

## THE GLORY OF GOD REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL

The Bible teaches us the purpose of all things in eternity, creation, providence, judgment, and salvation is to glorify the one living and true God. We could fill pages with verses of Scripture proclaiming this fact, but consider how the Apostle Paul was inspired by God the Holy Spirit to write the following acclamation of praise to God –

***Romans 11 – (33) 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! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? (36) FOR OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM, ARE ALL THINGS: TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN.***

***Psalm 96:8*** commands us to ***“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come into His courts.”*** This is a command and instruction from Almighty God given to us for worship. God’s ***“name”*** is His honor, majesty, and reputation. His ***“name”*** identifies and distinguishes Him as glorious and high above everyone and everything else. Hannah acknowledged in her prayer, ***“There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside Thee: neither is there any rock like our God” (1 Samuel 2:2).*** God commanded Israel through the prophet Isaiah to ***“remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me” (Isaiah 46:9).*** God is so unique in His nature and glory, so high above us, that He is not to be and cannot be compared with anything in creation – ***“To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?” (Isaiah 40:18); “To whom will ye liken Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that we may be like?” (Isaiah 46:5).***

We see the impossibility of such comparisons as we seek to understand the awesome truth of the Holy Trinity – God is one God in three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). For ages men have tried to understand the Trinity by using earthly illustrations in various analogies such as:

- One God in three roles. For example, a particular man can be considered a father to his children, a son to his parents, a husband to his wife. This is the error of modalism as if God reveals Himself in three different modes of operation.
- One God in three forms – water, ice, vapor. This promotes the error of mutability. Water changes to ice and vapor, and visa-versa, but the true God never changes.
- One God in three parts like the three parts of an egg (shell, white, and yolk). This is the error of a divided God who can be separated, but the true God is singular and cannot be divided within His nature of deity.

The fact is that no earthly example can explain the high and glorious truth of the Trinity. Our finite minds are simply inadequate to grasp the fullness of the nature of the Godhead. And what is worse is that seeking to explain the nature of God with such earthly comparisons is the very thing God forbids us to do as we read in ***Isaiah 40:18*** and ***46:5***. This falls into the category of the same things de-

scribed by the psalmist when he wrote, ***“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Psalm 139:6).***

This also seals in the minds of God’s people how God alone is to be glorified and worshipped. We are to claim or take no glory for ourselves – ***“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake” (Psalm 115:1).*** Even the good works of God’s people are intended for His glory and not their own – ***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).*** The ***“light”*** here is not the ***“good works,”*** but the ***“light”*** of God’s glory revealed in salvation by His free, sovereign grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such ***“good works”*** are not the product of man’s self-proclaimed abilities and goodness but God’s power and goodness. They are not intended to make us righteous before God, but even they must be washed in the blood of Christ, made accepted before God in Christ who is our righteousness before God. They are not meritorious for earning God’s favor and rewards for us, but they are the inspiration of the powerful, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who motivates believers with grace, love, and gratitude. They are not meant to draw attention to ourselves but to the God of all grace who saves us, keeps us, and brings us to glory based on what Christ alone has accomplished for us. They are the fruits of God’s grace. It is God’s purpose ***“that no flesh should glory in His presence,”*** but ***“he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:29-31).***

Knowledge of God comes, not by human reasoning, logic, and understanding, but by Divine revelation from God Himself. Why do I believe the doctrine of the Trinity? It is because this is the way God reveals Himself to me in His Word which is the revelation of Himself. This is an awesome thought – GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO MEN! And when we consider how we fell in Adam into sin, death, and darkness, and how we are born naturally dead in trespasses and sins, it is astounding and humbling that God would condescend to reveal Himself to sinners like us in His way of salvation. There is a common revelation of God’s glory in creation to all men as recorded in the ***Psalms*** –

***Psalm 19 – (1) The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork. (2) Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. (3) There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. (4) Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, (5) Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. (6) His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and His circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.***

