



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Behold His Glory

TIM PAULEY

VARIOUS PASSAGES

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Tim Pauley / PO Box 58403, Charleston, WV 25358 / 304.767.8430 / tim.pauley@capitolcom.org

It is always amazing to note the dramatic difference in our capitol building between when the regular session is in and the rest of the year. During the session the rotunda and main floor are packed with legislators, lobbyists, and individuals representing their various organizations. When session is adjourned you can often walk the halls around the rotunda and be the only one there. There is something special about the place when the legislators, lobbyists, and staff are all in the building. While the building is still quite impressive, it seems there is something missing when it is empty and quiet.

In a very small way, this may remind us of a Bible truth that points us to Jesus Christ, who He is, and what He has done for us.

In the Old Testament the people of Israel had a special building – the temple – where they would come to worship God. This building provided the means by which a holy God could dwell among sinful people. It was a permanent replacement for the mobile structure God instructed them to build during their wanderings in the wilderness – the Tabernacle.¹ There was a dramatic event that took place at the dedication of both these structures. At the dedication of the Tabernacle:

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Exodus 40:34-35

And at the dedication of the Temple:

... Then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,¹⁴ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14

THE GLORY OF GOD DEPARTS

We can only imagine what this must have been like. This “glory of the Lord” was the visible expression of the presence of God among His people. The structures themselves with their layout and furnishings for the sacrifices provided the means by which sinful people could be in the presence of the glory of this Holy God.

We do not have time to take a detailed look at the history of the people of Israel. Suffice it to say they sinned often as they took part in the idolatry of the nations around them. Because of their ongoing sin, we see that the glory of God departs from the Temple. (Ezekiel 10:4; 18-19)

What a difference there must have been in that grand building when the glory of God was there and then after it had departed. Certainly the building seemed very different, empty, and quiet. But Ezekiel and others wrote of a time when the Glory of God would return.

THE GLORY OF GOD RETURNS

The Tabernacle and the Temple both pointed to Jesus Christ and what He would do for us (Hebrews 8). Jesus, speaking of Himself said:

*¹⁹... “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”
²⁰ The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²² So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. John 2:19-22*

What is significant about Jesus calling Himself – His own body the Temple? John makes this clear in introduction of his gospel:

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the

BIBLE STUDIES

INTERIM BIBLE STUDIES: **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 8:00 AM; 12:00 NOON**, TREASURER’S CONFERENCE ROOM (EB 54)

Behold His Glory

Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” ¹⁶ For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. *John 1:14-18*

John is telling us that the Glory of God has returned! God’s glory has returned and it is found in Jesus Christ. That is why Hebrews tells us that Jesus is “...**The radiance of (God’s) glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power**” (Hebrews 1:3).

If we are to come into the presence of God, if we are to see God’s glory, we must do so through Jesus Christ. In both the Tabernacle and the Temple, God set forth a process by which sinful people could be in His presence. There were priests to intercede and there were sacrifices which had to be offered. All of this was simply a picture describing what Jesus would ultimately do for us when He came to suffer and die on the cross.

THE GLORY OF GOD IN A MAN?

Through out this year we have been considering the life and ministry of Christ through the framework of His “diverse excellencies” described by Jonathan Edwards.² Can we find any more diverse than that of the Glory of God found in a man. At a simple glance, Jesus may have seemed only a man. Yet we know the Bible teaches that He was both GOD and MAN. Certainly this is the most diverse of excellencies we find in Christ. This is what Paul describes in Philippians 2:

*...although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. *Philippians 2:6-8**

While Jesus may have outwardly appeared as a normal man, there were certainly glimpse and revelations of His glory. His miracles were proof that He was God. In Matthew 17 we see

Him transfigured before Peter, James, and John so that they beheld His glory (perhaps what John refers to in John 1).

BEHOLD HIS GLORY

Jesus is both God and man. His body is the “temple” in which God’s glory dwells. His body is also the means by which sinful people can come into the presence of a Holy God. This may be best described in a passage written long before Jesus came:

¹*Who has believed our message?*

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

²*For He grew up before Him like a tender ^[a]shoot, And like a root out of parched ground;*

He has no stately form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

³*He was despised and forsaken of men,*

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

And like one from whom men hide their face

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁶*Surely our griefs He Himself bore,*

And our sorrows He carried;

Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵*But He was pierced through for our transgressions,*

He was crushed for our iniquities;

The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,

And by His scourging we are healed.

⁶*All of us like sheep have gone astray,*

Each of us has turned to his own way;

But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all

*To fall on Him. *Isaiah 53:1-6**

CONCLUSION

We should be overwhelmed with the truth that we come into the presence a holy God through Jesus Christ and what He has done for us.

¹ See our 2012 study on the Tabernacle, “Gaining Access to God”. <http://www.capitolcom.org/west-virginia/studies/2012>.

² *The Admirable Conjunction of Divine Excellencies in Christ Jesus*. <http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/admirable.html>