see this when, during the time of Elisha, the Ethiopian treasurer asked for soil from Israel to take back to where he was from, because there was this superstitious belief that a god only dwelled in that particular land. He wanted some of the soil of Israel because if he did, then he could place it in what he considered a holy place in his country, and God would be dwelling there.

You see this seeping into this Jewish idea of the Shekinah that God was confined to the land of Israel, and further confined down until He got to be in this very small area within the Most Holy Place, in the Holy of Holies.

So they really took it a long way and actually defined God down into an ephemeral, ethereal, amorphous cloud.

Now, this is not wrong. God did dwell between the cherubim in the most holy place during this time. But, He was not confined to that place. That is the difference. God, as Solomon said, is in all of the universe. He can go anywhere He wants, and be anywhere He wants, in order to get His plan moving and do whatever He needs to do.

We want to make sure that we don't have that idea that God is just in one place, and does not move, and has no power beyond that. I don't think we have that problem. That's a totally different culture than we have today.

But here we see in the psalm (and this is actually a Song of Ascent, which means it was probably sung on the holy days, or when the priests were filing into the Temple for a service of some sort) that their idea was that God dwelt in the Most Holy Place, between the cherubim.

Let's go on, because we need to get away from this idea that He was just confined to the Shekinah, because that is not true. The glory of God was something quite a bit more than just the cloud and fire.

Let's read Exodus 33, which is the beginning of the story of Moses asking God to see His glory. We will begin just after the golden calf incident. God was ready to basically start over with Moses.

**Exodus 33:13** "Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way [Listen to how Moses crafts this question.], that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." And He [the Lord] said, "My Presence [remember Shekinah: God's dwelling or presence] will go *with you*, and I will give you rest." Then he [Moses] said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here."

"If You're not going to go up with us, don't even start!" Moses had an understanding of what was ahead of them. They still had to get across the wilderness.

**Exodus 33:16** "For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? [What good is it if You're not with us?] So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth."

It was God's presence with them that made them a separate people.

**Exodus 33:17-19** So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." And he [Moses] said, "Please, show me Your glory." [Listen to God's response:] Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you [Moses asked to see His glory, and God gave him His goodness to see. This is very important.] and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you..."

So we have two things here that make up His glory. First was His goodness. And second, was the name of the Lord. In many ways they are similar.

**Exodus 33:19-23** ...I will be gracious [Notice what He brings in here: grace] to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. "So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. "Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

**Exodus 34:5-9** Now the LORD descended in the cloud [here is the Shekinah] and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

We've seen here that God Himself defines His glory not necessarily as His splendor. That was part of it because God put Moses into the cleft of the rock, and shielded his eyes from His frontal splendor, and allowed him to see the splendor of His rear parts.

So, obviously, that radiance that God has—the light that shines from Him—is a part of God's glory. Remember that was part of the definition; the stunning beauty and brilliance is a glory. And that is part of what we will receive in the resurrection, a body like unto His. But God emphasizes a different part of His glory here. In a way, the radiance of God was a minor thing compared to what He was trying to get across to Moses as to what His real glory is.

It is defined several ways just within this passage. Moses defined it as "show me your way." That was in verse 13.

And "your way" he further defines as "knowing Him." There are all kinds of little parallelisms here. Equations of terms so that we get a better understanding of what God's glory is, and what makes God so wonderful.

So, we have "Your way," in verse 13, as well as "knowing You," and "finding grace." Those are all in verse 13.

And then verse 19, it is "God's goodness" that is part of His glory; or, we could say maybe a general term for what God's glory is that He's trying to get across; as well as "the name of the Lord" (also in verse 19). He also then defines it down further by talking about grace, being gracious, as well as having compassion.

In chapter 34, He defines it down further still. Maybe I should say, "breaks it down further." Because, He proclaims the name of the Lord. He starts with the word, "the Lord," for one thing, the Eternal. And then He is the Eternal God, or the Eternal Deity, the Eternal One who is above all—the master—the term El.

Then He talks about mercy and grace again, longsuffering, goodness, truth, mercy again, and judgment (by no wise clearing the guilty and visiting the iniquity upon generations).

