

# QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry  
for the Christian community*

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## **JOHN 1 v 14 – “We have seen His glory”**

During the course of John’s marvellous Prologue, in this verse he describes the Incarnation of God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity. That blessed Person, the everlasting Word, became flesh, made His dwelling among us, and here lived a life full of grace and truth. However, the personal impact John and others had experienced was that they “had seen His glory”. In this study we explore that impact and consider its relevance for ourselves in our day.

### 1. John saw His glory spiritually

In the opening verses of the Prologue, John describes the glory of Jesus as the One who was with God and was God. He was pre-existing (with God in the beginning) and co-originator of all creation; the author of life and light. In verse 14 John goes on to describe Jesus as the One and Only, coming from the Father. Therefore, He was not just another major religious figure in world history but uniquely the embodiment of all grace and truth. He is the One who asked His Father to restore to Him that pre-eminent glory following the completion of His redemptive work on Earth while humbled in His humanity (John 17 v 4 – 5). And so now this glory is seen and affirmed as spiritual reality by John, and us too, through the eyes of faith. Glory is intrinsic to the character of Jesus, the One we are all learning to love.

### 2. John saw His glory physically

However, the context of John’s Prologue, and indeed His whole Gospel, shows that John and the others who followed Jesus also saw a very physical aspect to His glory, which had a great effect on them. When John says that they have seen His glory, that physicality suggests that all their physical senses were involved, and that it was not just a mystical, spiritual experience they had had. Here are seven ways in which they would have physically seen His glory.

- i) His incarnation. We read from the Gospel accounts that: a) it was a virgin birth; b) there was a tremendous amount of angelic activity; c) there were physical fulfilments of scriptural prophecy; d) those who came to see the baby in the stable, in the “house”, and at His circumcision, were drawn to do so in miraculous ways; and e) His God-ordained preservation through exile in Egypt following the satanic attempt by Herod to kill Him.
- ii) His spotless life. Although we read little of the Lord’s early years, we accept that Hebrews 4 v 15b applies to His whole life. As the Lamb of God, He had to be spotless and without blemish in accordance with God’s righteous requirements under the law given to Moses, so that He could be our effective and atoning sacrifice.
- iii) His amazing character and personality. Everywhere He went crowds of people followed Him and hung on His every word. He had tremendous influence, so that even those opposed to Him were inevitably drawn to follow Him and engage with Him. They couldn’t leave Him alone! Everyone had a view about Him, and He didn’t seem to leave anyone indifferent to His presence.
- iv) His teaching. He taught with tremendous authority, intellect and truthfulness, always seeing right through the issues being discussed and the reasons for the questions being asked. He reduced the most expert teachers of the day to absolute silence with the depth of wisdom in His comments and replies. Matthew 7 v 29 is typical of people’s reactions.
- v) His miracles. Jesus fulfilled all their messianic expectations by displaying the signs they had been told only the Messiah would show, and they were overwhelmed (e.g., Matthew 12 v 23, Luke 9 v 43a, John 11 v 40). For John, his brother James, and Peter, the height of His miraculous messianic glory was the Transfiguration.
- vi) His death. John saw the nature of His dying, the effect on the thief and the centurion, felt the earthquake, and they all soon came to understand the total fulfilment of all the scriptures in the atoning nature of His death.
- vii) His resurrection. This was overwhelmingly glorious in itself, but as they all eventually realised, it answered humanity’s ultimate need, a final victory over death, which is the greatest enemy of all.

### 3. We see the glory of His Church

Here we are talking about the true Church, the vast body of those throughout the past two thousand years who have been truly born-again by means of their saving faith in the person and work of Jesus, completed at Calvary. Often these have been ordinary unsung heroes of their faith, living quiet but effective lives wherever God had placed them. Sometimes they have been amazing examples of a total change of life and outlook and incredible achievement in His service. Truly they have demonstrated that “the just shall live by faith”, and collectively have had a vast impact for good on the world over the centuries. However, the glory of His true Church since Pentecost has been, at root, a spiritual glory, showing Whom we follow, what we believe, and the outward working of our inward faith.