This revelation is common to all men, but it is ultimately rejected by sinful, fallen, unregenerate men as to following in seeking more knowledge of God that would lead to salvation. This is what the apostle meant when he wrote, ***“There is not that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Romans 3:10).*** The natural man will see some things of God’s glory in creation, but left to himself, he will always stop short of seeking the true God as revealed in the Gospel of His grace in Christ Jesus. The natural man, left to himself and his own sinful will, either totally rejects this revelation and follows his own sinful lusts, or he misuses it to exalt himself in some religious way which is another form of lusts ***(Romans 1:18—2:24; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14).*** There is, however, a special and powerful revelation from

God to His chosen people whereby He reveals Himself in His Word as the God of salvation, the God of all grace –

***Psalm 19 – (7) The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. (8) The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. (9) The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. (10) More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (11) Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. (12) Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. (13) Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. (14) Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.***

These verses speak of the greatest manifestation and revelation of God’s glory to be found anywhere in eternity and time – GOD’S GLORY IN THE SALVATION OF SINNERS BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. This glory of God is revealed to sinners when God the Holy Spirit empowers the preaching of the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ for salvation to bring them to faith in Christ and true repentance. As it was stated before, knowledge of God comes, not by human reasoning, logic, and understanding, but by Divine revelation from God Himself. However, in revealing Himself to His people, God does not suspend or ignore His reason, logic, and understanding. He gives His people these things as gifts of His grace – ***“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).*** How does He do this? Consider the following verse –

***2 Corinthians 4 – (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***

In this verse God the Holy Spirit, by the Apostle Paul, gives us one of the most comprehensive statements in the Bible concerning the role of the Gospel in salvation and concerning the main issue of the Gospel – GOD’S REDEMPTIVE GLORY. When God the Holy Spirit brings sinners to experience salvation in the new birth, He reveals this glory of God in the Person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ to the newly regenerated ***“hearts”*** of His people. In the Bible the *heart* is the mind, affections, and will of man. This is a spiritual regeneration, revelation, and illumination by God the Holy Spirit through the truth of the Gospel. Consider the following:

1. The Gospel is God's promise and assurance of the forgiveness of sins, of justification before God, and of eternal salvation and final glory for sinners who cannot save themselves, and how all the blessings of salvation are conditioned on the Lord Jesus Christ who is God manifest in the flesh without sin. ***(Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:21,23)***

2. The Gospel reveals how the salvation of sinners must be based on the righteousness of God, which is perfect satisfaction to God's law and justice found only in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ as the representative, substitute, and surety of His people. **(Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-26)**
3. The Gospel reveals how in His obedience unto death the Lord Jesus Christ completely fulfilled all the conditions for the salvation of His people and established the only righteousness whereby God could be just to justify the ungodly. **(John 17:1-5; Romans 5:21; 2 Corinthians 5:21)**
4. The Gospel reveals how God has engaged every attribute of His character (His nature, His glory), summarized in God's revelation of Himself as both **"a just God and a Savior" (Isaiah 45:21)**, to fulfill His promise in and by the Lord Jesus Christ based on the righteousness He worked out and established for His people. **(2 Corinthians 4:6; Colossians 2:9-10)**

**2 Corinthians 4:6** shows us that God who created the world and spoke light into existence (**Genesis 1:3**) is the author, source, and power of salvation including the new birth (**John 1:12-13; 3:3-7**). Just as He brought the world into being by divine creation, He brings spiritually dead sinners to spiritual life by divine regeneration and brings them to see His glory in Christ. The **"glory of God"** here is profound and immeasurable, but not mystical in the sense of having no foundation in revealed truth and knowledge. It is the revelation of God's attributes revealed in the salvation of sinners based on the righteousness of God in and by Christ freely imputed (charged, accounted) to His people and received by God-given faith. When we experience this regeneration, we most certainly stand in awe and admit that in our own limited understanding we cannot reach the heights and depths of God's nature and mercy towards us (**Romans 11:33-36**). We do, however, by divine revelation and teaching through the Word of God (**John 6:44-45**), come to a saving knowledge of how all the attributes of God Almighty are engaged, honored, and revealed in salvation accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ (**John 17:1-4**).

