

# THE GLORY OF GOD ON THE EARTH

What is the glory of God upon the earth? How do I “measure” the glory of God upon the earth? How would I recognize or know the “glory of God” if I saw it? Can I willfully bring forth the “glory of God” upon the earth? These are some of the questions I have had over these past few months. I know that if I ask ten

believers these questions, I would most likely get 10 different answers. So that doesn’t help me much. Yet, I continually hear ministries and leaders speak about the “glory of God upon the earth” in these last days.

I would imagine the first question we need to ask to get to the root of this is, “What exactly is the glory of God upon the earth?” When we mention the term “glory of God” we think of magnificent signs and wonders occurring. We think of powerful “prophetic words” going forth. We think of Christianity spreading like wildfire and that thousands upon thousands are getting saved. We think of countries (especially those of us in America) believing that their country is going to have great revivals and mass salvations and that our nation will be “saved.” This is what many of us think when referring to the “glory of God.”

Please, do not misunderstand me, all of the above are wonderful examples of God moving and we should be praying for all these things to occur. However, I sometimes think that in doing so, we leave out and ignore what God tells us His glory upon the earth will be in these end times and replace that with what we think it should be. To that end, I believe we are making a mistake and unfortunately many will be disheartened, disappointed and become ultimately disillusioned. I also would like to make it very clear that I am not putting forth myself as an expert on this matter. However, I would like to share some thoughts.

Again, returning to my initial question concerning, “What is meant by the term “the glory of God” upon the earth?” The first thing we must grasp is that we are speaking about the “glory of God” and **NOT** the “glory of man.” I believe that this has subtly entered into the equation when it comes to the “glory of God upon the earth.” It slowly but surely has started to become “all about me” and not about God. We hear in many of our sermons and in many of our worship songs these days that God has done everything He did through Jesus “just for me.” We are told, “Yes, Jesus did what He did, but He did it just for us.” Again, I am not totally disagreeing with this. However, I believe we have become overbalanced when it comes to “me.” What about God and where should He be in the midst of it all?!! Hmmm.....

The word “glory” comes from the Hebrew word “kabowd” which means “honor, reverence and splendor,” It is a noun. Therefore, it is an actual “person, place or thing.” It is a “presence” that “just is.” It manifests itself in pure reverence, honor and splendor. This word “kabowd” comes from the Hebrew root word “kabad” which is actually a verb. The word “kabad” reveals an actual “heaviness” and “weightiness.” However, if it is a verb, it is an action word.

Therefore, the “glory of God” is not just a presence or person that exists and sits and remains immovable. Quite the contrary; this “presence” is in constant action and moving in mighty and powerful ways. The glory of God is constantly revealing who He is. It is constantly revealing every aspect of His character and nature. God’s “glory,” therefore, can be revealed and manifested in many, many different ways.

Another, term that is many times used concerning the “glory of God upon the earth” is the Hebrew word “shekinah.” The word “shekinah” does not actually appear in the Bible, but the concept clearly does. It was the Jewish rabbis who coined this “extra-biblical” expression. It is the English transliteration form of the Hebrew word “shekinot” (which is found in the Bible) that literally means “he caused to dwell.” The rabbis used this word to signify a divine visitation of the presence or dwelling of the Lord God on the earth. Over the years it has become interchangeable with “kabad.” Although they are different, they both express the presence and moving of God in the midst of His people and upon the earth.

The word “kabowd” is first used in Exodus 16:7 as it states, *“In the morning you shall see the **glory of the LORD.**”* Moses stated this to the children of Israel while they were in the wilderness at the foot of Mt Sinai. God was going to meet with and reveal Himself to them. Of course we know that they were not going to actually see His physical form. He would reveal Himself in His “glory” (kabowd – His reverence, honor, and splendor) in the form of a dark cloud, a devouring fire, tremendous thunder and powerful lightning that they would be able to see upon My Sinai. The “glory of God” manifested that day was His actual presence.