### 4. We see the glory of His interventions

Throughout history as recorded in the Bible there have been major turning points in God’s dealing with humanity. With each change to a new dispensation there have been increased physical displays of God’s glory as He has intervened in the normal course of life on Earth, demonstrating His overruling sovereignty. The Holy Spirit is dramatically involved at such times, moving in power as the agency of the Trinity’s physical glory. Some of these interventions have happened at other times in the course of human history, but often long periods may elapse when there are not so many dramatic interventions, and His people live lives of faith quietly, simply enjoying the spiritual glory of the Lord they love and serve. Again, we can see seven ways in which God gloriously intervenes physically, especially at times of great change in His way of reaching out to the world.

- i) Awakened spiritual awareness. The Holy Spirit has been promised as the One who will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16 v 9). While He continues His work at all times, clearly there have been periods in history when His actions in this matter have been more pronounced; a real awakening. This happened in Old Testament times and during the Church age. In our lifetime we’ve seen something of this happening in the great evangelistic crusades, particularly under men like Billy Graham, and others.
- ii) Revival leading to many conversions. This usually follows on from the glory of awakened spiritual awareness, and revivals lead to great blessings in society as a whole. While revivals can be misused by some, who want to obtain glory for themselves, these times of real refreshing are a glorious intervention of God.
- iii) Understanding truth prophetically. This type of intervention often occurs when God’s eras of grace are about to change, and He raises up those who are carefully listening to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Such prophets do not always find a good reception in the Church, but they are important forerunners of God’s greater intervention (Amos 3 v 7, John 16 v 13 – 14). John the Baptist is a perfect example from Bible times.
- iv) National and international events. We read that Jesus came “when the time had fully come” (Galatians 4 v 4). With the establishment of the Roman Empire, the political and economic situation was just right, both for the situation in Israel, and for the easy spread of the Gospel. The apostles and early disciples took maximum advantage of those current events. Even Augustus’s census was a divine intervention, and it is amazing to see how events over history have occurred at just the right time for the outworking of God’s plans. I believe that once again we can see God’s increasing interventions in world affairs over the past one hundred years or so.
- v) The physical world. God’s direct interventions in the physical world reveal His glorious sovereignty. In Isaiah 64 v 1 – 3 the prophet longs to see such intervention, and he is not just talking spiritually. When God moves in the way Jesus describes in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, we are to look up, for these are signs of the ending of the age. Whilst we live in the day of grace, physical events in general are not a judgement by God but serve to display His glory. There is a time of physical judgement coming on the world, as described in Isaiah 24 and in Revelation chapters 6 to 18, but scripture specifically teaches that now is not yet the time for judgement and punishment (John 12 v 47 – 48, Luke 13 v 1 – 5, Hebrews 9 v 27). Scripture makes it plain that in a fallen world the sun shines and the rain falls on the righteous and unrighteous alike, and disasters will happen. As we are under a clear instruction not to judge, we must not declare God’s judgement on others who are subject to physical misfortune. We just cause division, misery and maybe unwarranted feelings of guilt. We have no business second-guessing God’s view of the hearts of other people. True, sin and disobedience bring consequences, but that is quite a different matter, as is the gift of discernment.
- vi) The Rapture of the Church. This promised glorious event will be a remarkable physical intervention, shaking to the core those left behind. While we’re still here it is our present responsibility to warn the world that this event could happen at any time.
- vii) Matters being taken out of our hands. Just now, so much is happening that we cannot do much about, both in the world and to Christians in particular. It seems God is taking matters right out of our hands and placing them into His own hands for action. All we can do is willingly hand everything over to Him, and plead in earnest prayer for His direct intervention in sovereign grace, spiritually and physically. How desperate are we to see His glory, not just by the spiritual eyes of faith, but in the physical reality of His glorious interventions?