The **"face of Jesus Christ"** is His nature and attributes as God in human flesh, God with us, whereby He is identified and distinguished as the one and only savior of sinners. It is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross that God's glory shines forth in its greatest revelation –

**John 1 – (14) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.**

**Hebrews 1 – (1) God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.**

#### **THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD**

To understand more of how the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen as the surety of His people is the highest, the greatest manifestation of God's glory, consider what is commonly called the *shekinah* glory of God. The word *shekinah* is derived from a Hebrew word meaning to *inhabit, to settle, to dwell*.

It refers to the presence of God, where God is pleased to reveal Himself to men. It describes the dwelling place of the Lord, where God meets with sinners on the basis of His glory. Under the Old Covenant the place of the *shekinah* was at the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies (**Exodus 25:17-25**). God said, **“And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Exodus 25:22)**. The high priest of Israel came into this place one time each year with the blood of a lamb taken from the altar of sacrifice. He would sprinkle the blood over the mercy seat which covered the ark of the covenant. The ark contained the tablets of the law which exposed the sinfulness and guilt of man. The blood of the lamb was a type, a picture, of Jesus Christ the Messiah as the Lamb of God. He is the **“propitiation” (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)** for the sins of His people. **“Propitiation”** is a Greek word that means essentially the same as **“mercy seat” (cf. Hebrews 9:5)** and describes satisfaction to God’s justice accomplished in the death of Jesus Christ for His people. Under the Old Covenant the mercy seat within the Holy of Holies was the greatest revelation of the glory of God to be found on earth. This was typical of the fact that the greatest revelation of God’s glory ever to be found in eternity or in time is in the Person of Jesus Christ as **“Emmanuel, God with us” (Matthew 1:23)**, and His finished work of redeeming all of God’s elect by His death on the cross – **“JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21)**. The Lord Jesus Christ worked out the righteousness of God to insure and secure the salvation of all for whom He died and arose.

God's redemptive character, how God reveals Himself in salvation, is His chief glory. We cannot properly identify the God of redemption, and, therefore, call on sinners to believe unto salvation until we preach the particulars revealing how He justifies the ungodly based on the righteousness of Christ freely imputed and received by God-given faith. Everything we preach by way of encouragement, warning, exhortation, and instruction, whether it be to lost sinners to believe and be saved, or whether it be to saved sinners to persevere, to use the means of grace and grow in knowledge and obedience, is to be preached in this light.

Many preach truths about God without identifying the particulars showing Him to be both a just God and a Savior. They may preach God as Creator, and we must respect Him as such. They may preach God as totally and absolutely sovereign, and we must bow to Him as such. Many say salvation involves bowing to the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ, and this is true. But what does this mean? They may preach God as immutable, and we must acknowledge this great truth. We could name every one of God's attributes individually, and we could properly claim that this is the only true and living God. Sinners will bow to this God, or they will perish. But bowing to God in salvation has to do with seeing God as the one who justifies the ungodly based on the merits of the obedience and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider the following –

**Isaiah 45 – (21) Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside Me; A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR; there is none beside Me. (22) Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.**

Sinners are commanded by God here to look to Him in His specific character as **“a just God and a Savior.”** This revelation of God sets before us the great question of questions – HOW CAN A HOLY

AND JUST GOD REMAIN TRUE TO HIMSELF AND STILL SAVE SINNERS IN GRACE, LOVE, AND MERCY? This question lies at the heart of the glory of God and the Gospel of salvation. God is holy, righteous, and just. He must punish sin! He will by no means clear the guilty. How can He be both a righteous judge who must punish all sin as well as a loving, merciful, gracious father to His people? No religion or philosophy of man has ever answered this question. Man's answer to the dilemma of salvation from sin has always been his own will or works in some form by which he glorifies himself. IT IS THE GLORY OF GOD TO SOLVE THIS MYSTERY. The Gospel of God's glory in the Lord Jesus Christ is the answer –

***1 Timothy 3 – (16) And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.***

***Romans 3 – (19) Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (21) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; (22) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (23) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (24) Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.***

It is in Christ and Him crucified that we see every attribute of God's holy character as a just God and a Savior revealed, honored, and magnified. Christ crucified is God's redemptive glory. He is the *shekinah*, God's highest glory, the greatest revelation of Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation by Him (***Luke 2:14; Colossians 1:12-19***). God's preeminent goal in all things is His own glory (***Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 1:3-12***). He reigns and disposes of everything in this universe, from the rise and fall of nations to the death of a sparrow, for this purpose. Since God's glory is the goal of all things, then God's purpose in the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ is to glorify Himself.

