

# QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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

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## **THE REVELATION OF GOD'S GLORY**

In Psalm 57, amidst all his problems David twice exclaims: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth" (v 5 & v 11). In other words, the answer to his feelings of distress was for a display of God's glory. In the same way when we feel times of distress, whether personally or in the body of the Church, our cry should also be: "God, show the world your glory." This is especially relevant in the Church today as we face the hardness of the multitudes towards the Gospel, the rapid growth of atheism, and the godlessness in society generally. At such times we do not need more money, technology, or organisation, but for God to reveal to the world just who He is, with glory and power.

However, God has chosen to show His glory through the Church (Ephesians 3 v 10 – 11 and v 20 – 21). It is therefore our duty to show His glory to the world in three great areas: the glory of God's redemption through Christ; the glory of God as Creator; and the glorious supremacy of the truth of God as given to us through scripture. If the Church is not revealing these then the accusation against us must be "Ichabod" – "The glory has departed" (1 Samuel 4 v 21). The Church will only be doing its true job, and enjoying the power that should be its hallmark, when it focuses on the glory of God. If, instead, we are busily making ourselves a reflection of the wisdom of man, or adopting the standards of society around us, or self-indulgently chasing after signs and wonders, or just promoting a legal or religious spirit, then our cries to God will be completely in vain. Before considering our duties further in this matter we must have a look at the theology.

The Bible outlines a definite process in the revelation of God's glory. Firstly, it is God the Father who reveals God the Son. Three times during the Lord's earthly ministry the Father spoke out loud from Heaven, twice confirming who Jesus is. When Peter made the clear declaration on behalf of all the disciples that they believed Jesus to be the long-awaited Christ, Jesus explained that this revelation had been given to them by the Father (Matthew 16 v 17). In John 6 v 44 Jesus stated: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him". The revelation we receive concerning the glory of Jesus as Saviour, Redeemer and Lord is brought to our attention by the Father, whether we realise it or not. It is God the Father who chose us before the foundation of the world as an act of glorious grace (Ephesians 1 v 4 – 6), based on His foreknowledge (Romans 8 v 29). This is wonderfully reflected in the Jewish marriage process, when the bridegroom's parents choose their son's bride for him. So, the whole work of awakening, convicting, converting, and all the associated experiences people pass through before they accept Jesus as Lord, are ultimately orchestrated by the Father, according to His perfect foreknowledge. This revealing of Jesus' glory is an essential first step for anyone, as Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 3 v 11.

Secondly, it is God the Son who reveals God the Father. When we have come to see and accept the glory of Jesus, part of His work in our lives is to show us the Father. John 1 v 18 tells us that while no one has ever seen God, it is Jesus who has made Him known. Even more emphatically, Jesus confirms in Matthew 11 v 27 that only the Father can possibly reveal the Son, and, in turn, it is only Jesus Himself who can choose to reveal the Father. (Interestingly, children usually have no difficulty in seeing something of the glory of Jesus, and here in v 25 the Lord explains why.) Jesus was very clear that "no-one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14 v 6). In Jesus' prayer to His Father in John 17 v 6 He emphasised: "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world". Hebrews 1 v 3 grandly sums it up: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being". The ultimate revelation of the Father's glory that Jesus will give us will be in Heaven when He will "present us before His [Father's] glorious presence without fault and with great joy" (Jude v 24). The consequence of all this, of course, is that if a person has never come to see the glory of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, he or she will never be in a position for Jesus to show them the glory of God the Father, and we should not be surprised at this state of affairs.

Thirdly, it is God the Holy Spirit who reveals the truth. There are many who claim to have the truth, and many who intellectually know the Bible inside out, but it is only the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth, on behalf of Jesus (John 16 v 12 – 15). He, the Spirit, gives a glorious understanding of the truth of God that lies behind the words and events of scripture, giving us teaching, discernment and wisdom. Being led by the Spirit to know the mind and heart of Christ is an exceptional glory, especially when the Spirit anoints the Word with great power. True, the reader or hearer of the Word needs a humble and teachable spirit, but these will be given to those who earnestly seek them. Paul carefully explains this in 1 Corinthians 2 v 7 – 14.

