

“...give honor to Him...”

-Revelations 19:7

Recently, I have been thinking about the term, “honoring god.” The reason being is that I have been hearing and seeing so many things concerning and using the word “honor.” We enjoy in giving honor to people, organizations and even nations. We hold banquets and events to honor people for their work in their various professions. We honor athletes with such things as placing them in the Hall of Fame. We honor celebrities for their philanthropy or for their

achievements in their industry. We honor our veterans (which we should). We have days set aside to honor our fathers and mothers. In the Christian arena we honor Christian music artists for their achievements in the Christian music industry. We set aside days to honor our pastors and leaders. We sponsor events such as “A Night to Honor Israel” - and many, many more. Now, I am not saying that any of these things are wrong and incorrect to do. The scripture does tell us that we are to give “...*honor to whom honor is due.*” (Romans 13:7)

What I am saying is that this topic of “honoring” led me to start thinking about God and what it really means to “honor God.” The scriptures express in both the Jewish scriptures and in the New Testament that we are to honor God. Therefore, if we are encouraged to honor God, then we truly need to grasp what it really means to honor our God according to how **HIS** Word teaches us to honor Him in the way that **HE** delights in.

Let’s begin our discussion with first of all taking a look at some definitions of the term “honor.” If I were to ask anyone what their definition of the word “honor” would be we more than likely would hear the typical definition as found in any modern day dictionary. Basically we would find the definition of the term “to honor” to be “to show a deep respect, esteem and high regard” for someone or something. The Greek words in the New Testament translated to the English word “honor” when it speaks of honoring God is, “*Timaō or timios or timē.*” These words mean “to estimate or fix the value” of something as well as to mean “to revere or venerate” something or someone. Another Greek word used and translated into the English word “honor” is “*doxa*” which means “a most glorious condition, a most exalted state, splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace and to be majestic.”

In seeing the translation from the Greek words to the English word “honor” we seem to be on the correct track with what we ordinarily think of when we want to “honor” someone. They make sense when we see them in the scriptures. We see these words used in the following New Testament scriptures:

- John 5:23 (KJV) - *That all men should **honour** (timeo) the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that **honoureth** (timeo) not the Son **honoureth** (timeo) not the Father which hath sent him.*
- Revelation 19:1 (KJV) - *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and **honour** (timē), and power, unto the Lord our God:*
- Revelation 19:7 (KJV) - *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give **honour** (doxa) to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

There are also several Hebrew words in the Jewish Scriptures that have been translated to the English word “honor.” One of them is the Hebrew word, “*hadar,*” which means “to honor, adorn, glorify, to be high and lifted up.” Another is “*pa’ar*” or “*tiph’arah*” which means “beauty, splendor or glory.” Another word used is “*hawd*” which means “beauty, splendor or glory.” Again, these words would again cause us to think that we have been on the right track when it comes to honoring our God.

However, there is one other Hebrew word that is used and translated into our English for the word "honor." When I came across this word in my word study, it caused me to stop in my tracks and wonder if it was a misprint or error. The word that I am referring to is the Hebrew word "chabod." Now, if you are like me, as soon as we "hear" the word "chabod" we immediately think of God's glory. So what does that have to do with honoring God? Before we try to find the answer to my question, let's first take a moment to briefly discuss and look into this word "chabod."

"Chabod" is one of the Hebrew words translated into the English word "glory" as well as "honor" which we had just mentioned. We have come to understand the word "chabod" to mean the glory of God's presence. When we are in God's "chabod," His glory, we are in the midst of His divine and infinite perfection. This is not to be confused with another word that has become familiar to us when we speak of God's "glory." I am referring to the Hebrew word, "shekinah." "Shekinah" does in fact refer to God's glory. However, there is a difference or distinction between God's "chabod" and the "shekinah" glory of God which we will review later in our discussion but first let us get back to the term "chabod."

