

Glorified Together

“If so be that we suffer with Him, that we also may be glorified together”
(Romans 8:17).

Glorified with Christ! How can it be? Is He not the radiance of the glory of the Infinite God-head? Was He not in the beginning with God? Did He not create the world, yea the universe—the sun, the moon, the stars? Is He not in fact God, the very God manifested in the flesh? So how can it be that we “mere” humans should be glorified together with Him?

In the first place, we “mere” humans are not mere humans. We are **fallen** humans, but not **mere** humans. We were created by God in His image. As such we are, in one sense, an extension of Himself, (and yet totally “other”). Peter says that *“we are partakers of the divine nature”* (II Peter 1:4). We were destined from the beginning of creation to be an eternal part of the divine sovereignty over the universe. The statement, “and we shall reign with Him,” is one of the grand refrains of the apocalyptic revelation. We are forever a family; and not just a family, a **royal** family, to whom was given dominion over all the earth. Psalms 8 is the classic passage on the nature and destiny of man as originally created. *“When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him and the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet”* (Psalm 8:3-6). The mood of this psalm is not in any way denigrating to man. It is just the opposite. The word translated “angel” in verse 5, really should be translated “God”—*elohim*—the strongest form of the Deity. The verse should be translated—“Thou hast made him a little lower than God.” It must have seemed incredible to the translators that such a statement should be made. And yet human beings can never be lower than angels, since angels have no free will. For example, there are many ways in which robots have functions beyond normal human capacity but no one considers humans to be inferior to them. Angels have many remarkable functions, but without free will they can never approach the oneness with God that humans are capable of.

Prophetically, Psalm 8 refers to Jesus, the Messiah, as Hebrews 2 plainly indicates. Of course Jesus was never lower than the angels, since He was never without the divine nature, even in the womb (the seed having been implanted in Mary by God himself). But whatever Jesus was on the earth, in terms of the balance between divine and human He was the expression of what God originally intended in His creation. And what Jesus became in His glorified state is what God intended humans to become. *“Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is”* (I John 3:2).

Jesus declares this truth plainly in John 17—the so-called high priestly prayer, or intercessory prayer. It is one of the most uplifting and enlightening passages in all of scripture as to the ultimate meaning and destiny of God’s creation. The prayer is well worth considering. *“These words spake Jesus and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee:... I have glorified Thee on the earth... And now, oh Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory Which I had with Thee before the world was”* (John 17:1-5). The key word is “glorification.” The

Father glorifies the Son. The Son glorifies the Father; the Son shares His glory with creation; and in turn is glorified by them. The angels sang of this glory at Jesus' birth—"Glory to God in the highest." The cherubim sang of it in Isaiah's temple vision—"the whole earth is full of His glory." This glory is passed on to the creatures through Jesus Christ. We are thus, not only heirs together with Him and sufferers together, but glorified together.

In Jesus' prayer in John 17 the sharing of the glory is emphasized and affirmed by the phrase "that they may be one, as we are one," which Jesus repeats four times in different ways. He likens our oneness with Him and the Father to His own essential oneness with the Father—"that they all may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us" (17:21).

A most important consideration in this prayer is the fact that this condition of glorification was not limited to a special group of spiritual "worthies," but included the whole body of believers. This was clearly implied in verse 20—"neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their words." Concerning His disciples, Jesus makes a statement that is one of the most encouraging in the Bible. "I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou hast given Me. Thine they were and Thou gavest them to Me; AND THEY HAVE KEPT THY WORD" (verse 6). Remembering the many weaknesses of the disciples, including Peter's infamous denial, already predicted by Jesus, it is encouraging to note that Jesus is satisfied that they have been, nonetheless, faithful to God's word to them through Himself. Jesus considers them to have been "kept" in turn, by Himself, and now commits them to God's keeping. The Greek word translated "kept" is a word from which we get our word treasure. As God has "treasured them," so they have "treasured" His word, and respected its teaching. They had made mistakes, to be sure, but had not thereby rejected the Word. By analogy we who respect the United States Constitution and the Federal and local laws of which it is the foundation, believe ourselves to be law-abiding citizens—to keep the law—even though on occasion we may be guilty of a violation of it.

So Jesus included in His prayer and therefore in his statement regarding glorification, all His disciples (with the exception of Judas whom he specifically excluded) and those who would believe through them; and presumably, their successive followers through the ages.

But what is this glorification which we are to receive? What does it mean—the glory and glorification of God's people? The author gave a comprehensive statement of this in our 1986 calendar. We quote from it herewith.

But what do we mean by the word, "glory?" Like so many abstractions, it can mean so much, and so little. It can describe trivia—"Having a glorious time!" Or meaningful human concepts—"Old Glory," the United States flag. Whatever it may mean in the common vernacular, we need to know what God means by it in His Word. The Hebrew word is *Kabod*—"weight;" that which has substance. Gold, for instance, has substance; its weight shows its worth. The Greek word is *doxa*—"That which is apparent." The glory of the temple was manifested in the splendor of its gold. The glory of God's substance is manifested to the world, in the radiant splendor of His creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). In *kabod* God has the substance to be the reality of the universe; in *doxa* His substance is manifested in radiant splendor.

We are partakers of this glory along with Christ, whatever our fleshly faults and failures; frustrations and tribulations; our ultimate destiny is infinite oneness with Christ in the limitless reaches of God's glory. As surely as we have been justified, we shall be glorified. Paul says, "*whom he justified these He also glorifies. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Romans 8:30-31).

David Morsey

July 1986

www.harvestermission.org