

God IS Glorious

People need to *“be still and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10) says the Lord of heaven. Knowing who God is and what He is like is of first importance. For the believer, an accurate and broad knowledge of God is critical to our spiritual growth and maturity. Therefore, Paul reminded the Ephesian elders, *“I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27).

A clear and thorough understanding of God, as He has revealed Himself, changes our perspective on everything. Beginning with how we think about God, we then think differently about ourselves, about our relationships with others, including our plans for life. Everything changes as we grow to know the glorious nature of God.

Following Israel’s exodus from Egypt, Moses sang, *“who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”* (Exodus 15:11). To know anything of God is to be exposed to His glory. By nature, and by deeds, God is glorious!

God's glory is the combined magnificence of all His attributes and actions. Everything that makes God, God, which radiates out the brilliance of His beautiful and holy nature goes to express His glory.

We get a sense of God's glory as we consider His divine attributes; His triune personhood, His creative and governing sovereignty, His holiness, His infinite power (Omnipotence), His infinite knowledge (Omniscience), His presence everywhere (Omnipresence), His truth, His mercy and grace, His loving kindness, and His wrath against injustice and sin. All these combined display God's greatness - His glory. Therefore, we say **"God IS Glorious!"**

In the discussion between God and Moses, recorded in Exodus chapter 33, Moses presents God with the most amazing request any human could ever ask; *"Please show me your glory"* (Exodus 33:18). Moses had already been exposed to God in more ways than any other person, he had heard God's voice, he had seen God's great and miraculous works, but Moses desperately wanted to know the very BEST of God, His glory.

In response to Moses' bold request, the Lord explains that He would need to protect Moses, as this experience could kill him. God explained to Moses in Exodus 33:22-23; *"while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by."*²³ *Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."* *"You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live"* (Exodus 33:20).

The point was, God wanted to be known more fully by Moses, just as Moses wanted to know God more fully.

The Lord explains to Moses that He would reveal His glory by making *"all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.'* *And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy"* (Exodus 33:19).

And so it happened, *"the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,'*⁷ *keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers*

on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6-7).

Exodus 34 permits us to be spectators of this most unusual and unique event. The Lord, Yahweh, manifested a condensed revelation of Himself, parading before Moses the summation of all His character while protecting fragile Moses from being consumed by His divine glory. Moses' response was appropriate, and perfectly matched such a revelation, *“Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped”* (Exodus 34:8).

Exposure to God's glory should produce worship!

David proclaimed, *“the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork”* (Psalm 19:1). Any examination of the created universe shows the impossibility of this infinitely complex universe coming into existence by any means other than by the Almighty power and intelligence of God. Therefore, the created universe is God's testimony of Himself. What we call nature, is God's living book of His genius and power to create and maintain everything.

Romans 1:19-20 explains further; *“for what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.”*²⁰ *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse.”*

Observations:

- ~ Evidence of God is obvious for all mankind to see and experience. Creation speaks a universal language throughout all ages and all cultures, that there is a creator – God.
- ~ Therefore, we conclude that God wants to be known by mankind. He is not hiding in secret. He is not difficult to find. He IS the God of creation who places Himself on display through His created world for all to see.
- ~ God openly reveals His *eternal power and divine nature* through His creation. And His nature has actually been perceived by mankind, even though they mostly reject God.
- ~ God’s self-revelation through creation is sufficient to remove all excuses used by mankind to justify their disbelief in God. God is the greatest reality of the universe, and humanity is responsible to acknowledge

Him, then get to know Him through His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3).

It's no coincidence that Scripture begins with Genesis 1:1, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* God, through His Son Jesus Christ, *"created the world"* (Hebrews 1:2; John 1:1-3). He created everything in 6 literal, 24 hour days (Genesis 1:1-31) by His spoken Word (Genesis 1:3). The world was created "round" as Isaiah says, *"he who sits above the circle of the earth"* (Isaiah 40:22), it is God. He did this by calling *"into existence the things that do not exist"* (Romans 4:17).

God began with nothing, and into that vacant nothingness He supernaturally created everything instantaneously using NO building materials. The universe and everything in it were created in a pre-aged and mature state. God left nothing that required evolving into something better. Everything was fully formed in their various kinds and species. God created, He breathed His life into it all, and He maintains it all (Colossians 1:16-17).

When God had completed His creating work, He surveyed His entire work. He inspected EVER part of His work *"and*

God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good..." (Genesis 1:31). Nothing in all that He had made in the new universe was less than perfect. Nothing was less than a perfect expression of His entire glorious nature. God had placed Himself on display.

Isaiah 45:18 explains that *"the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the LORD, and there is no other."* God is unmatched in His creative work as He designed earth to be populated by humans created in His image.

In Proverbs 8:22-30, Solomon details for us how the Lord's WISDOM was active throughout His entire creative work.

²² *"The LORD possessed me (Wisdom) at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.*

²³ *Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.*

²⁴ *When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.*

²⁵ *Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth,*

²⁶ *before he had made the earth with its fields,*

or the first of the dust of the world.

- ²⁷ *When he established the heavens, I was there;
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,*
- ²⁸ *when he made firm the skies above, when he established
the fountains of the deep,*
- ²⁹ *when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters
might not transgress his command, when he marked out
the foundations of the earth,*
- ³⁰ *then I was beside him, like a master workman,
and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always..."*

Creation displays God's intelligence, His wisdom, His power, His ingenious creativity for enormous variableness, His kindness, His forethought, and His grace.