God's "chabod" glory is expressed as a "weight, a heaviness." This indeed is one of the definitions and usages of the Hebrew word "chabod." It invokes the total fullness of all that God is - His greatness; His holiness; His majesty and splendor; His awesome power and might; His never ending love which is full of mercy and compassion; etc. It expresses and reveals that God's character and attributes are so vast, so dense and overflowing with all that is life, light and goodness that it actually has a spiritual weight and heaviness to it. It invokes the understanding that God is simply, yet incomprehensibly, everything that He says He is and that He is the one and only true God. There is no one or nothing else like Him. Therefore, the "chabod," when it refers to being "heavy" or "weighty," really expresses the overflowing, abundance and fullness of all that is God.

This is so very hard for us to truly comprehend because of our limited ways of seeing and understanding things. How can anyone be able to fully comprehend the concept of an unlimited, limitless, all knowing, omnipresent God? Paul declares this in Romans 11:33-36, *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."*

The word "chabod" also expresses a tremendous majesty and splendor that is so great and dense that it fills, permeates and changes the atmosphere. So much so that one can literally experience the "heaviness" of God's character or we can say His presence. It saturates the atmosphere and literally changes the atmospheric conditions to that in which we as mere mortals cannot stand by reason of the "weight" of His presence. This is found in such events as the dedication of the Temple that Solomon had built. We read in 1Chronicles 7:1-3, *"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory ("chabod") of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory ("chabod") of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory ("chabod") of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever."* God's presence, His character, all of His infinite perfection, came into the Temple and saturated the atmosphere.

Now, let us take a brief look at the term "shekinah." The "Shekinah" glory of God is commonly referred to as the "seen" or "manifest" presence of God dwelling in the midst. We must note that the Hebrew word "shekinah" is not found in any of the Scriptures. The Jewish rabbis used this "extra-biblical expression" as it

is derived from the Hebrew word *“shakan,”* which means *“dwelling place, to settle, dwell, or inhabit.”* They used this expression to signify any event that would imply a divine visitation of the presence or dwelling of the Lord God on this earth. In Exodus 25: 8 and 9, *“Construct a tabernacle for me, that I may dwell (shakan) among them.”*

Shekinah refers to the fullness of God’s attributes and character being expressed and seen. In other words, the *“Shekinah”* glory is the visible expression of the attributes of God. The Pillar of Cloud by day and the Pillar of Fire by night would be considered by the rabbis as an example of this *“seen”* or *“manifested”* presence of God. In the New Testament, Jesus is the visible expression, the dwelling place (shekinah) of God’s glory (chabod). Colossians 2:9 tells us that *“...in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”* That is why Jesus explains to us in John 14:9, *“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”* In Jesus, we see the visible manifestation (shekinah) of all the attributes of the glory of God, although the fullness of His glory (chabod) was veiled by His flesh. The fullness of God’s glory (the chabod) was in Jesus. The glory of God was who Jesus was because Jesus is God. It was not just in Him, it is Him. God’s glory was manifested by Jesus throughout His life. He went forth and expressed the fullness of God’s attributes for all to see and witness.

Keeping the above in mind, let’s get back to our discussion concerning honoring God. As I mentioned previously, the question that came to my mind when I stumbled upon the word *“chabod”* was, *“So what does that have to do with honoring God?”* I want to know how to *“honor”* my God in the way that He desires me to honor Him. Using the *“Hebrew”* word *“chabod,”* my question would be, *“How do I *“chabod”* God? If the word *“chabod”* denotes the fullness, the vastness, the weight and heaviness of all the attributes of God, then how can I honor God with His own glory?”*

The answer obviously lies in the greatest example of a man who expressed and manifested for all to see the glory of God that was within Him. I am of course referring to Jesus. The glory of God (chabod), all of the attributes of the sovereign, living God not just dwelt within Jesus but He was the very embodiment of the fullness of God because He was indeed 100% God. However, it also dwelt within Him and was manifested in, by and through Him (shekinah) upon this earth as an example for all man to see and witness because He was 100% man.

