

The Glory of the Lord

An Adult Bible Study

by

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Leader's Guide

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Leader's Notes

This Bible study is one of four in the Bible Panoramas series. This series deals with overarching themes that are found throughout the Scriptures. The other themes are “The Lord’s Rest,” “The Lord’s House,” and “The Lord’s Faithfulness.”

This course contains eight lessons. However, enough material is included to expand it to ten sessions.

The introduction to the first lesson is longer than most introductions. If fully discussed, it could actually be used as a lesson in itself. Please review that introduction ahead of time and determine how many of the details you wish to use so it fits your time frame.

Lesson 7 covers Revelation chapters 1, 4, and 5. You may want to limit your discussion either to Revelation chapter 1 or to chapters 4 and 5. Or you may want to cover this lesson in two class sessions.

Lesson One

The Glory of the Lord Appears to Abraham and Moses

Worship

Speak or sing the following hymn:

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, O Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, your great name we praise!

Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,
Not wanting, nor wasting, you rule in your might,
Your justice like mountains high soaring above,
Your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Your angels adore you, all veiling their sight.
Our praises we render; oh, lead us to see
The light of your splendor, your love's majesty! (CW 240:1,2,4)

Prayer: Lord, you are infinite in majesty and hidden from our eyes. Reveal your glory to us in your Word and in your Son. Fill us with awe of your holiness and joy for your goodness. Help us reflect your glory in our words and in our deeds. Amen.

Introduction

Glory in God's creation: *Glory* has many meanings that shade into one another. What feelings and emotions strike you when you hear the word *glory*? Consider the following:

- a sunset
- a great civilization or city
- a woman's beautiful hair
- the Olympic gold medal
- a victory in battle
- when a person is at his or her best
- a person given special honor by the Lord
- a Christian's death

While discussing the list the teacher should emphasize what a many-faceted, rainbow word *glory* is. If there is time, ask the students for other examples of striking uses of the word *glory* for each point.

Glory is great beauty and splendor: what a glorious sunset!

Glory is magnificence: the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome.

Glory is a quality or asset that brings distinction: her beautiful hair is her glory.

Glory is praise and honor: the Olympian won glory.

Glory is something that secures praise or fame: the campaign was his glory.

Glory is a state of great happiness or exaltation: she's in her glory

Glory is a ring of light or halo around the head of a saint; the glory of Mary.

Glory is heaven: our brother has entered into glory.

The Lord's Glory: *Glory* applies most fully to God. What is God's glory according to the following passages?

- Exodus 15:11

Glory is beauty and splendor: God is "majestic in holiness, awesome in glory."

- Revelation 21:11

Glory is magnificence: the city "shone with the glory of God."

- Hebrews 1:3

Glory is a distinguishing quality or essence: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being."

- Psalm 96:7

Glory is praise, honor, or distinction: "Ascribe to the LORD glory."

- Psalm 19:1

Glory is something that secures praise or fame: "The heavens declare the glory of God."

- Revelation 19:1

Glory is a state of great happiness or exaltation: "Glory and power belong to our God."

- Luke 2:9

Glory is a ring of light or halo: "The glory of the Lord shone around them."

- Psalm 73:24

Glory is heaven: "Afterward you will take me into glory."

Ask the students for other examples of striking uses of the word *glory* from the Bible.

Which of these meanings fits the passage, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)?

It could be heaven, approval from God, or the degree of conformity to the standard of the law necessary to receive his approval. Others?

What is the glory of the Lord? We have seen that *glory* is a rather elusive term. In many contexts it is hard to pin down its precise meaning.

The glory of God is the whole essence and being of God. Analyzing the glory of God is like trying to study rapidly flashing lights. Each of his qualities gives us a little flash of his glory. But the full picture escapes us. At best, we see only flashes—one part of his full glory. To use another picture, trying to drink in the glory of God would be like trying to drink the ocean.

As a technical term “the glory of the Lord” refers to a visible revelation of God to his people, most often in the form of fire and light, clouds and smoke. Though even this was only a pale reflection of God’s glory, it was nevertheless overwhelming. It was like a bolt of lightning or a crash of thunder that draws attention to the power of a storm.

These manifestations of God’s glory are for us also. We view the glory of the Lord and are overwhelmed by its majesty. But more important, we are warned and strengthened by the messages it brings with it. It fills us with fear and dread of the holy God who hates sin. It fills us with joy at the glory and power of the God who saves us.

Studying God’s Word

God has been working in the world from the time of creation and the fall. He called Adam and Eve to repentance and announced the first gospel to them. He warned Cain and his descendants of the judgment that was coming. He brought the great flood that swept away the filth of sin that was polluting the earth, and he renewed the gospel promise to Noah.

Yet in all this he never appeared in the form of “the glory of the Lord.” This special form of revelation first appeared when the Lord advanced the gospel by delivering his promises to Abraham and by giving a full revelation of his law to Moses. These men, the first to witness the glory of the Lord, were recipients of some of the most notable revelations of the gospel and the law, which led up to the calling of Israel as a chosen nation that would prepare the way for the Savior.

The glory of the Lord appears to Abraham

Abraham had already received the promise of the Savior in Genesis chapter 12, although some important aspects of the promise were not revealed there. In Genesis chapter 15 we have one of the most important and dramatic revelations of the gospel promise.

Read Genesis 12:2,3 and Genesis 15:1-7.

1. God gave his initial promises to Abraham before he told him to leave his home in Haran. What new information was added to those promises in the first verses of chapter 15?

The promise would be fulfilled through Abraham’s “seed,” his own descendant, who would also be the “seed” promised to Eve.

Read Genesis 15:8-21.

2. In Abraham’s culture, cutting animals into pieces and walking between them was a way of making a treaty or a covenant. The meaning was that whoever broke the agreement would be cut in pieces like those animals. Why is it significant that only God passed through the pieces?

God’s covenant with Abraham was a one-sided covenant, that is, the fulfillment depended entirely on God’s gracious gifts.