

us for all eternity! God's love and grace glorify us far out of proportion to our desert: he glorifies us much, much more than we glorified him: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom 8:18). Glorification will exalt us above angels, making us new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), a new creation in resurrection bodies (Gal 6:15), the greatest of all of God's creatures in the universe!

#### **Positional, Experiential, and Ultimate Glorification**

Positional glorification takes place at the moment of salvation; experiential glorification takes place when we use our spiritual gifts (especially evident in the temporary gifts of miracles, and healings) and when God blesses us in this life; ultimate glorification takes place when all the promises of positional truth are fulfilled, all the gifts of God's grace are given, received, and possessed, and we are enjoying first hand all the blessings of the next life such as living in a resurrection body without a sin nature. That is to say, we can be glorified with a promise of future gifts of grace (positional glorification), glorified with supernatural spiritual gifts to use now that glorify both you and God (experiential glorification), and glorified with many gifts of God's grace and merited rewards received at the Rapture, judgment seat of Christ, and in the millennial kingdom (ultimate glorification).

Positional, experiential, and ultimate glorification was also God's plan for Jesus. In the days of his suffering he had to believe the messianic prophesies of the Old Testament that he would be glorified someday as the Messiah (positional glorification based on promise, Heb 12:2; 1 Pet 1:11). His anointing (2 Pet 1:17), teaching with authority (Matt 7:28-29), miracles (Mark 6:2; Acts 2:22), healings (Matt 4:23-24), and exorcisms (Mark 9:32-33) glorified him during his public ministry (experiential glorification based on the use of his gifts and the ministry of the Holy Spirit). And after his death, God glorified him first with resurrection and then with exaltation (ultimate glorification based on divine decree and a complete fulfillment of God's promises of future glory). "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor" (Heb 2:7, 9). Resurrection is the first gift given in ultimate glorification and the last gift, his future reign, still awaits fulfillment.

**Glorification of Old Testament and Tribulational Saints**  
Saints living before the age of grace and during the Tribula-

tion, both Jews and Gentiles, are glorified at the beginning of the kingdom (Matt 25:1-46). Their glorification consists of righteousness through faith (Heb 11:7), eternal life (Matt 19:29, 25:46), resurrection (Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2, 13; Rev 20:4), rewards (Matt 5:12; 6:1, 4, 6, 20; 10:41-42; 16:27; Luke 6:23, 35; 12:33; 14:14; John 4:36; Rev 11:18), promises of God (Heb 6:12, 17), land of Canaan (Exod 32:13; Heb 11:8-9), millennial kingdom (Matt 5:3, 5, 10; 25:31-40), service (Ezek 44:10-16; Hag 2:23), and rule with Christ (Ezek 44:3; Rev 20:4, 6).

#### **Glorification of Creation**

After glorifying the saints, God must also glorify creation to provide a suitable habitat for them. This glorification will take place during "the period of restoration of all things" known as the millennial kingdom (Acts 3:21; cf. Isa 11:6-9; 35:1-2; 65:25). In the same way all creation was cursed through the fall of man, so all creation will be glorified through the glorification of man. The hope of creation is the glorification of man: "For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:20-21).

#### **Glorification and the Angelic Conflict**

God glorifies us because we have chosen to be in his kingdom through faith and obedience to the gospel, and because we have chosen to serve him rather than ourselves. Our choices condemn Satan and his angels by doing the exact opposite; they chose to reject God and to serve themselves. For fallen men to come to God while living in darkness in a cursed world ruled by Satan is nothing less than astonishing and results in receiving abundant grace, being made higher than angels in resurrection bodies, and enjoying all the riches of God's grace and glory in the ages to come (Eph 1:18; 2:7). True glorification comes not from men but from God (John 8:54; Heb 5:5).

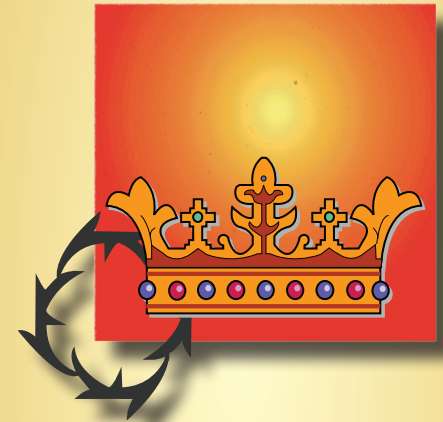


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# GLORIFICATION



of God, Jesus Christ,  
the Saints, and Creation



God's glorification program spans the ages. Glorification is accomplished in five steps: (1) the glorification of Jesus begins with his resurrection, exaltation, and session, and continues until he sits on David's throne in his kingdom, (2) the glorification of church age saints at the Rapture, the judgment seat of Christ, and the beginning of the kingdom, (3) the glorification of Israel at the beginning of the kingdom, (4) the glorification of Gentile saints who are not members of the church at the judgment of the sheep and the goats at the beginning of the kingdom, and (5) the glorification of all creation at the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

#### **The Meaning of Glorification**

The verb *doxazo* in Greek means 'to think about, have an opinion about, or to have a high opinion about something or someone.' It always implies thinking highly of someone

in the New Testament. It's used of a person who overestimates himself: "unreasonably overestimates his own strength" (Thucydides III.45.6). It's a short jump from a high, lofty, or vaulting opinion to holding or being held in honor because of one's outstanding reputation: "images of men renowned for their excellence" (Polybius, *Histories* 6.53.10). "The name of Abram is still celebrated [glorified] in the region of Damascus, and a village is shown that is called after him 'Abraham's abode'" (Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.160). Good works produce high opinions, honor, and fame among men: "that you may be glorified by an eternal deed" (*Ignatius to Polycarp* 8:1). The opposite of glorification is dishonor and shame (Hos 4:7; 1 Cor 15:42-43; 2 Cor 6:8; Phil 3:18-19). Honor creates a high opinion; shame creates just the opposite—a low opinion.

