

What Is Glory?

by T. Austin-Sparks

Glory is the expression of the satisfaction of God's nature, and it is revealed in creation, in Christ's incarnation and work, and in the lives of believers who walk in faith and dependence on God.

Scripture: Genesis 1:2, John 1:3, John 2:11, John 11:4, John 17:5, Acts 7:2, 1 Corinthians 2:8, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 2:9, 1 Peter 4:14, 1 Peter 5:4

Topics: "Divine Glory", "Trinity"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks concludes the 'Horizons' series by emphasizing the theme of glory in the Bible, highlighting how each Person of the Divine Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - is associated with glory as a descriptive designation. Glory is expressed through radiance, light, and splendor, often seen in the transformation of individuals and the Church. The basis of glory lies in the satisfaction of God's nature, reflecting His holiness, righteousness, truth, and love. The ultimate fulfillment of glory is found in Christ, who wholly satisfied God's nature through His incarnation, life, death, and resurrection, leading to the restoration of glory through redemption.

Transcript

This is the last of our "Horizons", and the series ends just where it ought to end; that is, on the note of glory.

We will all be ready to admit that the Bible is bounded by the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is therefore impressive that each Person of the Divine Trinity has the term 'Glory' as a descriptive designation.

God the Father is called "the God of Glory" (Acts 7:2); and "the Father of Glory" (Ephesians 1:17). "Father" means source. So, the "Father of Glory" is the Source, Spring, Origin, Generator of Glory. Glory begins and springs from Him.

His Son, Jesus Christ, is called "the Lord of Glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). This means that He governs all things with glory in view.

The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Glory" (1 Peter 4:14), meaning that, as the Custodian and Executor of the Divine purpose, He jealously operates in the interests of the Divine glory, and to bring us to glory.

This threefold activity is seen at the beginning of the Bible, in creation: "In the beginning God created...."

Of the Son it says that 'all things were created through him and unto him' (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

Of the Spirit it says: "The Spirit of God brooded on the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2).

The result of the Divine 'combined operation' was that God said "Behold, it is very good" (Genesis 1:31). When God can say that, then it must be a state of glory.

That is the beginning of the Bible. When we move to the end and behold the climax of God's work in the New Creation, we again find a state of glory. Between the beginning and the end we have an immense explanation of what glory is. We shall therefore proceed to answer the question: What is glory?

What is Glory?

There are two aspects of glory. One is its expression; the other is its nature or basis.

As to the expression, in the Bible it is usually something that is registered on the senses, especially sight. A radiance, a glow, light, splendour, and this in force and power. Some have thought and suggested that before their sin and disobedience there was a radiance about the bodies of Adam and Eve, and it was the departure of this glory which resulted in their awareness of being "naked", so that God provided covering. Nothing is actually said about this, but we have a great deal in the Bible which indicates that the full effect of redemption will mean glorified bodies. Moses' face did shine when he came from the presence of God. Stephen's face was - in the hour of martyrdom - "like the face of an angel". The body of Jesus was glorified on the mount of transfiguration. Much could be added to this from Scripture. So often at the time of new birth a new light comes into the eyes and face of the one concerned. The same is true when a victory has been gained or given over some dark thing in a Christian's life, or when some controversial matter with God has been cleared up.

How often, when there has been a departure from the Lord, a loss of spiritual zeal, a touch with something contrary to God, we have said that 'the light has gone out of So-and-so's face. They have lost something, the brightness (glory) has gone.' So also it is the case in a church, a company of Christians, when the level has dropped or there has been more of man than of the Lord.

So much for the expression; but what about the meaning, the basis, the reason?

Glory, in the Bible, is the expression of the satisfaction of God's nature. God is holy. God is righteous. God is truth. God is love. God's nature is utter and exact, without mixture, compromise, or duplicity; and so on. When things are as God wills them to be there is glory whether in a sentient way, or in a spirit of glory. This is seen in creation. When God had finished His work, He was able to say "It is very good", and everything speaks of a glorious state. When, in the making of the Tabernacle, all things were meticulously 'made according to the pattern shown', the glory filled the tent of the Testimony. The same was true of the Temple of David and Solomon.

The glory filling demanded the absolute exclusion of man by nature. Even the Priests had to go out of the Temple when the glory entered. Why was God so exact and particular to a detail in all this, both as to the general conception, the every part, the people, the sacrifices, and the service? For one reason only. God knew that the lost glory in man and creation could only be recovered by the satisfaction of His own nature. That satisfaction would alone be restored to Him by His own Son in incarnation, life, death and

resurrection. Glory for Him was bound up with His Son. Therefore, everything to a detail must represent His Son, and the glory would return - through redemption - in Him who was able to say: "Father, glorify thou me... with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

Christ, in person, and in work, wholly satisfied the Divine nature. When, therefore, a point of climax was reached, He could be transfigured and the glory could shine forth; the Father attesting Him as "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". In person, in work, in suffering, God's nature was satisfied, hence the next thing: "Jesus... crowned with glory" (Hebrews 2:9). It is therefore supremely important to always bear in mind that the all-inclusive purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God was for the glory of God in this sense of answering the requirements of the nature of God in humanity. John it is who, among the Gospel writers, underlines this truth. By the beginning of "signs" Jesus "showed forth his glory" (John 2:11). In the consummate "sign", the raising of Lazarus, Jesus made glory the all-governing factor: "This sickness is... for the glory of God" - "Said I not unto thee that thou shouldst see the glory of God?" (John 11:4,40).

The book of "Acts" could rightly be named "The Book of the Glory of Christ". The Church is born and comes in in glory. Pentecost was the glory descending. Stephen, in martyrdom, had the glory on his face and in his heart. Saul of Tarsus was struck down and saved by the glory.

James was slain by Herod, but the glory struck Herod dead "because he gave not God the glory.... But the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:23,24). Peter was seized and imprisoned, but the glory acting in sovereignty delivered him. So, on the story goes to the end when, by the combined operation of Satan, Jews and Gentiles, Paul is imprisoned and has his travelling oral ministry cut off. Then the glory decides that a wider and richer ministry to the next two thousand years shall issue from the imprisonment, and be the answer of Christ in glory to all adverse forces and conditions.

It becomes evident from this whole process of the glory that, as in the Old Testament in type and figure, so in the New in spiritual reality, the reduction of man naturally is made effective in order to make room for Christ in glory. Men are in weakness, limitation, and discredit as Christ increases.

It can be seen in the whole Bible that, when the glory, of life, joy, fulness, power, departs or is limited, it is because man's hand is laid on Divine things, or man's nature has asserted itself. Man's mind, reason, will, touching the Testimony means death and shame, as in the case of Uzzah. So human weakness and dependence are always the way of the glory.

We close with the reminder that the prize and reward of faithful devotion at cost is the "Crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:4). This crown is the symbol of Divine approval; the attestation that God is satisfied; the answer is given to His nature.

"The riches of his glory" (Romans 9:23) will be the blessedness of God's satisfaction in our hearts.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/what-is-glory/>

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