Therefore, the answer to our discussion concerning how we are to truly honor God is found in Jesus. Jesus honored and glorified the Father by His character, personality and lifestyle. He honored His Father through His obedience as He continually lived out the *“chabod”* that was Him. We see that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. We read the account of the Holy Spirit’s *“arrival”* within Jesus at the time of His baptism with John, the Baptist. This was done for our benefit, not Jesus’. He was already 100% God. This was really more of a symbolic gesture signifying the need for the Holy Spirit within a person’s life to be able to truly live the Godly lifestyle that is pleasing to God.

The Holy Spirit, because He is God, has and is the fullness of all the attributes of God which make up the fullness of His glory, His infinite perfection. Jesus told His disciples that it was imperative for Him to *“go away”* so that the Holy Spirit could come and *“dwell”* within them just as it dwelt within Him. Jesus became the final sacrifice and died for our sins. However, He rose from the grave and defeated every obstacle that would stand in the way and hinder a restored relationship with the Father. By believing in Jesus (in who He is and what He had done) the believer becomes a *“son of God.”* (John 1:12) We become just like Jesus in the eyes and heart of the Father. And just as Jesus was filled with the attributes and nature of God so are we as believers, now filled with the fullness of God’s attributes, His character and nature through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As disciples of Jesus we are to live the same lifestyle that Jesus exemplified which glorified and gave honor to the Father.

Therefore, based on our discussion we can say that the greatest way to honor our God is not simply through singing the words of a beautiful worship or praise song. It is not through our attendance of every service at our church or things like that. I am not saying that these are wrong to do. These are all well and good. However, the greatest way to honor our God is to be the manifested expression, (shekinah) that others will see, of the fullness of the attributes of our God who now is within each of His sons and daughters. Yes, we honor God with His own “chabod” that is now within us because of who we are in Jesus. We are sons and daughters of the Most High God – members and joint heirs of the Household of Faith. The fullness of God’s own glory (chabod) shining forth from us and emanating out of us - just as Jesus did. This is truly honoring God.

There is one last item I would like to share. There is an interesting side note concerns the phrase we often hear which is, “Give glory to God.” Again this phrase sounds simple enough. We would think it simply means to give God all the praise and worship that He is truly, deserving and worthy of, which I do not dispute. However, in the Jewish scriptures this phrase is used in a little different way. It is actually a “Jewish idiom.” An “idiom” is an expression that is used to mean something different than the actual words used. For example – we say that “it is raining cats and dogs” to refer to the fact that it is raining very, very hard. It is the same with this phrase, “Give glory to God.” We see this phrase used in both, Joshua 7:19 and Jeremiah 13:16. In those scriptures, the context is that of which Joshua and Jeremiah are both speaking concerning the wrongful acts or actions of a person or a people. According to Easton’s Illustrated Dictionary the phrase, “Give glory to God” is a Hebrew idiom meaning, "Confess your sins." It is the same words the Jewish leadership said to the man born blind after Jesus healed him. They said "Give God the praise (glory)." They were not saying to praise God for his healing but rather they were exhorting this man to confess his sin and that he was an imposter and he was lying and not being truthful. In this situation they were totally wrong but that is how they used the phrase. They wanted the man to repent although in reality He had nothing to repent of. This brings a little different light on the usage of the term “Give God the glory.” Yes, we are to bless and praise the Lord. However, giving glory and honor to God also involves being truthful and honest before God. It also involves being repentant and owning up when we mess up. Hmm!!! Let’s take a “Selah moment” and pause and think on that.

In concluding our discussion on what it truly means to honor God, we see that it is really more of a lifestyle and manner of behavior, as well as and most importantly, an attitude of the heart. It is having a desire to truly honor God by choosing to change our lifestyle to that of the one we are choosing to follow. That is the definition of being a disciple. If we say we are disciples of Jesus than this is what we do. We desire to change our lifestyle and character to that of the one we are choosing to follow - Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit within us we have the fullness of God’s glory (chabod). It now dwells within us so it can be expressed and manifested for others to see (shekinah). Our lifestyles must be expressing the same attributes and nature of Jesus. We may not be there yet. However, it should be and must be the desire and attitude of our heart. It is said that, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” I believe we can say that imitation of the lifestyle and character of Jesus is truly the greatest way to honor our God.