

In commenting on Exodus 33:18, A.W. Pink confessed—"Our pen falters as we take up such a verse as this, for what sinful creature is competent to write upon such an exalted theme as the glory of God?"

Thus, with fear and holy trembling, having finished our study on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, I want to begin a short study on the Glory of God. This first sermon will serve as an introduction to our topic, wherein we shall consider three things: the glory of God explained, manifested, and experienced.

But before we come to these headings, I want to say something very briefly, by way of introduction, concerning the existence of God. Simply put, the Scripture nowhere attempts to prove the existence of God, but it merely assumes that existence. For example, the Scripture begins, Gen.1:1—"In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth."

And yet, this doesn't deny there are important arguments in favor of God's existence. For example: (1) The testimony of universal religion argues the existence of God. The fact that all nations, from the beginning of time, possess a common desire for religious worship argues the existence of God.

(2) The testimony of creation argues the existence of God. Creation demands a Creator. That which is created can not have created itself.

(3) The testimony of our conscience argues the existence of God. Man knows there's a God. Rom.1:18—"What may be known of God is made known in them, for God has shown it to them." Though man attempts to suppress the truth, his conscience condemns him for it.

Thus, Scripture doesn't so much prove the existence of God but assumes it, and yet the same Scripture goes to great length to describe who this God is. This brings us to our topic of the glory of God, which we shall consider under three headings.

- I. The Glory of God Explained
- II. The Glory of God Manifested
- III. The Glory of God Experienced

#### I. The Glory of God Explained

1. Here I want to explain what Moses meant by God's glory. We use this term rather frequently, but what does it mean?
2. Well, I want to suggest rather simply, that Scripture uses the concept of God's glory in two closely related ways.
3. (1) God's glory is the sum-total of His divine perfections—the root of the word translated "glory" means "heavy or weight."
4. Thus, fundamentally God's glory is another way of saying God Himself—it's the sum-total of all that He essentially is.
5. Ex.33:22—"So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by."
6. The Lord uses the phrases "My glory passes by" and "I pass by" as interchangeable—that is, they are the same things.
7. In other words, His glory and His being are the same things—His glory is the sum-total of His divine perfections.
8. And thus, He identifies, in part, what His glory entails in v19—"I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion, on whom I will have compassion."
9. This simply means—God's glory is nothing more than God Himself—the sum-total of all that God is—the sum-total of His divine perfections.

10. Ex.34:6-7—"And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.'"
11. This is God's glory that He revealed to Moses, and what is this but a list of many, not all, of His divine perfections.
12. Thus, we learn in the first place, that the glory of God is the sum-total of all that God is—the full weight of His divine perfections.
13. (2) God's glory is the radiant splendor of His perfections—that is, God's glory is the manifestation of His perfections.
14. In other words, while God is glorious in and of Himself, He also reveals this glory and allows men to experience it.
15. Ex.33:18—"And he said, Please, show me Your glory"—that is, Moses wanted to personally see or behold God's glory.
16. Ex.33:19—"Then He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you., and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."
17. Notice that God promised to proclaim His name or glory—He promised to make His glory manifest to Moses.
18. V22—"So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."
19. Thus, in answer to Moses' prayer, the LORD allowed him to behold His glory, which was nothing more than His attributes.
20. Perhaps I can put it like this—the LORD proclaimed His own glory to Moses—the LORD glorified Himself to Moses.
21. In fact, the term used in 33:18 (34:6) translated "proclaim" (I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you), is a generic word used for preaching.
22. Perhaps we could even say, God preached or proclaimed His glory to Moses by revealing to him His attributes.
23. But notice, Moses was only allowed to see this glory in part, v20—"You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."
24. The LORD allowed Moses only to see His back and not His face—that is, he only saw a glimpse of God's glory.
25. Thus, we could say, God glorified Himself to Moses, as He revealed or made known His glorious nature (name).
26. And so, in summary, when we speak of the glory of God we mean, all that God is, as He makes this known to man.
27. The glory of God is the radiant splendor of all that God is—it's the beautify of His perfections made known to man.
28. It's for this reason, throughout Scripture whenever man encounters God's glory, he's always powerfully effected.
29. Ex.34:8—"So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped"—that is, after having seen God's glory.
30. Lk.2:9—"And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid."
31. In other words, throughout Scripture the glory of God is often equated with the special, felt-sense presence of God.
32. God is not only glorious in Himself, but He makes this glory known—He enables men to know and sense His glory.
33. Thus, perhaps another way of describing God's glory would be His MAJESTY—God is majestic (glorious), and He reveals that majesty (glory).