### ***“I HAVE GLORIFIED THEE ON THE EARTH”***

This is essentially what the Lord Himself expressed in His high priestly prayer in ***John 17***. Before the foundation of the world God the Father appointed His Son to be the mediator and surety of all His chosen people. As surety for the elect the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to do all things required and necessary to earn for them all grace here and all glory hereafter.

***John 17 – (1) These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: (2) As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. (3) And this is life***

***eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent. (4) I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.***

The Lord Jesus Christ glorified the Father in His great and powerful work of redemption. In this finished work all the infinite perfections of God's character were honored and magnified working together for that one purpose. Christ's mediatorial work reveals and honors the true character of God as both a just God and a Savior. Therefore, for sinners to know the true character of God savingly, they must have honoring views of Christ's Person and mediatorial work. God's Word tells us –

***2 Corinthians 5 – (18) And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.***

The glory of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) was engaged in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, to insure and secure the complete salvation of all the elect of God as He represented them. God's glory is set forth in the great work of reconciliation based on Christ's righteousness imputed to them. Based on this glory revealed in the preaching of the Gospel, sinners are called to be reconciled to God upon this same ground –

***2 Corinthians 5 – (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.***

To know God savingly is to know Him as both a just God and a savior in the Lord Jesus Christ. In and by Christ, God the Father honored and magnified the glory of His holiness, justice, and truth, as well as His love, mercy, and grace by placing His Son under the penalty of the law as the sins of His elect were imputed (charged, accounted) to Him – ***“For [God the Father] He hath made Him [God the Son incarnate] to be sin for us.”*** Having imputed the sins of His elect to Christ, those sins cannot be imputed to them (***Romans 8:1,31-34***).

God's glory is also magnified in the imputation of righteousness to His people – ***“that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”*** The ***“righteousness of God”*** is the work of redemption Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross for His people whereby He glorified the Father as both just and Justifier. God's glory is set forth in Christ as ***“the LORD our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:5-6)***, and His righteousness demands and secures the complete salvation of all sinners for whom He died. It is the glory of God in that Christ ***MUST “give eternal life to as many as”*** God the Father gave and entrusted to His care before the foundation of the world in the everlasting covenant of grace. It is God's glory, not to make salvation merely possible for sinners with no guarantee of success, but to secure and insure the eternal salvation of all whom He gave to the Lord Jesus Christ and for whom Christ established righteousness. If one sinner for whom Christ died and arose should perish in eternal damnation, God's glory (His reputation and honor) would be impugned and dishonored. It is in light of the guaranteed promise of God's grace in Christ Jesus, that the Lord said,

***John 6 – (37) All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. (39) And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.***

In light of all this scriptural testimony, it is clear that any so-called gospel that reduces the death of the Lord Jesus Christ to a mere possibility of salvation if sinners do their part or meet some specified condition does not glorify God or exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. It cannot, therefore, be called a message of salvation, for true salvation glorifies God by exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever salvation is suspended on the works and/or the wills of sinful men, the glory goes to those men who comply, not to the sovereign will and power of God. Again, God will never share His glory.

