

What is Glorification?

As the Old Testament speaks of the glory of God as “all of His goodness” (Ex 33:18-19), and the New Testament speaks of Jesus Christ as becoming a part of it, Luke records an event where two Old Testament Believers are described as “appearing in glory” (Luke 9:29-32). How does a Believer become glorified and what exactly does that mean?

And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, **appearing in glory**, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. (Luke 9:29-32)

Before one can begin to understand how a human being can be glorified, the prophet Isaiah states that Believers are created to glorify, give honor, and praise God.

Everyone who is called by My name,
And whom I have created for My glory,
Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.” (Isa 43:7)

Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul say the same thing.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 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 5:14-16)

For you have been bought with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body**. (1 Cor 6:20)

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. (1 Cor 10:31-33)

In heaven, glorifying God is continuous, reverent, and grateful.

And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,
“Great and marvelous are Your works,
O Lord God, the Almighty;
Righteous and true are Your ways,
King of the nations!
Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy;
For all the nations will come and worship before You,
For Your righteous acts have been revealed.” (Rev 15:3-4)

To make a distinction from a disingenuous praise of God, Jesus makes a contrast between those who seek the approval of God versus those who seek the approval of man; motives distinguish who is a Believer and who is not.

I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? (John 5:43-44)

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He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. (John 7:18)

How a Believer receives honor and praise from God is explained by Jesus in the latter part of His High Priestly Prayer where, after addressing His eleven disciples, He prays on behalf of His disciples that follow them:

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. **The glory which You have given Me I have given to them**, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:20-24)

Here Jesus says explicitly that the praise and honor that He received from His Father He passed along to Believers! The reason is associated with the idea of the unity of Oneness where the spirit of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, is in each Believer as Jesus Christ is in His Father. In essence, coming to faith in Jesus Christ is the act of obedience that God approves and honors; receiving God's glory only comes to those whom His Son Jesus Christ personally knows.

It was for this He called you through our gospel, **that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (2 Thes 2:14)

But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.** (2 Cor 3:18)

When a Believer receives God's glory, what exactly does that mean? Is it just praise from God or something more? Does one receive it when coming to faith or sometime later? God's glory for the Believer appears to be something eternal. As to when God's glory is received, it appears to come later, after death, and when Jesus is revealed.

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. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, 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. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Rom 8:18-23)

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us **an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.** (2 Cor 4:16-18)

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.** (Col 3:1-4)

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It is at this point that there is considerable confusion about the sequence and eschatological meaning of glorification of the Believer, because the book of Revelation is very difficult to understand. The biblical data appears to suggest that glorification is not a singular event but one that takes place over a period of eschatological time.

1. After the seventh trumpet, Jesus appears twice: a) before the release of the seven bowls of God's wrath (Rev 14:14-16), and b) after the seventh bowl with His heavenly army to battle at Armageddon (Rev 19:11-13).

a) Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped. (Rev 14:14-16)

After the seventh trumpet (Rev 11:15) and before the first bowl of God's wrath is dispensed (Rev 15:5-8), Jesus Christ is sitting on the clouds. At this time, Believers are being raptured (Matt 24:29-31). For an in-depth discussion, see the article "The Reaping" at:

www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/WorksJudgmentReaping.aspx.

b) And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. (Rev 19:11-13)

After the seventh bowl, Jesus Christ is riding on a white horse and clothed in regal attire ready to wage war at Armageddon. At this time, while Believers have been raptured, none have been resurrected (Rev 20:4).

2. The glorification of the Believer appears to have two stages: a) rapture – receiving the white robe of righteousness and celebrating the Marriage Feast, and b) resurrection – receiving a new incorruptible and eternal physical body.

a) When Jesus speaks of His Second Coming in the gospels, He is only referring to this period of rapture, when He arrives "with great power and glory" and sends forth "His angels to gather together the elect" (Matt 24:30-31). Believers, who are alive or did not die for their faith (1 Cor 15:51-54; 1 Thes 4:16-18), are being gathered to the Temple of God to put on their white robe of righteousness in order that they may attend the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:5-9). With the same motif of marriage where the "two shall be one" (Gen 2:24) and with their white robes, Believers are revealed with Jesus in glory.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will **transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Phil 3:20-21)

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also **will be revealed with Him in glory**. (Col 3:4)

b) After the battle of Armageddon, the Bible speaks of two separate resurrections concerning Believers. The first resurrection (Rev 20:4) is for those who died for their faith and would reign with Jesus Christ for one thousand years. The second resurrection (Rev 20:5, 11-13) is for all other Believers who died naturally or by means apart from their faith. In his discussion of the life of faith, the author of Hebrews would allude to these two resurrections as well (Heb 11:35). Regardless of which resurrection, the Believer is renewed with a glorified body.

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So also is the **resurrection of the dead**. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, **it is raised in glory**; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Cor 15:35-49)

The apostle Paul explicitly makes the connection of the resurrection of the dead as being raised in Jesus' glory.

This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when **He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day**, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thes 1:5-10)

When Jesus Christ is revealed at Armageddon, with His mighty angels in flaming fire dealing out retribution to those who do not know God, the apostle Paul indicates that He came to be glorified in His saints on that day.

It is in the end through a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, where He Himself knows you, that a Believer becomes a part of God's glory as an image of God.

"Glorification" is the future aspect of salvation and known as salvation from the presence of sin. It is a process that takes place over a period of time and is completed when the Believer receives his resurrected body and become a true image of God. It is the final step of sanctification and conclusion of the whole salvation process in which a Believer is made completely pure and enables complete access into the presence of God (Rev 21:27).