Psalm 29 summarises God's glory in creation.

- ¹ *Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*
- ² *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness.*
- ³ *The voice of the LORD is **over the waters; the God of glory
thunders**, the LORD, over many waters.*
- ⁴ *The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.*

- ⁵ *The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.*
- ⁶ *He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.*
- ⁷ *The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.*
- ⁸ *The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.*
- ⁹ *The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth
and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry,
“Glory!”*
- ¹⁰ *The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.*

Think for a moment of God's mercy in creation. He created Adam and Eve into the perfect garden of Eden, where there were no faults, no errors, no mistakes, no death, and no sickness of any kind. Adam and Eve were perfectly healthy and would never experience sickness provided they did not sin. Yet God, knowing all things, created within Adam and Eve an immune system. He graciously did this so that when the day of sin arrived, with sickness and death entering this world, they would have an internal system to fight sickness. Similarly, God graciously permits our bodies to repair themselves to some degree. Broken bones grow back

together etc. These all give expression to God's glory in creation. And even though sin has terribly damaged creation, sin cannot disguise or hide God's glory.

The psalmist says of God, *"You are clothed with splendour and majesty, ² covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent"* (Psalm 104:1-2). Brilliant light surrounds God and radiates out from Him as the purest manifestation of His glorious character.

Jesus, wanting to show Peter, James, and John His divine glory, *"led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light"* (Matthew 17:1-2). These three disciples got to see the 2nd person of the Trinity in His divinely natural form. As Jesus peeled back His humanity, His unrestrained glory could not be contained.

Immediately following, as Peter was speaking to Jesus *"a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him'"* (Matthew 17:5). God the Father always affirms the glory of His Son. Plus, any exposure to the glory of Jesus calls for listening and learning ears that desire to obey Jesus. *"When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and*

touched them, saying, 'Rise, and have no fear'" (Matthew 17:6-7). While God's glory is an overwhelming thing for we sinful creatures to behold, Jesus assures His children that we should not fear Him. Glory should attract us to Him, not scare us away. Glory should inspire faithfulness and not faithlessness. Jesus' glory should compel us to WORSHIP.

The apostle John looking forward to the New Jerusalem, observed it *"coming down out of heaven from God,"*¹¹ *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal"* (Revelation 21:9-11).

John continued; *"and I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb."*²³ *And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb"* (Revelation 21:22-23). Eternity future shall be illuminated by the all-consuming glory of God the Father through the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

But the greatest display of God's glory is at the Cross of Calvary.

Paul shows us the ultimate offense of sin, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). It's

not just our sinful actions that are the problem, being dead in sin is not the real problem either (Ephesians 2:1). No, it's that we sinners violate, in every way, the holy glory of God.

Sin does not offend just one aspect of God's nature. No, God's entire glorious being is offended by sin. Every facet of God's nature which combines to manifest glory is unitedly violated and repulsed by our sin.

Our sin is particularly offensive to God when you consider that mankind is the ONLY creature created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Mankind had the greatest capacity to manifest God's glory, but we chose to sin. This is why *"the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). Death is the only appropriate, just, and accurate reward for sin's violation of God's glory.

Nahum 1:6 asks, *"who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger?" "Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused?"* (Psalm 76:7). Holy God is glorious in His condemnation of sinners; *"as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur,*

which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). God is glorious in His wrath and judgement of sin. Hell is the only appropriate destination for all who continue to contravene the glory of God.

At the Cross, God does something sinful man could never have thought of. God, the righteous judge, gave His only begotten Son to be the recipient of His divine wrath for mankind’s violation of His glory.

“God put forward (Jesus) as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith...²⁶ It was to show his (God’s) righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:25-26). Jesus was sent to Calvary by His Father who is the just judge of sin. Jesus voluntarily obeyed the Father’s will by becoming the Justifier who would be the recipient of His Father’s wrath. *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me”* (John 6:38). The Cross was God’s will, because the Cross put the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on display.

Jesus’ *propitiation* works like this; He appeased His Father’s glorious wrath over our sin by calming the Father from a

state of anger to a state of peace. The substitutional work of Christ in our place on the Cross was the only way God could accomplish His 2 requirements: **1)** To be the righteous judge whose need for justice would be satisfied, and **(2)**, to be the actual one bearing the wrath of His own justice for sins not His own, through His Son, Jesus.

Here we see that God will not violate his own holiness even in order to save the ones he loves. At the Cross, we see wrath and mercy working together. We see both of them in their glorious fullness - the ultimate display of God's wrath and the ultimate display of God's mercy. As Paul says, the reality of this propitiation, the application of propitiation is ONLY for *"the one who has faith in Jesus."* Only those sinners who place repentant faith in Jesus' substitutional death for them will receive the mercy of propitiation. God's peace towards sin is ONLY applied to those who put faith in the Jesus of the Cross.

The Cross is glorious because God IS glorious.

Application:

The effect upon every Christian who has been exposed to the one and only glorious God should be that *"whether you*

eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”
(1 Corinthians 10:31). God’s glory fuels our spiritual motivation and inspires personal sanctification and worship. Every part of our living is to be awakened to His glory.

God is worthy of our attention, our thoughts, and our affections. He is worthy of our words, our time, and our energies. He is worthy of our money, our possessions, our dreams, our plans, our abilities, and our skills. He is worthy of all our relationships. He is worthy of our affections, our lifelong service, and our continual worship.

God is worthy because God IS glorious!