34. Or perhaps another way of putting this would be—God's glory (majesty) is all that He's revealed about Himself in His names, nature, and attributes (perfections).
35. And as we shall see in subsequent sermons, these are simply different ways of describing all that's true of God.

## II. The Glory of God Manifested

1. Here I want to answer the question—How or Where does God manifest or make known His glory to mankind?
2. In our text, the LORD revealed His glory to Moses in a direct manner—He allowed Moses to experience that glory in the form of His special presence.
3. But for the rest of us, how does God reveal His glory? Where does God make His glory known within this world?
4. (1) God's glory is seen in creation—that is, everything in heaven and earth, displays or reveals the glory of God.
5. Ps.19:1-2—"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge."
6. Every single day and night, the sun, moon, and stars all declare the glory of God—they reveal unto all men God's perfections.
7. Rom.1:20—"Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."
8. Here we learn that God's invisible attributes (His power and wisdom), are clearly seen in the creation of the world.
9. John Calvin—"Wherever you cast your eyes, there is no spot in the universe wherein you cannot discern at least some sparks of His glory. You cannot in one glance survey this most vast and beautiful system of the universe, in its wide expanse, without being completely overwhelmed by the boundless force of its brightness."
10. You know brethren, the older I get the more I love to behold the glory and majesty of God within His creation!
11. (2) God's glory is seen in Christ—by this I mean, the glory of God's divine perfections is seen in the Person of Christ.
12. Jn.1:14—"And the Word became 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."
13. By "His glory" is meant, the glory that Christ possessed as the eternal Son of God (put another way, it was the glory of God).
14. In other words, in the Person of Christ, the glory of God's perfections, shine forth in veiled but beautiful ways.
15. The power, wisdom, grace, mercy, compassion, patience, and love of God are all visibly displayed in Jesus Christ.
16. (3) God's glory is seen in redemption—by this is meant, the glory of God is seen in God's work of redemption.
17. While God's glory is seen in His work of creation, it's more clearly seen in His work of the new creation (salvation).
18. The reason God's glory is more clearly seen in redemption is because all of God's attributes are on display in redemption.
19. His righteousness, justice, wisdom, power, mercy, grace, love, and patience are all clearly made known in salvation.
20. Thus, Paul throughout Ephesians 1, repeatedly uses the phrase—"for the glory of His grace"—all of salvation is for the glory of God's grace.
21. Most of us are familiar with the Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation—Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Christ Alone, Faith Alone, and God's Glory Alone (Soli Deo Gloria).
22. Salvation is revealed in Scripture—it's all of grace, in Christ, and received by faith, all to the end that God is glorified.

23. (4) God's glory is seen in the church—this is to say, God makes Himself uniquely known within His gathered people.
24. Ps.26:8—"Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells"—what a beautiful description of God's church—"the place where His glory dwells."
25. This obviously brethren, was typified in the OC, wherein God's glory, in the form of a cloud, rested on the temple.
26. What is God's NC temple but the church, and thus, it's the place where His gracious precious and glory dwells.
27. But, the question then becomes—How does God's glory uniquely dwell in the church? Well, at least two ways—in the people of the church and the activities of the church.
28. That is, the glory of God is manifested in the church by us as we reflect and speak about His glory to one another.
29. But foremostly, His glory is evident in the church in our worship, wherein we behold His glory in song, sacrament, prayer, and the reading (but esp) preaching of the word.
30. (5) God's glory is seen in eternity—that is, for all eternity God will reveal His glory, both in heaven and in hell.
31. Rom.9:22-23—"What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory."
32. What are heaven and hell but places, wherein God's glory will be eternally manifested—both His wrath and mercy!
33. Thus, before we go any further, in light of what we've learned thus far, let me suggest two ways we can behold God's glory.
34. (a) We must pray that God would show us His glory—O brethren, what a bold and beautiful prayer—"Show me Your glory."
35. What a proper prayer to pray as you behold the beauty of creation, ponder redemption, behold Christ, and come to church.
36. O brethren, this is the prayer we must offer as we prepare our hearts for worship—"I pray Thee, show me Thy glory."
37. (b) We must look in those places His glory is revealed—that is, in creation, the church, redemption, and Christ.
38. Brethren, in order to behold the glory of God we must look for it—for those with eyes to see it's all around them.
39. But it's especially revealed within His house as His people gather to worship Him and behold the beauty of His glory.
40. This is what our church needs—this is what our families need—this is what our souls need—to behold the glory of God.

