

Christ

The Glory of Christ

Introduction

“Who being the brightness of *his* glory” (Heb. 1:3). The glory of our Lord is beyond all angelic and human comprehension. When there is a consideration of His Person, pre-eminence, power, position, or prerogatives, no words even in a combination of languages can convey His excellencies. Speaking of the “brightness of glory” is an expression too big for us to enter into. What is meant by this clause, when was this applicable to the Lord?

What is meant by the clause “Who being the brightness of glory?”

- a) Who is the individual spoken of? Evidently it is the “Son” (Heb. 1:2-3). However, when our Lord is designated “Son” in Hebrews 1:3, it is the same as John speaks of Him as “Son”. When man was created he is spoken of as the “Son of God”, but the context is of one finding their source in God (Lk. 3:38a). John never calls the saints the “sons” of God but rather “children of God”. The word “Son” is reserved for the Lord alone. I have two son-in-laws, I often will call either of them “son”, but when I speak of my begotten son it is a uniqueness of relationship. God calls the Lord “My Son” in parable (Matt. 21:37), in resurrection (Acts 13:33), or in glorification (Heb. 1:5). Never does He ever call any other singular human by that term. (It is used of Christ and Israel as a nation, Matt. 2:15).
- b) What is meant by “being”? The tense of the Greek word indicates an unchangeability, ever was, is and ever will be. This then carries the truth, wondrous truth, when our Lord was here among men, a human being, He was still the brightness of glory. Far beyond our comprehension is whither we consider Him as a babe in the arms of Mary or hanging on the cross with a marred and bruised body, He was still the brightness of glory.
- c) What is meant by “brightness”? This is not a brightness of natural light (Psa. 104:2), it is the moral perfections intensified. Christ is the inherent essential glory of God manifested, unwavering and undimishing. A momentary manifestation of this was seen at His transfiguration when that radiance of blazing light made his very clothes to shine, dazzling as the sun on the snow (Mk. 9:3). When the face of Moses shone a little piece of cloth covered it (Ex. 34:35), but not so with the Lord.
- d) “What is meant by “glory”? The glory of the Lord is the composite of every divine attribute manifested in uncurtailed perfection. Whither it is the glory of His power in creation with its variegated hues and complexities (Psa. 19:1); His giving life (Jn. 11:4, 40) or His uniqueness (Isa. 42:8). It is recorded in John the glory of the perfect equality of Christ with God; equality in works (Jn. 5:19); equality in giving life (Jn. 5:21, 27); equality in judgment (Jn. 5:22); and equality in honour (Jn. 5:23). In John 1:1-3 it is the glory of His eternality, His creating ability, and His unchangeable deity. Paul wrote, “Who being in the form of God” (Phil. 2:6). His very Person blazed glory at Sinai, “And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel” (Ex. 24:17).

The Brightness of His Glory

This clause teaches that the Lord displayed His attributes of holiness, truth, power, glory, compassion, thoughtfulness and all other attributes which could be displayed as a man in every role He was found in, in every situation, every moment of every day, with the purest of motives.

As the Displayer of moral perfection it meant that:

- a) Every word He said was perfect. He alone could say, “I do always those things that please Him” (Jn. 8:29).
- b) Every act He performed was perfect whither it was cursing the fig tree (Matt. 21:19) or holding back when responding to a cry for help (Matt. 15:22-26). Because all He did was perfect and no one could convince Him of sin (Jn. 8:46), He could pronounce woes on the religious leaders (Matt. 23:13-16, 23, 25, 27, 29).
- c) Every reaction was perfect. When the servant of the high priest smote him, it was not of one smiting back when He suffered. He threatened not, but with convicting words to the servant said, “Why smitest thou me?” (Jn. 18:23). -How filled with sorrow was His attitude when He said to Judas, “That thou doest, do quickly” (Jn. 13:27).

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- d) Each breathing sigh was beautiful to God. There is a profound beauty in the sighs of the Lord. “And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened” (Mk. 7:34);
- e) Each falling tear was beautiful to God. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it” (Lk. 19:41); “Jesus wept” (Jn. 11:35); in the garden of Gethsemane, “He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears” (Heb. 5:7).
- f) With Christ being in perpetuity, the Brightness of *His* Glory shone forth in His gracious condescension and incarnation. As a little boy of twelve year of age, the Almighty accepted His place in the planning of God and was subject to His “parents” (Lk. 2:51). When, as a man at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, the sovereign God who sustained creation and which obeyed His word, knew when to oppose the controlling of His mother (Jn. 2:4). When on the cross, the brightness of His glory shone out in care for his mother even though she had no request (Jn. 19:27). Thus we see in Christ the Brightness of His Glory in adulthood.
- g) The ancient writer wrote, there is “a time to weep, and a time to laugh” (Ecc. 3:4). We never read of the Lord laughing when here on earth. We do read of His joy but when God laughed it is in judgment (Psa. 2:4). Interestingly, in both cases He was going to resurrect the dead, however, with Lazarus that was his friend, it was only natural to weep whereas with the little child He possibly did not know her. Furthermore, He knew when to tell others not to weep (Lk. 7:13); when to weep for others (Lk. 23:28); and when he wept Himself (Lk. 19:41).
- h) His glory shone out in His timing. It was as the last short time of His being with them, giving them their almost last teachings that He told the disciples of His approaching death and resurrection (Matt. 20:18). He was giving them time to digest the truth of it, but not too early in their schooling to depress their spirits beyond that which was necessary. Again, it was not until there was rejection of His messages by parables for instruction that He began to speak in parables indicative of judgment (Matt. 13:13).

Due to His unsullied perfections as the Displayer of the brightness of glory, the Lord:

- a) Prayed, but never asked for forgiveness.
- b) Interceded for others, but never had others pray for Him.
- c) Called God His Father, but never His Saviour.
- d) Never presented Himself before God via another.
- e) Was conscious of sin in the world, but never in Himself.

Being the brightness of glory there was never any restriction on His availability as a channel for the glory of God. This is exhibited so beautifully in Psalm 1:3:

- a) “He shall be like a tree planted”, indicating stability
- b) “Bringeth forth his fruit in his season”, indicating fertility
- c) “His leaf also shall not wither”, indicating vitality.
- d) “Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” indicating prosperity.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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