Romans 9 – (15) For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

#### **“LORD, SHOW ME YOUR GLORY”**

The main issue in defining and witnessing the true Gospel is God's glory, the honor and revelation of His redemptive character as both a just God and a Savior (***Isaiah 45:21-22***). The main issue in God's glory is the Person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish by His death on the cross for the sins of His people the righteousness of God as the only ground of salvation (***Romans 3:21-26***). When this glory is revealed to God’s elect by the Holy Spirit in the preaching and application of the Gospel to them as they are regenerated and given new hearts, they come to a saving knowledge of:

1. Their sin and depravity in light of God’s holiness and justice (***Isaiah 6:1-5***), which is true Holy Spirit conviction; and
2. The greatness of God’s grace and mercy to save them from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ whereby they are justified based on His righteousness imputed (***Philippians 3:3,7-9***).

Hereby God the Holy Spirit imparts faith to believe in Christ Jesus, and repentance of dead works, sin, and idolatry, along with the powerful motivations of love, grace, and gratitude by which to follow Christ as a willing, loving bond-slave.

We see many examples of God’s glory revealed in the Bible. One is when Moses entreated the Lord for His presence among the people, ***“he said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory” (Exodus 33:18)***. Consider the Lord’s answer – ***“And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And He said, thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a***

**rock: And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:19-23).**

All this pointed Moses to the glory of God in His promise of sovereign goodness, grace, and mercy in the salvation of sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ. When God said **"My glory passeth by,"** the next statement, **"I will put thee in a clift of the rock,"** symbolically described the glory of all His perfections, His wisdom, holiness, justice, power, and faithfulness, and especially His grace, mercy, and goodness, in the Lord Jesus Christ. Did Moses understand something of this revelation? The only way we can answer this is by Scripture. The Lord Jesus Himself told the Pharisees, **"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John 5:46-47).** He taught His disciples, **"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself."** (Luke 24:25-27).

Here we have an absolute and unconditional promise from the one sovereign, powerful, merciful, and gracious God, the only true and living God (**Isaiah 45:20**). This is God's promise to save sinners based upon His free, unmerited favor, revealed in His purpose to justify the ungodly conditioned, not on the sinner, but on a God-sent substitute. The only substitute sent of God is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is able to represent sinners before a holy God, and who alone can satisfy God's law and justice on their behalf. Sinners are commanded to believe God's promise of salvation conditioned on Christ alone as Christ fulfilled all conditions required for salvation.

We see another great example of this in Isaiah's conversion –

**Isaiah 6 – (1) In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. (3) And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the middle of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: (7) And he laid it on my mouth, and said, See, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.**

Isaiah's vision of God's glory was directly connected to redemption based on the sacrifice performed upon the altar from which burning coal was taken. This vision of God's glory brought a great change within Isaiah which could only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the new birth. It also established the message of Isaiah's prophecy in light of the natural rejection of unbelievers of the message of salvation by God's grace through the Lord Jesus Christ which gives all glory to God and none to man (**John 12:37-41; cf. John 3:19-20; 1 Corinthians 2:14**).

## OUR GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD

In light of this, we need to consider the issue of God's jealousy. God is jealous for His own glory; He will not share His glory with another (**Isaiah 48:9-11**). When we think of jealousy in ourselves, it is most often accompanied with the sin of covetousness when we desire and/or strive for something that does not belong to us. It is also closely related to the sins of envy, greed, ingratitude, and bitterness. But this is not the case with a holy and just God. The Bible tells us plainly that God is a jealous God –

**Exodus 20 – (3) Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. (4) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: (5) Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;**

God's jealousy is certainly not sinful. God is not jealous because someone else has something He wants or needs that does not belong to Him. All glory, honor, praise, and worship truly belong to God, and He is jealous when those things are attributed or given to another. To attribute any of these things to any other supposed god is idolatry – **“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:” (Exodus 34:14)**. God will not share His glory. He says, **“For Mine own sake, even for Mine own sake, will I do it: for how should My name be polluted? and I will not give My glory unto another” (Isaiah 48:11)**. Again, this glory belongs only to God and never to another. Those who give God's glory to another are under His judgment – **“For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God” (Deuteronomy 4:24)**.

