

Glorification

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Glorification is the last step in the golden chain of salvation. Romans 8:29-30 gives us that order.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Glorification is the final process which makes you fit to live forever in heaven.

But what is glorification? If you take the word apart, you will see two different words which come from the Latin and mean *glory* and *make*. The word literally means, “to make glorious.” The final step, therefore, is that in which God makes you glorious.

You must know from the start that the glorification which God performs is far different from the way in which the world glorifies. Remember the Olympics, when the top three athletes in each event stood on their pedestals with the medals around their necks and their national anthems playing? That is how the world glorifies. Nations of the world glorify themselves with their displays of troops, battleships and fighter-jets. Throngs of people glorify actors and actresses who star in the most violent and lewd films.

This is not how God glorifies. God takes the glory that is in Himself and places a little bit of that glory in you, without any change in His own infinite glory. Because of this, you must know what God’s glory is. In the Old Testament God showed His glory several times. The most impressive was when God filled the tabernacle and temple with His glory. When the tabernacle was finished we read in Exodus 40:35 that Moses was not able to go inside because “the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” When the temple was finished by Solomon and the ark was put inside the Holy of Holies, the same thing happened. “The priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord,” I Kings 8:11. God’s glory actually kept these men from entering the tabernacle and temple. It was a real, physical barrier.

God’s glory was also that before which people could not stand. They were so struck by that glory that they had to fall to the ground and worship. If God were to show His glory today as He did then, you and I would do exactly the same thing. Part of that which makes God’s glory so powerful and awe-inspiring is that it is an expression of God’s holiness. What sinner can ever stand in God’s glorious presence and not melt away in horror and say with Isaiah, “Woe is me!”?

Consider two instances of that glory appearing in men. The first is Moses. In Exodus 34, God showed Moses part of His great glory. When Moses came back down from his meeting with God, the Israelites were afraid of him because his face shone with the reflection of that glory. In order to be able to talk with the people, he had to wear a veil over his face to hide that glory. The other instance, of course, was when Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. According to Matthew 17, “his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”

Someday, you will have that glory, because God will give it to you. He will make you to be as glorious as Christ on that mountain. But even today, as you walk on earth here below you

have in principle that same glory. What is that glory today? If you compare yourself with the people of the rest of the world, you cannot say that you appear to be glorious while they do not. There is no difference between your body and their body. There is a world of difference, however, between your heart and theirs. That is because you have been regenerated by the power of God's Word and Spirit. You seek the things which are above, the things of God's kingdom, rather than the things below. You lay up for yourself treasures in heaven. You love God the Father, Son, and Spirit. You gain the victory, slowly but surely, over your sinful nature.

There is a more direct way in which you can see this principle of glorification. Younger people usually do not experience this as much as older people, so you may have to look more carefully to find it. That principle is seen in your attitude towards death and the Second Coming. Both events bring deliverance from this world of sin, and your body of sin. Both events mean that you will no longer have to fight against sin. That awful, seemingly endless war which takes up so much time and energy will be over once and for all. That enemy will fall, never to rise up again.

Because death and the Second Coming lead to that victory, to that ultimate glory, you strain toward it with every fiber of your being, every ounce of your energy. You go through life with the taste of that victory in your mouth. That is what glorification in this life is about.

Now you ask, "That is all well and good, but what about glorification after Jesus comes again?" The Heidelberg Catechism sums it up well in Answer 58. "I shall inherit perfect salvation, which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither hath it entered into the heart of man' to conceive, and that, to praise God therein forever." You can tell from this answer that there is very little to say *positively* about glory. That is because you, having a mind geared to this present earthly life, are unable to understand what it is. You can know far more about what it is not. The best possible picture of glory is in Revelation 21:3,4.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Notice that, although the second part of this is negative – you see what is not in heaven, you do see the essence of heaven. God will dwell with you and the entire church in perfect fellowship and friendship. That is the covenant. No greater bliss and joy is there.

That covenant, expressed in Revelation 21:3, is the very same covenant that you are in today, the covenant of grace. Because it is the same covenant from beginning to end, you experience the beginning of that glory right here and now. Walk in that covenant with your God. Then, when you get to heaven you will say to yourself, "This is where I belong. My whole life on earth was never really home, but only a time of shadows. I am now all that I was ever meant to be." Practice that glorification now and thus prepare yourself for that final glory.

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