### III. The Glory of God Experienced

1. Here I want to address the question—Why is it important for Christians to behold or experience the glory of God?
2. If the glory of God is the sum-total of God's divine perfections, then why must Christians strive to know this glory?
3. Or perhaps I can put the question like this—Why did Moses desire to behold the glory of God? Why did he pray—"Show me Your glory"?
4. (1) A clearer sight of God's glory satisfies us—that is, the more we see God's glory the more know God more intimately.
5. There is a necessary relation between seeing God's glory and knowing God's person—the one leads to the other.
6. This can be found in comparing the previous prayer of Moses to that our text, Ex.33:13—"Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."

7. Moses desired to see "God's way"—this is another way of saying, he desired to God's glory in His works and ways.
8. And notice the phrase—"that I may know You"—those who behold God's glory come to know God more intimately.
9. Dear brethren, this is the reason we've been made—mankind was created to behold and enjoy the glory of God.
10. And frankly put, nothing will satisfy the heart of man except the glory of God—this, and this alone, satisfies the soul.
11. Ps.63:1-5—"O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory."
12. V5—"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips."
13. (a) A thirst—nothing in this world could satisfy David's thirst; (b) a satisfaction—only beholding God's glory satisfied David.
14. By "sanctuary" is meant the OT temple—this is where God's glory dwelt—in the NT this glory dwells in the church.
15. (2) A clearer sight of God's glory changes us—that is, no person can encounter the glory of God and remain the same.
16. A clearer knowledge of who God is will have a profoundly practical effect upon our lives. No one beholds God's glory and remains the same.
17. 2Cor.3:18—"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."
18. To behold God's glory is to be changed into that glory—that is, He changes us to become more like Jesus Christ.
19. (3) A clearer sight of God's glory humbles us—that is, to behold God's glory, put's God and man in their proper places.
20. Ex.34:8—"So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped"—this is what happens when we behold God's glory!
21. Brethren, why is it, that all over our country this morning, so many churches will be playing games in public worship?
22. Why is it that so many will attempt to steal God's glory, by filling His worship with manmade games and inventions?
23. It's because they have never truly come to see the glory of God—when God's glory is known we make haste to bow and worship.
24. (4) A clearer sight of God's glory motivates us—that is, to behold God's glory motivates us to love and serve Him.
25. It's possible someone may question the wisdom of spending the next 10-12 weeks examining the glory of God.
26. Do we really need to spend this time examining the nature and attributes of God? How is this practically relevant?
27. Well my friend, if this is what you're thinking, then I suggest you have a rather flawed view of the Christian life.
28. Why do Christians do the things they do? Why do they obey God, mortify the deeds of the body, and strive for purity?
29. Why do they labor to keep themselves separate from the world, all the while sharing the gospel with those in the world?
30. Why do Christians travel over sea and land, at great personal cost and possible harm? What motives us to work?
31. Well, let me suggest that nothing can provide strength, encouragement, and motivation as a fresh sight of God's glory!
32. I can illustrate this in the first place with Moses, who connected a sight of God's glory with a sense of His presence.

33. The LORD had just commanded Moses to lead the nation of Israel up from Mount Horeb (Sinai) into the Promised Land.
34. Ex.33:13—"Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I am find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."
35. Ex.33:14-15—"And He said, My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. Then he said to Him, If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here."
36. In other words, the LORD showed His glory to Moses as a preview of the fact, that He would be with Moses as he led the people.
37. In other words, Moses said something like this—Unless I am able to behold God's glory I will not be able to complete my task!
38. God then revealed His glory by proclaiming His attributes, 34:6—"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, etc."
39. Let me speak to specific kinds of people—you who feel too weak and weary to continue—behold the glory of His faithfulness
40. Those of you who feel the power and pull of this world and your enemies—behold the glory of His infinite power.
41. Those of you who feel your remaining sinfulness and filthiness—behold the glory of His mercy and His grace.
42. This may sound rather simplistic and cliché, but what you need more than anything else, is fresh sight of God's glory.
43. Dan.11:32—"The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits"—to know God's name is to behold His glory.
44. (5) A clearer sight of God's glory glorifies Him—this is perhaps, the greatest reason to experience God's glory.
45. Think of it like this—according to the Shorter Catechism, the chief end of man is—"to glory God and enjoy Him forever."
46. This is the chief end of man or the highest purpose of man—this is what God originally created man to do—to glory Him.
47. And yet, we can also say—this is the great purpose of God in creating and redeeming man—to glorify Himself.
48. Dear brethren, this is greatest reason why we should want to behold the glory of God—because it glorifies God.
49. God delights to glorify Himself—He rejoices when His people behold His glory—both because it brings good to us but also it brings glory to Him.
50. And thus, God-willing beginning next week we'll consider His glory as made known in His names, being, and perfections.