We need to understand also that God never commands or encourages His people to compromise His glory in order to win friends, influence people, or gain and keep an audience. When we are tempted to avoid controversy and the offense of the cross in the name of love or to gain someone's favor or blessing, we should always remember God's honor and God's love. God's love subjected His Son to the greatest depths of humiliation, suffering, and even death for His glory in salvation. Christ on the cross proves that God could not and would not compromise His glory to save sinners. Consider those described by the Apostle John –

**John 12 – (42) Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: (43) For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.**

To confess Christ before men is to glorify God and not men. It is to tell the truth about God's holiness and justice, and to tell the truth about man's sinfulness and depravity. It shows how man's best efforts to save himself, things which are highly esteemed by unbelievers, are evil deeds, dead works, and fruit unto death. It shows how Christ's righteousness alone saves, justifies, and entitles sinners to salvation and all its blessings. It leaves not room for men to glory in anything but Christ. This is offensive to the natural man, but we cannot compromise it to keep his friendship and approval. Those who com-

promise God's glory love **"the praise of men more than the praise of God."** They think more of their own glory and nothing of God's glory in Christ Jesus.

### **GOD'S GLORY – THE DEFEAT OF SATAN**

Satan brought sin and death into the world, thus, bringing the whole human race under the curse of sin and death because of Adam's sin against God (**Romans 5:12**). Adam took sides with Satan against God. Satan's hold over the fallen, depraved human family lies in two spheres:

1. The sphere of condemnation in which Satan is described as **"the accuser of our brethren"** (**Revelation 12:10; cf. Zechariah 3:1**); and
2. The sphere of darkness in which Satan is described as the deceiver (**Revelation 12:9; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:13-16**), and has come to be known commonly as the prince of darkness (**Ephesians 6:11-12**), and the father of lies (**John 8:44**).

Satan's power in the sphere of condemnation only exists where his accusations of sin against people hold true so as to set forth their guilt and condemnation. According to His strict law and inflexible justice, God must condemn and punish sinners where sin is imputed (**Romans 5:12-14; 6:23a; 1 Corinthians 15:56**). The great issue then is not Satan's accusations or what he says about us, but God's judgment of us. Does God accuse us of sin? Does God impute sin to us? It is a fact that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**), and we all deserve eternal condemnation and death. If God were to judge any of us at any time based on our best efforts to keep His law or to make ourselves righteousness in His sight, we would all perish (**Psalms 130:3; Romans 3:19-20**). How then can God JUSTLY save us and forgive us our sins? How can He be just and still justify sinners like us? We have already shown how God is glorified in the salvation and justification of sinners based on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ imputed. This is why Satan's accusations against God's people will not hold true. God does not impute sin to their account (**Psalms 32:1-2**). God imputes righteousness worked out by the Lord Jesus Christ in His blood, His death on the cross, to them (**Romans 4:6-8**). God imputed the sins of His elect to Christ and imputed His righteousness to them (**2 Corinthians 5:18-21**). Satan is defeated in the sphere of condemnation by the blood of Jesus Christ –

**John 12 – (31) Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (32) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. (33) This He said, signifying what death He should die.**

**Revelation 12 – (9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (10) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (11) And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.**

Satan's power in the sphere of darkness only exists where he is able to keep sinners ignorant of the Gospel of God's glory in Christ. Consider **2 Corinthians 4:6** again in its context –

**2 Corinthians 4 – (3) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**

By nature we are all spiritually dead in sin and lack the spiritual ability to hear and believe the Gospel of God's glory savingly. This is part of the total depravity of all men by nature. Total depravity and spiritual death are described in the following verses –

**Romans 3 – (9) What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; (10) As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: (11) There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (12) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (13) Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: (14) Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: (15) Their feet are swift to shed blood: (16) Destruction and misery are in their ways: (17) And the way of peace have they not known: (18) There is no fear of God before their eyes.**

**(19) Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

These verses show that by nature: (1) we are not righteous and have no righteousness by which to be saved; (2) we have no ability to work righteousness, not even by our best efforts to obey God or keep His law; and (3) we have no desire to be saved and made righteous God's way – BY GRACE THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, because it gives all glory to God and none to us. By nature we love the darkness of our own self-righteousness, self-love, and religious pride (**John 3:19-20**). Satan operates in the sphere of this darkness to keep the Gospel of God's glory hidden from us **"lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto."** His goal is to keep us in a lost state with **"no fear of God before"** our eyes, i.e. no respect or regard for God's true glory revealed in salvation by Jesus Christ alone and based on His righteousness alone.