So, there are very practical duties we, the Church, must take on board in all this. Firstly, we need to make it a matter of prime importance to plead with Father God that He will reveal the glory of Jesus to others. No amount of arm-twisting on our part will convert anyone. Only a revelation of Jesus to the heart, mind and will of a sinner will produce true conversion, and that is the Father's prerogative, not ours. We may be channels of this revelation but certainly we are not seeking to enlarge the Church as a social or religious club. We should rather be on our knees before the throne of grace pleading that Father God will lead others to see the reality and sufficiency of Jesus as Saviour and Lord (Ephesians 2 v 1 – 10). This revelation of the glory of Jesus by the Father is indispensable and is the only genuine route to being born again. When that revelation comes to many, we can truly say we are experiencing revival, and what a glory that would be!

Then, as we follow Jesus, we need to seek from Him a deepening understanding of God the Father's glory. This is an essential part of our Christian growth. As we have seen, it is the joy of God the Son to show us the Father and His glory, and He does this pre-eminently by means of the written Word. Through Jesus, the Word, we understand that all this glorious creation came about simply by God's command and by no other process (Hebrews 11 v 3). Once we grasp this by faith, we are then in a position to discover that creation reveals powerfully and exquisitely the glory of the Father: "*Something lives in every hue, Christless eyes have never seen*". Romans 1 v 20 confirms that the glory of His power and nature are clearly seen in what He has made. The reference to God's eternal power shows that His creation power is beyond the confines of time; and the reference to His divine nature shows that, as deity, He is beyond any order of created space or matter. This is especially important for us to understand today because we live in a very privileged era, being able to look more deeply into the wonders of creation than ever before, and the passage from v 18 to v 25 shows God's anger at anyone who looks at His creation and denies His unique glory.

What a glorious God, and what an amazing creation! Jesus very plainly tells us through the Word that the creation was brought into existence just a few thousand years ago and completed "in all its vast array" in six days - 24-hour days at that (Exodus 20 v 11)! Each element of creation on Earth was instantly made according to its inviolate "kind" (a slightly broader category than "species") and provided with its own complete instructions for perfect existence and reproduction, known to us as DNA. The rest of the cosmos was created on that incredible fourth day in a supreme demonstration of Father's eternal power as He "stretched out" the vast realm of space (e.g., Jeremiah 10 v 12; see also 33 v 25). No wonder the psalmist declares that the heavens reveal God's glory (Psalm 19 v 1 – 6; see also 1 Corinthians 15 v 40 - 41). We now even have the general and special theories of relativity, demonstrating how time at the extremities of the universe can be measured in billions of years *at the same time* as the passing of just 24 hours on Earth, here at the centre of the universe. God's "eternal power" indeed! Naturally, rebellious man in his arrogance has determined not to "allow a divine foot in the door" and seeks to explain the creation in any way that avoids these simple truths that Jesus has revealed to us in the Word. Having the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2 v 16b), we know the Word of God is far superior to man's deluded hypotheses and therefore we will not compromise or try to reinterpret the revelation of God's glory given by that Word. If Romans 1 v 26 – 32 is to be believed, God is so angry with this unbelieving generation that the consequences set out there are evident on the same rising scale as man's "worship of created things", which is what materialistic philosophies amount to. What an awesome and urgent responsibility we must tell the world what we have learnt from our Saviour regarding the glory of the Father, revealed and explained in His Word, and therefore utterly and literally true.

Lastly, we must let the Holy Spirit's revelation of the truth of scripture grip our hearts and minds like a vice. We should display a gentle but genuine passion for the truth on a par with the passion that Jesus had for our salvation. The truth of God's Word is glorious and has resulted in tremendous benefits to mankind. The worldview presented in scripture - comprising amongst other things glory, unselfish love, redemption, forgiveness, freedom, equality, eternal destiny - is quite unlike any other worldview, especially that adopted today by many so-called wise people, based as it is on a false understanding of creation. Alas, the passion for the glory revealed through the preaching of the Word is all too absent from our pulpits and we are all much the poorer for that. 2 Corinthians 3 v 16 - 18 powerfully shows what happens to us as we grasp the revelation of God's glory in all its fullness and live in that eternal and glorious light.