We also read that when God did manifest His “glory” in this way, it was not what the people had expected and they moved away from it. After all, the only “gods” they knew up to that point were that of manmade images and idols. This was totally different. When God came in all of His glory, it was not what they were expecting. They were in awe and actually feared the glory of God. They told Moses to go meet with God, They stayed home. Hmmm....

We see the “glory of God” manifested at the dedication of the Tabernacle of Moses. The presence of God came in the actual form of a great cloud by day and a fire by night. Exodus 40:38, *“For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”*

The “glory of God” was manifested and experienced at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. 2Chronicles 5:13-14, *“It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; <sup>14</sup> So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.”*

All of the above were manifestations of the glory of God upon the earth. This was the one of the “forms” in which God chose to come and manifest Himself upon the earth. On the mountain and in the Tabernacle His glory was manifested so that all His people could see His glory. In the Temple the glory was experienced as a heavy weight that was so strong that they could not stand. But why was this “glory of God” brought forth? Why did God manifest His glory in these ways on Mt Sinai and in the Tabernacle and the Temple? Was it just a show so that people would get excited and get “goose bumps?” Was it just to be a one-time “experience” so that everyone could talk about it and be amazed? Was there a purpose in all of this? Well, obviously, yeah there was a purpose. Duh!! But what was the purpose?

As mentioned previously, we are speaking about the “glory of God” and **NOT** the “glory of man.” Therefore, God’s glory being manifested upon this earth must be all about God!!! It is manifested to bring forth and establish God’s purposes and to point everyone to Him and to who He is – the I Am that I Am. In Isaiah 55 it tells us that God’s ways and thoughts are not ours but that His ways and thoughts are much higher than ours. His purposes are to bring about **His** plans that will give opportunity for His most prized creation to receive salvation and redemption which brings honor, reverence and splendor to Him.

In the above scenarios we see that He gave His people great opportunities to see Him in all His glory. It was done so for the purpose being that the people would see His glory compared to their sinful lives, recognize this, and then repent and turn to Him. In other words, yes, God’s glory will reveal His splendor and honor but the main purpose for God revealing His glory may be so that His people will see His glory and **repent**.

In saying that, it may mean that the “glory of God upon the earth” may not always look and be expressed in the ways that man has imagined in his own understanding that it should be. In essence we have put this concept of the “glory of God upon the earth” in our own nice, neat and tidy little box. Remember, we are discussing the “glory of God.” And as we all know we can never put God in a nice, neat and tidy little box.

In Exodus 9:14-16, God told Moses to tell Pharaoh, *“For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.”*<sup>15</sup> *For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.”*<sup>16</sup> *And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.”*

Many of us would have a difficult time in thinking that what God had declared to Pharaoh through Moses in the above scriptures would be an example of the “glory of God upon the earth.” However, notice what God declares. These plagues are for the purpose of revealing to everyone that there is none other like Yahweh in all the earth. It also tells us that it was God who had indeed “raised up” this wicked man (Pharaoh) whose heart was so hard towards the true God for that very moment of time. Pharaoh was put in place, by God, for **God’s** purposes.

As we read the account in Exodus we also see that the Israelites themselves had an expectation of how God was going to deliver them. They thought it would be done at once with them experiencing absolutely no difficulties. They thought God was going to take care of Pharaoh in the way they thought it would happen. Well, as we know it did not work that way. It took time – God’s time. I also believe that God wanted to show to the Israelites some things about themselves and their heart. Let’s see.

As mentioned, Pharaoh was put in position by God at that very moment in time so that God would reveal to all the earth, not just to the Egyptians, that He was the one and only true God and that His name would be declared and exalted throughout the earth. I believe, in all of this, God also wanted to reveal who He truly was to His people, the Israelites, as well. The plagues, these judgments that besieged Pharaoh and Egypt were all expressions of “the glory of God upon this earth” for all to see. You may be thinking, How could or why would God bring forth His “glory” in this way – with plagues.”