### **Glorification of God**

Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever (*Larger Catechism*)

Jesus glorified God during his earthly ministry: "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do" (John 17:4; cf. John 21:19). And we are called to glorify God in this life: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16). In return God will glorify us in the next life: "and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Rom 8:30).

### **Hope of Glorification**

The glorification of the Messiah is prophesied in the Old Testament: "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (1 Pet 1:10-11; cf. Isa 49:3; Dan 7:14). "The glories to follow" is the future glorification of Jesus Christ. We too have this hope of glorification: "fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13; cf. James 1:7). Saving grace, about forty gifts promised to saints who are "in Christ," will be delivered in full at the Rapture of the church. The blessed hope (literally, *ten makarian elpida* 'the happy hope' is the beginning of our glorification: "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus"

(Titus 2:13). It's the day when hope turns into happiness—the day of glorification. This is "the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). In a split second "we shall be changed" (1 Cor 15:51, 52) and "we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2). The rapture is the time when positional truth becomes ultimate truth—and we will be very, very happy. "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20).

### **Glorification of Jesus**

The Transfiguration was a pre-glorification to give Jesus the resolve to go to the cross (Matt 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). God gave him a foretaste of what it will be like after he dies for the sins of the world and is glorified—a few minutes in his resurrection body. On the mount Jesus meets with Moses, Elijah, and God himself. This is the first time God speaks to him in person since his baptism and anointing with the Spirit (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). Jesus was glorified after his earthly ministry: "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:5; cf. Luke 24:26; 1 Pet 1:21). For Jesus, glorification includes his resurrection, resurrection body, exaltation (Phil 2:9), session at the right hand of the Father (Eph 1:20), blessing (Rev 5:12, 14), wisdom (Rev 5:12), inheritance (Rom 8:17; Heb 1:2), riches (Rev 5:12), all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18), name above all names (Eph 1:21; Phil 2:9; Heb 1:4), honor (Rev 5:12, 14), majesty (2 Pet 1:16), radiance (Rev 5:12, 14), power (Eph 1:21; Rev 5:12), rule (Eph 1:21-22; Col 2:10), and dominion (Eph 1:21-22; Phil 2:10-11; Rev 5:14). Notice that his glorification did not take place all at once: he was glorified in steps, first on earth at his resurrection, then in heaven at his exaltation, and then in his kingdom as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

### **Glorification of Church Age Saints**

To glorify the saints is to give them great gifts of grace, rewards, honor, and status—and to make them higher than angels (Heb 2:6-9). Our glorification consists of many grace gifts (Rom 5:17). The forty gifts given at the moment of salvation are a part of our future glorification, such as being crucified, dead, buried, and raised with Christ, justification, propitiation, reconciliation, redemption, regeneration, eternal life, eternal security, adoption, sanctification, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and a resurrection body. Add to this many merited rewards such as pure gold (Rev 3:18), treasure in heaven (1 Tim 6:19), our inheritance (Col 3:24; 1 Pet 1:4), special honors such as crowns (2 Tim 4:8; Rev 2:10) and

diadems (perhaps implied in Rev 2:26-27), new names (Rev 2:17), honor (Rom 2:7), high position (James 1:7), privilege, and jobs or ministries such as ruling with Christ (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 2:26-27).

There are three phases or stages of ultimate glorification: (1) the Rapture, (2) the judgment seat of Christ (perhaps three and a half years later), and (3) the beginning of the millennial kingdom (at least another three and a half years). In other words, our glorification does not take place all at once, but over a period of at least seven years. At the Rapture (phase 1) we will be glorified with an abundance of grace that includes a resurrection body (Rom 5:17); at the judgment seat of Christ (phase 2) we will be glorified for our service with rewards and special honors; and at the beginning of the millennial kingdom (phase 3) we will be glorified with honor, privileges, jobs, and the right to rule with Christ. It's God's intent to bring "many sons to glory" (Heb 2:10). And our glorification is eternal: "obtain salvation. . . and with it eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10).

The road to glorification is salvation, suffering, faith, and good works. Salvation: "that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10). Suffering: "if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" (Rom 8:17b). Faith: "that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:7). Good works: "to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Rom 2:7) and "glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom 2:10).

Now, here's the important thing: there are degrees of glorification. We will not all be equally glorified. All believers will be glorified, but some will be glorified more than others! Some will receive more rewards, more special honors, and a greater inheritance than others. Some will be last or least and some will be great or the greatest in the kingdom (Matt 5:19; 11:11; 18:4; Luke 13:30). And some will have greater reputations than others: "many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 8:11). This future glorification of the saints is fair, more than fair, actually a great deal: we pay a price for a short time to glorify God in this life and in return he glorifies