

*Jesus answered them, "**The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.** Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But **if it dies, it bears much fruit.** He who loves his life will lose it. He who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life. If anyone serves me, let him follow me. Where I am, there will my servant also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. "Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this time?' But **for this cause I came to this time. Father, glorify your name!**" Then there came a voice out of the sky, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John 12:23-28)*

What does it mean to glorify God's name? And why does Jesus say this is the cause for this particular time? There is something far bigger, deeper and more pervasive going on here than most have taken into account.

The gospel centers around Jesus Christ. But as we have mentioned many times before, Jesus is not primarily the Christ for humanity but long before humans were ever existing, He was God's Christ. This is because a Christ or Messiah is one who saves. And the reason He was God's Christ long before He became our Christ, was because God's name was being slandered; God's authority was being challenged; God's reputation was being defamed throughout the entire universe. And what we learn from Revelation 12 is that the war involving sin and the great accuser Satan broke out in heaven before it took root on this planet earth. And the Son of God who at that time had assumed the form of a servant angel named Michael (meaning One who is like God), stood up to defend God's reputation that was being slandered by another angel named Lucifer.

***There was war in the sky. Michael and his angels made war on the dragon.** The dragon and his angels made war. They didn't prevail, neither was a place found for him any more in heaven. **The great dragon was thrown down,** the old serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was **thrown down to the earth,** and his angels were thrown down with him. I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "**Now is come the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down,** who accuses them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:7-10)*

This actually describes the first emergence of the gospel, the good news about God being promoted in opposition to the great accuser of everyone reflecting a true image of God. Notice how this passage identifies the Christ as the salvation of our God. The authority of God's Christ means that the One standing up to fight for God's reputation with the good news is the One who is authentically spreading the truth about God. This is the nature of true authority, and because Christ is the True Witness, His testimony is essential for restoring the kingdom and power of our God, power here meaning strength of credibility.

All of this transpired in heaven before the reformatting of this planet we call earth as described in Genesis 1 and 2. Satan and his angel loyalists could find no place welcoming their animosity towards God anywhere in heaven, so they were compelled to leave and take up residence on this planet where they planned to find other ways to expand their rebellion. But this is merely the backstory here for appreciating how the idea of glory fits into the broader narrative in context of the war begun in heaven long ago. Glory primarily refers to God's reputation, and when we see the root causes of sin that broke out in heaven that attacked God's integrity, we can see how Jesus viewed the need to glorify God's name here on earth in His own life as a human being.

There is a story in the Bible that helps to define what glory is really about in this context. Near the conclusion of an intense discussion between Moses and God about how to handle the rebellion of the Children of Israel right after God presented His 10 words to them we call the 10 commandments, they had built a golden calf and began to worship it in a frenzied sexual orgy with the help of Aaron, only to have Moses suddenly show up with a God-imprinted original stone record of the 10 Words that caught them red-handed in open rebellion against the God who had just rescued them from slavery in Egypt.

Moses reacted in fury and smashed the precious artifact gifted to him by God on the mountain. After a flurry of intense punishments by Moses, he returned back up the mountain to have a heated debate with God about the future of these ungrateful, unfaithful people just saved from slavery. It is a fascinating read well worth pondering recorded in Exodus 32:30 through 34:10. At the height of this intense interchange between Moses and God, Moses begins to be deeply affected by how different God is from what humans typically expect a God to act like. Moses gets to know God on such an intimate level that he challenges God to show him His glory.

*"For **how would people know that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Isn't it in that you go with us, so that we are separated, I and your people, from all the people who are on the surface of the earth?**"*

*Yahweh said to Moses, "I will do this thing also that you have spoken; for you have found favor in my sight, and **I know you by name.**"*

*He said, "Please **show me your glory.**" He said, "I will make **all my goodness** pass before you, and will **proclaim the name of Yahweh before you.** I will be **gracious** to whom I will be gracious, and will show **mercy** on whom I will show mercy." (Exodus 33:16-19)*

Notice how the name of God Yahweh is intertwined with the attributes of God's character. This is because God's glory is the truth about His character and disposition.

*Yahweh descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and **proclaimed the name of Yahweh.***

*Yahweh passed by before him, and proclaimed, "Yahweh! Yahweh, **a merciful and gracious God**, slow to anger, and **abundant in loving kindness and truth**, keeping loving kindness for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and disobedience and sin**; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the children's children, on the third and on the fourth generation."*

***Moses hurried and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.** (Exodus 34:5-8)*

With this backdrop in mind, we may now begin to grasp more firmly why Jesus was sent by God to live among us as a fellow human God-reflector. It was to demonstrate the authentic image of God's true heart, to reveal not only to humanity but to the entire watching universe the real truth about God that has been so undermined by the myriads of lies circulated about Him caused by the deliberate unbelief and rebellion of Lucifer turned Satan. This revelation of God's righteousness is the essence of glory.

*For I am not ashamed of **the Good News of Christ**, for **it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. For in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, "But the righteous shall live by faith."** (Romans 1:16-17)*

*Do you think this, O man who judges those who practice such things, and do the same, that you will escape **the judgment of God**? Or do you despise the **riches of his goodness, forbearance, and patience**, not knowing that the **goodness of God leads you to repentance**?* (Romans 2:3-4)

Note particularly how the Good News of Christ hinges on the revelation of God's righteousness. This is because Jesus was God's Christ long before He became our Christ. And part of saving God's reputation extended to salvaging the corrupted witness of those created to reflect God's glory but ended up reflecting Satan's version of God instead.

Paul makes this clear when he describes the reality that it is God who is on trial being judged primarily, not us. Every human being since Adam has been infected with the virus of sin and deceived into imagining God is a mixture of light and darkness, good and evil. This is what the accuser in the form of the ancient serpent seduced Eve into believing – that to be like God means to know both good and evil.

*May it never be! Yes, let God be found true, but every man a liar. As it is written, "That you might be justified in your words, and might **prevail when you come into judgment**."* (Romans 3:4)

This reality that it is God who is the One being judged more than anyone else is found again in the famous 3 angels messages in Revelation 14. It is also intricately linked with the gospel, the Good News which is primarily about God and His reputation needing to be salvaged.

*I saw an angel flying in mid heaven, having **an eternal Good News** to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said with a loud voice, "Fear the Lord, and give him glory; for **the hour of his judgment has come**. Worship him who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and the springs of waters!"* (Revelation 14:6-7)

God's glory is all about how others come to see Him, His reputation as being only good. Until that is fully accomplished, God will continue to be on trial in the thinking and hearts of any who are not fully convinced of the truth brought to light by the Christ of both God and humanity. And this glory Jesus came to coordinate with the Father's Spirit working through Their Son on earth, is the cause Jesus referred to when He called on His Father to glorify His name.

Tragically the Jews mistakenly came to believe that the Law of God was the central focus to be glorified rather than God's original design for humanity to live in intimate closeness with God so they would naturally reflect His image spontaneously. This legal view of obedience became the corruption of the gospel as ancient Israel gravitated more and more to see God as a super Pharaoh, a dictator ruler bent on enforcing his rules and demands relying on threats of punishment for non-compliance. The Law of God was elevated above the love of God, and this led to increased rebellion and sin instead of restoring the rule of righteousness. That is because we were designed to run on joy, love and intimacy as the fuel designed to bring meaning and fulfillment and pleasure to life. A relationship motivated by fear of punishment is opposite to God's design and only increases the slander of Satan.

*But now **apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed**, being testified by the law and the prophets; even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ** to all and on all those who believe. For there is no distinction,* (Romans 3:21-22)