Well, maybe we need to also look at these accounts in Exodus a little differently. Yes, they were judgments upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Yes, they were used to reveal God’s power and authority over the “gods” of Egypt, including Pharaoh who was thought to be the “god of all Egyptian gods.” But was that all they were? Maybe, just maybe this whole account of God’s glory being manifested in these ways was also expressing something else. I believe, if we look carefully, God was manifesting His character of mercy and grace, as well as His love, not just to His people, the Israelites, but also to Pharaoh and his people. You may be saying, “What!!!” But please, don’t give up on me yet. Let me explain my thought on this.

Let’s face it. God could have destroyed Pharaoh and Egypt and freed the Israelites in one great and powerful act. Instead, we see that He used ten different actions and events. Prior to and after each plague, Pharaoh had an opportunity to repent, let God’s people go, recognize God for who He is, turn and worship the one true God, Yahweh. God, through Moses, always told Pharaoh what was going to happen before it happened. In essence, God gave Pharaoh and the people of Egypt, ten opportunities to receive His mercy before he executed His final judgment in the tenth plague. God extended His grace to them by giving them opportunity after opportunity to “repent.” Unfortunately, as a people, they refused and rejected Yahweh. Even though they recognized and saw the awesomeness of God, as well as the futility of their “gods,” they rejected Him and continued to harden their already “hardened heart.”

Before the last plague, God warned Pharaoh what was to come. He warned him of the impending judgment because of his hardness of heart towards God and His people. Pharaoh rejected it and threw out Moses and Aaron from His presence. Ultimately, judgment was to come forth. God knew Pharaoh’s heart would not change but time after time He gave him the opportunity. Pharaoh’s heart was hard to begin with and it became harder and harder with each manifestation and his rejection of God’s manifested glory. Hmmm...

But, in the midst of this, we see that God always keeps and protects His covenant people. As we know, prior to the last plague, God told the Israelites to brush the doorposts and lintel of their homes with the blood of a lamb. Anyone within that home would be protected by the last plague which was the death of the first born. Any Israelite in a home with the blood on its doorposts and lintel would be “saved” from the death outside. The plague would come over all of Egypt including Goshen where the Israelites lived. The only way that any Israelite would be spared the plague of the death of their first born would be if they were in a home covered by the blood of the lamb.

Of course we know that this pointed to Jesus as the final Passover lamb whose blood would be shed and if “brushed” on the doorposts of anyone’s heart who believed they would be “saved” from spiritual death. We look at that as God’s greatest expression of His love, grace and mercy. (John 3:16) Therefore, it was God’s grace and mercy that was exhibited to His covenant people by giving them instruction on how to be “saved” from the affects of the tenth plague.

We must also take note that after all the plagues were completed there were some Egyptians and others that turned and at least acknowledged Yahweh as God through the demonstration of His power over their gods and the manifestation of His glory upon the earth. We are told in Exodus 12:38 that a “mixed multitude” left Egypt that day.

The purpose of God’s glory being manifested in and through these plagues in Egypt was to show Pharaoh and everyone in Egypt, including the Israelites, as well as every nation, that Yahweh was the one and only true and merciful God. In 2Peter 3:9 we are told that the Lord is longsuffering and desires that none perish, but that all should **come to repentance**. God’s desire is for **all to repent** and turn to Him. God was truly longsuffering towards Pharaoh, the Egyptians and the Israelites. That is **His purpose** for **His glory** being manifested upon the earth. And it may come in different ways than we may think it should or would come. However it looks, the glory of God will be manifested for His purposes because God desires all to repent.

It is interesting to note, that the Israelites in Goshen did in fact experience and were affected by the first three plagues. It would seem that God had to “get their attention” as well. He manifested His glory in this way to awaken them to turn towards Him and totally return to Him as their one and only true God. It was most likely that through their 400 years of captivity they may have assimilated and began to include the Egyptian gods into their lives. I believe God was telling them that they needed to do some repenting as well. Hmmm...