These are all part of God's glory that God wanted Moses to key in on. When Moses heard this, boy, it hit him like a ton of bricks. It wasn't the radiance that made Him fall down and worship; it was the concept that made him fall down and worship. The concept of what God's glory contained. He gets it because he immediately says, "If I have found grace in your sight, oh Lord, I pray, go among us."

He knew that the only way that this could be worked out, that people could actually come up to some sort of level of understanding God's glory and imitating it, was if God Himself was among them, was with them.

We can't understand this alone by just understanding the words in here, or having it taught to us. We have to see an example. We have to be led and guided in this way because Moses understood that this concept was so much greater than even he, a great prophet of God, could get across to the people. They needed the presence of God with them to make it work.

So, here we have a change in our thinking of what God's glory is all about. It has to move from the physical representation of God in a cloud, and a pillar of fire to the way of God, the goodness of God.



And, maybe as an overarching term we could say "God's nature" or, a term that Mr. Armstrong liked to use, "God's Holy Righteous Character."

God's glory is His essence, what He is. And then we define it by these other terms that come into various circumstances in the bible—various ways of teaching it. But God's glory is not a physical attribute, but a spiritual radiance of His character.

We need to transition, then, from this concept to a very New Testament concept—from the Old Testament to the New. We will do this by going through a series of verses.

Let's read Psalm 138, a psalm of David, another prophet of God who knew what God was up to. David is looking into the future here. He says:

**Psalm 138:4** All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD, when they hear the words of Your mouth.

Listen to this! He is going to parallel it here.

**Psalm 138:5** Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, [now he will parallel it yet again] for great is the glory of the LORD.

You see these prophets understood something. Maybe it was because they looked back at what Moses had written down there in Exodus 33 and 34, but David here equates the "words of your mouth," with "the ways of the Lord," and with "the glory of the Lord."

He could be thinking of three different things, but the way that they are put together gives them a great deal of intermeshing; that they hang on one another. The "words of the Lord," and the "ways of the Lord," and the "glory of the Lord," all have common features.

Isaiah 58 is interesting because it is speaking of a righteous person. This is the fasting chapter. In this particular section, God is talking about the fast that He will accept.

**Isaiah 58:6-7** Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?

He is talking about the effects of doing these things. These are all things that God does—this is what God does. These are the very things that Jesus spoke of in Luke 4. When He began His ministry He talked about loosing the oppressed, and that sort of thing. This is the same sort of thing that a correct fast is supposed to produce in us.

**Isaiah 58:8** Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

It is those last two phrases that I want to connect here. When we act like God, when we display the righteousness of God, it goes before us as a vanguard. And it is just like God being behind us, guarding our rear.

What God, through Isaiah, is doing here is showing that our righteousness functions very much the same as God's glory does. Remember, I said that there are a lot of these terms that come in and form parallel ideas, or they are part of, or define parts of God's glory.

And so now we stick in the term "righteousness" as one of those terms that is part of the glory of God. These prophets understood this. The glory of God was not just in the pillar of cloud and fire—His presence dwelling among them—but the glory of God had these spiritual aspects that were far more important than just seeing something.

So we have another one of these terms—"righteousness"—being equated with the glory of God. Now let's go to the little book of Habakkuk. We probably talk about this verse every Feast.

**Habakkuk 2:14** For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

What is being equated here? The knowledge of God's way is being equated with the glory of the Lord!

So, we've added several of these words (these terms) that highlight, or emphasize different parts of God's glory and help us to define a bit better what God's glory is. We have the *word* of the Lord, the *ways* of the Lord, *righteousness*, and *knowledge* of God's way of life, as all being parts of, or being aspects of, the glory of God.

Yet, God certainly is (if we should happen to see Him) radiant and beautiful to behold. But, His real glory, the glory that God wants us to grasp and then to emulate, is what He is and how He lives.

Let's transition to the New Testament—to Zechariah 6. This is how God did it. This is a beautiful, beautiful couple of verses here. You might say, "How in the world does this fit in?" This was the crowning of Joshua back at the time when they're re-building the Temple. Joshua was the high priest at the time, and Zerubbabel was the governor. You would think that if anybody was going to be crowned, it would be Zerubbabel because Zerubbabel was a son of David. But, God says, as we will see, "Crown Joshua!" That must have floored people.