Satan's power over us in the sphere of darkness can only be broken by the power of God in Christ as God the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life from Christ and gives us new hearts, new desires, new spiritual eyes and ears. He brings us to a true conviction of sin and works in us faith to believe and rest in Christ for all salvation. He brings us to true repentance and the obedience of faith. All this is accomplished by the Holy Spirit when He brings us under the Gospel of God's grace in Christ as **"the power of**

***God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16) and reveals to us “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This is when God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:13). This is when we cease to walk in darkness and begin to “walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8; cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:5). As we are brought to this saving knowledge of and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for all salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, eternal life, and glory, we can know that the God of all grace “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”***

## **GOD'S GLORY – THE STANDARD OF ALL JUDGMENT**

We who have been brought by God to believe the Gospel must, therefore, judge all things by the standard of God's glory, and we must seek to be motivated in all our desires by that same glory. It is our love and compassion for lost sinners and our desire to see them saved that keeps us from compromising the truth of God's glory in the Person and finished work of Jesus Christ. This is what motivates us to preach the Gospel to the lost and tell them the truth about their lost condition and the wickedness of their best efforts when aimed at earning God's salvation, favor, and/or blessings. We see an example of this in the Apostle Paul who refused to compromise the Gospel of God's glory in Christ for his own earthly family. He wrote, ***“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:1-3).*** He went on to write, ***“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:1-4).***

Paul knew salvation could only come by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that all who are truly saved have this same testimony – ***“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:14-16).*** The true ***“Israel of God”*** is a spiritual nation populated with sinners saved by the grace of God and who glory only in Christ and what He accomplished to justify and redeem them. Any claim of salvation, obedience, or good works that does not glorify God in this way is a false claim and renders such salvation to be a deception and such obedience and works to be dead works, evil deeds, and fruit unto death. This may be highly valued by men, but it is an abomination to God (***Luke 16:15***). True salvation, accompanied with acceptable obedience and good works, glorifies God in Christ alone. The whole Christian life is ***“to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6).***

Therefore, when it comes to proper judgments on matters of salvation, doctrine, interpretations of Scripture, and methods of evangelism and worship, we must judge all things in light of the glory of God as He reveals Himself in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Here are four questions to ask concerning these matters of proper judgment:

1. Does it honor God in His redemptive glory as both a just God and a Savior setting forth His true nature and character, as revealed in the Bible, as He deals with humanity whether in creation, providence, judgment, or salvation?
2. Does it exalt Christ both in His glorious Person as God manifested in the flesh without sin, and in His powerful finished work of redemption to bear away all the sins of God's elect? Does it express Christ's righteousness imputed to them whereby God is just to justify them, and which demands and secures their complete salvation unto final glory?
3. Does it exclude all grounds for boasting within us as sinners saved by grace, leaving us no room to boast but in Christ crucified and arisen, and in His righteousness alone for our whole salvation unto final glory?
4. Does it inspire and energize believers in obedience and service to God, in the warfare of the flesh and the Spirit, in worshipping God, in prayer, in growth in grace, in evangelism to the world, and in love and loyalty to brethren, as motivated by grace, love, and gratitude?

When God is glorified Himself within our hearts, we become true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit imparts within us a real desire to glorify God in all things – ***“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)***. While in this life we still have to deal with the remaining power and influence of the flesh continually trying to draw us away from Christ and His glory to honor ourselves and other men. This is a great struggle in the warfare of the flesh and the Spirit, but because of the power and grace of God in Christ, we who are truly saved will overcome the flesh. It is the fruit of God's power and grace that we truly desire to glorify Him. Our prayer for ourselves and our brethren is stated in the psalms –

***Psalm 22 – (23) Ye that fear the LORD, praise Him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel.***

***Psalm 86 – (12) I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy name for evermore.***