The manifest presence of God’s glory will also be seen in like manner during the end times. The events found in Exodus are “shadows and types” that point to the events that are prophesied and will occur in the end times. As we see in the Book of Revelation as well as other “end time” prophecies throughout the Bible, God’s manifest presence and glory will be experienced through times of judgment and wrath upon wickedness, evil and the forces of darkness. In the midst of all that, God’s grace and mercy will be extended to everyone because as these manifestations of His glory are revealed, there will be opportunity after opportunity for people to repent and turn towards Him.

I also believe that the glory of God upon the earth in the end times will also be used to awaken many in the Body of Christ. Just as the Israelites in Egypt, many in the Body, whether knowingly or unknowingly, have assimilated into the ways of the world and of the flesh. One of the purposes of God’s glory being manifested upon the earth during the end times and even prior to the end times will be to cause those in the Body of Christ to enter into a time of deep repentance in preparation for the second coming of Jesus.

There will be great signs and wonders that will be taking place as we approach and begin to enter into the end time prophecies coming to pass. However, we are told not to get caught up in the signs and the wonders because the enemy can counterfeit these things. The antichrist and his cohorts will do “signs and wonders” because he will declare himself to be God as he will try to deceive many.

So how will we know the true manifestation of God’s glory in these end times? It will absolutely and positively be done for His purpose as laid out for us throughout the scriptures. It may not look pretty to us. It may not be what we expect and think. However, it will be exactly according to His already prophesied Word found in the scriptures. We need to be careful that we do not find ourselves praying for and believing for things that are contrary to His plans and how His glory should or should not be manifested. We must be careful not to be get caught up, whether we realize it or not, into the “glory of man” – thinking that it is all about us. This can happen when, in our prayers, we begin to tell God how it should be accomplished.

We need to be careful that we do not fall into the same mistake as Peter did. When Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was, Peter declared that He was the Christ. Jesus commended Him on this and told him that the Father had revealed that to Him. Peter was feeling pretty good about himself. Immediately after that, Jesus foretold to them how He was going to Jerusalem where He would be arrested and then crucified. Peter immediately jumped in and told Jesus that He had it wrong. After all, Peter had an “in” with the Father – so he thought. This was not how Messiah was going to save the people. How could Messiah, the son of God, be crucified? How could God die? No, no Jesus. You have it all wrong. I have it right. My way is better than your way – so he thought. He was speaking contrary to the plan of God.

To that Jesus immediately, rebuked the enemy. The enemy was lying to Peter and placing the wrong concepts of what God’s plan should be and look like. In Peter’s mind Jesus was to be a conquering King, not a suffering servant. Peter was right but his timing was off. Jesus will indeed come as that conquering King but it will be at His second coming. If Peter’s plan had happened, we would all still be dead in our sins. God’s manifestation of His glory was to be different than what Peter and everyone else’s expectations were. God’s glory was in the death (which saved us from our sins) and then the resurrection (which gave us eternal life) of Jesus. That is the true expression of God’s glory – His reverence, His honor and His splendor. Thank God for God not listening to Peter and changing His plan. (Not that He would)

So it is with us. We must be ready and prepared to trust God totally. He is in control. His glory will be manifested upon this earth through the end time prophecies being fulfilled and coming to pass – His way. I believe the greatest way we can express the glory of God upon this earth, individually, in these days is to live a life that loves the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. How do we do this?

We do it through a life of total surrender and obedience to Him and His commandments. We do it by loving others as Jesus loved us. It is living a life of loving and being faithful to our spouses; loving our children; having integrity within our workplaces; walking in uprightness, justness and holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within the believer. These are manifestations of the glory of God that should be, and must be, manifested every day upon the earth – through the lives of His people. The purpose being that the lost will see the power of God in the lives of the believers, recognize the saving power of God, repent and turn towards Him.

Wouldn’t that be something? Now that, I believe, is another way the glory of God is to be revealed on this earth!!! Through His people; not just revealing His glory and bringing forth His presence in on the earth, but ultimately, in doing so, giving Him all the glory, honor and splendor due his Name.