**Zechariah 6:9-10** Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Receive the gift from the captives ...

What had happened here is that the people in Babylon had gotten together, some of them, and had sent a gift to Jerusalem to adorn the Temple. This gift came by their hands of as we see here:

**Zechariah 6:10-11** ...from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. "Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown [actually it says make crowns, plural], and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

Now this was a gold crown, and a silver crown. They were both supposed to be put on the high priest.

**Zechariah 6:12** "Then speak to him [Joshua the high priest], saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH!"

A ha! There is something beyond Joshua that is involved here. It is good to know that Jesus' name in Hebrew is Joshua! He is the Branch! We find the Branch in other places comes from the root of Jesse. Thus, you can understand from this that He has to be an heir of David. He is saying that Joshua the high priest is a symbol of the Branch—the coming Messiah.

**Zechariah 6:12** ..."Behold, the Man whose name *is* the BRANCH! From His place...

This kind of means "from the soil from which he grows," or literally, "from under himself." Roots are under a plant, so the idea is that when He is planted, He will grow up

**Zechariah 6:12** ... He shall branch out [It means, "to sprout up." This is all a prophetic way of saying that He is going to be born; He is going to grow.] and He shall build the temple of the LORD...

A ha! Who are we talking about now? Jesus Christ, the Branch, the heir of David, will build the church—Matthew 16:18. He is telling the people there in Judea what has to happen first. When the Messiah comes, His job is to build the church. That is what Jesus told His disciples He was going to do. "I will build my church, and the gates of the grave will never prevail against it."

And then notice verse 13, He repeats it. When God repeats something it is important:

**Zechariah 6:13** Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD...

That was His job the first time. And of course, the other things that He did, living the perfect life, and dying for our sins were necessary for the building of the church. But, in this particular context, the church's being built is absolutely, fundamentally, vitally necessary.

Going on—this is what I was getting to, this one phrase:

**Zechariah 6:13** ...He shall bear the glory...

This is not the term that was eventually made into Shekinah. It doesn't have to be. It is talking about a majesty, or we might say an eminence. But the concept of the glory of God is the same here. When it says "the glory," it is talking about a specific glory; the majesty of God, which is basically what we have been talking about here. Majesty does not have to just be radiance. It can be something else. Or, it can be that and something else.

How many of you remember my dad's sermons on the Third Commandment? "You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." What are the main verbs of that sentence? Well, it is "take." The first clause and the last clause both have the verb "take" in it. That word "take" is the same word as "bear" in the verse above.

If you remember the definition of the word "bear," or "take" in those sermons, you will remember that the definition of this Hebrew word is "to take." It is also "to carry; to lift or lift up; to use; or to appropriate." And there were various other ones as well.

But "bear" may be the best one of all, and I think that is why they used it here. When you bear something, like you bear arms, or you bear a burden, it is something that you carry with you. It is something that is normally very visible.

But on the other hand, you could also bear griefs, and sorrows; you could bear love towards someone. You could bear this, that, and the other thing.

It is something that you have, that you possess, that you carry with you. And so in the Third Commandment, it says that he who takes, bears, carries, uses, appropriates the name of God had better do it in a way that will please God, because God is not going to hold him guiltless if he bears that name in vain.

We, of course, in this church, have been baptized into the name of God, and it is so important for us, vitally important for us to bear that name to the glory of God.

This prophecy says that when Jesus Christ comes, He is going to bear the glory, and then it talks about Him.

**Zechariah 6:13** ...And shall sit and rule on His throne [which is future] so He shall be a priest on His throne,...

By dying for us, becoming the Mediator of the New Covenant, He became our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. So, what this is saying is that He holds in Himself both offices of King and Priest, and as the last little clause there indicates,

**Zechariah 6:13** ...And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

It means that there will be no contradiction between the two offices—kingly and priestly—because they will be in one person on one throne. That's why it was so weird that Joshua was crowned because he was of Levi. He couldn't be king. But, neither could a son of David be a priest under the Old Covenant.

And so, this future Branch was going to bring the two of them together. This is what Paul explains in Hebrews 7. In Jesus Christ a much holier, and older branch of the priesthood was being re-instituted in a son of David.

