

What Is The Glory Of God?

Answer: The glory of God is the beauty of His spirit. It is not an aesthetic beauty, or a material beauty, but it is the beauty that emanates from His character, from all that He is. [James 1:10](#) calls on a rich man to “glory in his humiliation” indicating a glory that does not mean riches or power or great aesthetic or material beauty. This glory can crown man or fill the earth. It is seen within man and in the earth, but it is not of them; it is of God. The glory of man is the beauty of man’s spirit, which is fallible and eventually passes away, and is therefore humiliating—as the verse tells us. But the glory of God, which is manifested in all His attributes together, never passes away. It is eternal.

[Isaiah 43:7](#) says that God created us for His glory. In context with the other verses, it can be said that man “glorifies” God because through man God’s glory can be seen in things such as love, music, heroism and so forth—things belonging to God that we are carrying “in jars of clay” ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)). We are the vessels which “contain” His glory. All the things we are able to do and be find their source in Him. God interacts with nature in the same way. Nature exhibits His glory. His glory is revealed to man’s mind through the material world in many ways, and often in different ways to different people. One person may be thrilled by the sight of the mountains and another person may love the beauty of the sea. But that which is behind them both (God’s glory) speaks to both people and connects them to God. In this way, God is able to reveal Himself to all men, no matter their race, heritage or location. As it says in [Psalm 19:1-4](#) “The heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands; day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world.”

[Psalm 73:24](#) calls heaven itself “glory.” It used to be common to hear Christian’s talk of death as being “received unto glory,” which is a phrase borrowed from this Psalm. When the Christian dies, he will be taken into God’s presence, and in His presence will be naturally surrounded by God’s glory. We will be taken to the place where God’s beauty literally resides—the beauty of His Spirit will be there, because He will be there. Again, the beauty of His Spirit (or the essence of Who He Is) is His “glory.” In that place, His glory will not need to come through man or nature, rather it will be seen clearly, just as it says in [1 Corinthians 13:12](#) “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

In the human/earthly sense, glory is a beauty or vibrancy that rests upon the material of the earth ([Psalm 37:20](#), [Psalm 49:17](#)) and in that sense, it fades. But the reason it fades is only because the material things do not last. They die and wither, but the glory that is in them belongs to God, and returns to Him when death or decay takes the material. Think of the rich man mentioned earlier. The verse says “The rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.” What does this mean? The verse is admonishing the rich man to realize that his wealth and power and beauty come from God, and to be humbled by the realization that it is God who makes him what he is, and gives him all he has. And the knowledge that he will pass away like the

grass is what will bring him to the realization that God is the one from whence his glory comes. God's glory is the source, the wellspring from which all smaller glories run.

Since He is the one from whom glory comes, He will not let stand the assertion that glory comes from man or from the idols of man or from nature. In [Isaiah 42:8](#) we see an example of God's jealousy over His glory. This jealousy for His own glory is what Paul is talking about, in [Romans 1:21-25](#) when he speaks of the ways people worship the creature, rather than the Creator. In other words, they looked at the object through which God's glory was coming and instead of giving God the credit for it, they worshiped that animal or tree or man as if the beauty it possessed originated from within itself. This is the very heart of idolatry and is a very common occurrence. It is probably safe to say that everyone who has ever lived has committed this error at one time or another. We have all "exchanged" the glory of God in favor of the "glory of man."

This is the mistake many people continue to make: trusting in earthly things, earthly relationships, their own powers or talents or beauty, or the goodness they see in others. But when these things fade and fail, as they will inevitably do (being only temporary carriers of the greater glory), these people despair. What we all need to realize is that God's glory is constant, and as we journey through life we will see it manifesting here and there, in this person or that forest or in a story of love or heroism, fiction or non-fiction or our own personal lives. But it all goes back to God in the end. And the only way to God is through His Son, Jesus Christ. We will find the very source of all beauty in Him, in heaven, if we are in Christ. Nothing will be lost to us. All those things that faded in life we will find again in Him.