What I really want to get out of this, though, when we strip all of the other stuff away, is that Jesus will bear the glory.

Most people would say that it is this occurrence in Luke 9 that is being referred to. But, this is only part of it. We could have also gone to Matthew 17, or Mark 9—they are all about the Transfiguration.

**Luke 9:28-33** Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the

appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. [This is what we normally think of regarding God's glory, but wait...] And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

It was like he was out of his mind. He had no idea what he was saying to Jesus.

**Luke 9:34-36** While he was saying this, a ['bright shining' You find the word bright in Matthew's account] cloud came and overshadowed them [like the Shekinah]; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud [it engulfed them]. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

Like Moses, they got, I think, what God was trying to get across with this appearance of God's glory, and it is all contained in "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" The glory that He wanted them to see was in Jesus and His message. "Hear Him!"

It is almost as if God was saying, "Guys, the lights are nice, the cloud is pleasant, but the real deal of God's glory is in Jesus Christ," and the work that He was about to do, and had done.

We get to the meat of this. In John 1, the apostle ties together these concepts. I also want to mention (regarding the passage in Luke 9) that not only are God's words a command to hear Christ, they are also in the form of an invitation. The reason I say this is that the command invites these men (the apostles) and those of us who come after, to share in that same glory. They not only could see this glory in Jesus Christ, and should hear what this glorious person had to say, but like Moses and Elijah in the vision, they have the opportunity to participate in it because they were shown in glory.

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Think of those terms that I've been using ever since we were there in Exodus 33, those parallel things to the glory of God. One of them was the word of God, the word of His mouth.

**John 1:1-3** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

What he is saying here is that the Word of God was God Himself, but He was with God also. He was from the beginning. He had always been with God. There is that time element that stretches back to eternity. And, it was this particular Personage that had created the "all things."

What he is doing here is tying together all the bits and pieces from Old Testament trying to get the reader to understand who this Person was of whom he was writing.

**John 1:4-5** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. [And so this idea of light pops in.] And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

I almost think that John was thinking of the Red Sea crossing, when the pillar of cloud came from before the Israelites, and went over the top of them, and came down behind them. And it says that it was darkness to the Egyptian, but it was a light to the Israelites.

**John 1:5** ...and the darkness did not comprehend it.

The Egyptians had no idea of what they were facing and who this was in the cloud and in the pillar of fire.

**John 1:9** That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

So, John introduces this other glory here. There may also be an allusion in this light in Psalm 119: 105, "Your word is a lamp unto my feet..." This combines the light together with the word. But I think that what John is doing here is trying to grab this with this arm, and that with the other arm, and say, "Look! These are the same things!" The concepts we've seen throughout the Old Testament all come together in this one Person.

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is His primary source—or maybe I should say that he has been working up to verse 14 this whole time. The big news that he is trying to reveal to everybody is that these concepts from the Old Testament were revealed in a fleshly human being named Jesus Christ, which was a radical thing.

Especially in John's time when the Docetists were saying that Jesus and Christ were two separate beings, and the Christ could not be touched by humanity in any way, or He would be defiled. But John says, "No." It was necessary for God to become a Man and die for the sins of the people, and to live a life of perfection as our example.

"This Word then became flesh, and He dwelled...." This word in Greek is literally, "tabernacled." This draws us right back into the Shekinah, because where was the Shekinah? Where did the Jews believe that the Shekinah was? In the tabernacle or in the temple.

And so what we have here is another piece of the puzzle being put into place—the Shekinah glory was this Word who became flesh. And then he hammers the final nail in this argument when he uses the term, "full of grace and truth."

Do you remember where we read this already? In Exodus 34:6 the final phrase, "abounding in goodness and truth."

One commentator says that John is quoting directly from the Exodus 34:6 to tie these two, who are actually the same Person, together; that the One who revealed His glory before Moses, who said that His glory is abounding in goodness and truth, is the same One who became flesh, who dwelt among us, and whose glory was full of grace and truth.

This goodness here in the Old Testament, grace in the New Testament, is *chesed*. It is often translated in the Old King James as lovingkindness or as mercy. It implies the whole of God's redeeming love toward men.

The word "truth" is *'emeth*, and do you know what this actually means in the Hebrew? "Faithfulness!"

So, he says that this God—this Person whose glory was shown to us in the flesh, was full of lovingkindness and faithfulness.

What he means is that in Jesus Christ can be seen all of God's redeeming love, as well as the faithfulness of God that His promises will, or have been fulfilled. Or, more broadly than that—what God says is true.

So, what we see in Jesus is the perfect representation of God's glory, and it comes out in gracious mercy and faithful truth.

Let's see an instance of this in John 11. Your ears may perk up when you remember that this is the passage with the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus shows by an action the glory of God. People had doubted. They said He had come too late. Lazarus was already dead for four days. There is no way He could raise him from the dead!

**John 11:38-40** Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench [he's going to stink], for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her [Listen to His response], "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

Notice Jesus equates what He was about to do with an example of the glory of God. It wasn't going to be that they saw Jesus in radiance. They would see Him perform an act of lovingkindness and faithfulness, because in verse 11 Jesus had promised to His disciples,

**John 11:11** These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

That was a promise of God. Lazarus is dead. "I'm going to raise him up no matter how long it has been." So He tells Martha that by this resurrection of Lazarus, He is going to show, or reveal, the glory of God.

**John 11:41-42** Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."

This glorious act that He was about to do was done as a witness to them to prove that Jesus was the Christ.

**John 11:43-44** Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with

graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

Here in the resurrection of Lazarus, God's glory is manifested in Jesus and His actions. This also, in turn, gave glory to God—*that* a glorious act turned around and made a witness to the people, and thus gave glory to God.

This is all fine if we see this in Jesus. If it were no more than this, if we're just looking at Jesus as a historical figure, it would be something of note. However, what we see here and in Jesus is far more because it has direct meaning to us.

It looks like I might only get as far as I did in my last sermon, but I hope I've explained it a bit better, and shown the transition from the Old to the New Testaments. This is Jesus' final prayer:

**John 17:20-21** "I do not pray for these alone [meaning just the disciples], but also for those who will believe in Me through their word [that's us]; that they all may be one [talking about unity], as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You...

See? The goal is to bring us into the same unity that He has with the Father and the Father has with Him. That's perfection in unity! And here God in the flesh says that it is possible for us to do this. And He asks God to make it so.

**John 17:21** ...that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

A ha! Isn't that exactly what He said that He did the resurrection of Lazarus for? So that the people could see that God had sent Him.

**John 17:22** "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them [It was already done!] that they may be one just as We are one:

It means that He had already laid the foundation in His life for this to be possible, that we could be one with God, and that we could have the same glory that He and His Father have.

**John 17:23-24** "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

This does not mean that we are going to go to heaven, because He is coming back to earth. This means, "Father, I ask you to bring them to the same place where I am. Give them the fullness, in time, that you have given Me."

The glory that God has, both the Father and the Son, is available for us to participate in, to share, and to use. It is not just for our aggrandizement at all. This is something that we possess—yes—from God, but what God wants us to do, and He says it twice here—that the world may believe that you sent Me. Or, later on He says "that the world may know that You sent Me."



The glory that God—Jesus Christ—says that we can have now is for this overriding purpose of letting others know that Jesus is the Christ, and that these things have been done for a purpose, and that people who see our glory—the glory that God gives us—will be able to directly look through us and see Christ and the work that He did.

There really isn't enough time to go anyplace else. But I will end in II Corinthians because I don't want to leave it there. I want to go one step further to give us an idea where we're headed in the next sermon.

**II Corinthians 6:16** And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.

Now, what was in the temple? The Shekinah glory of God! What this is saying here is that the church is now the temple of God which the Branch raised up. You are the temple of the living God, and the glory that He bore (Zechariah 6:13) has now been transferred in part to us. We are the habitation of the Spirit.

**II Corinthians 6:16** ...As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among *them*. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

This is an incredible thing to think of, that the glory of God no longer resides in a physical temple, but in you and me. What are we doing with it?

That's where I will end today. When we pick this up in my next sermon, that will be the topic—how to glorify God with the glory that has been given to us.