

Glory Of God Manifested

By HERSCHEL H. HOBBS

(This is the sermon prepared by Dr. Hobbs, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, for delivery to the Southern Baptist Convention in Chicago on Wednesday morning).

This Convention is assembled to consider reports and projects pertaining to the bringing of the kingdom of God into the hearts of men. The constant danger which confronts us is that we shall become lost in the entanglements of a jungle of statistics and programs, thus losing sight of the purpose of all our efforts—the glory of God.

This tendency is the besetting sin of every man. The scientist, whether sweeping the heavens with telescopic vision or peering with microscopic eye into the wonders of the molecule, is fraught with such danger. The statesman, dealing constantly in matters pertaining to the relationship between governments, is ever in peril of forgetting him who determines the destiny of nations.

The philosopher, delving into mysterious thought, should beware lest he become wise in his own conceit, not realizing that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men. The denominational statesman, even the pastor, daily wrestles with the besetting sin that he shall become so enraptured with the present promotional scheme, of the next sermon, that he shall deify the means and forget the end.

GREATEST BENEDICTION: For this reason the apostle Paul calls us to a consideration of this matter in the greatest of all his benedictions. Having presented in Romans the gospel as he preached it, he seemingly closes with his customary benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Then as though it were an afterthought, and what an afterthought, he adds that which we have chosen for our text. In three brief verses he runs the whole gamut of life from eternity unto eternity.

Grouped about three "according to's" he blocks out all of God's dealings with men. And the encompassing truth of it all is "To him that is able to establish you . . . to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

GOD'S GLORY: The key word in this sentence is "glory" as it pertains to God. The Oxford Universal Dictionary defines the glory of God as "the maj-

esty and splendour attendant upon a manifestation of God." And since Paul's express word is "To God . . . be glory through Jesus Christ" we are brought immediately to recognize that in Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form, we shall expect to find the ultimate expression of the "majesty and splendour" of every manifestation of God.

Furthermore, the lesson of our text is that the all-inclusive manifestation of God's glory is seen in his redemptive will and work as it is found in our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In this light, therefore, let us examine the various facets of the glory of God.

GLORY OF NAME: While there are many names used in the Old Testament for God, the name by which he chose to identify himself was Jehovah: "I am Jehovah: that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another" (Isa. 42:8 ASV). In that name, above all others, therefore, we shall expect to find the greatest manifestation of God's glory. The lexicographers tell us that this name is found 6,823 times in the Old Testament, and is, therefore, the most often used of all the several names designed to express the idea of God. So sacred was it that the Hebrews did not even pronounce it (Ex. 20:7). Nor did they write it, except with quill and ink not previously used. It is no wonder that Jesus taught us to pray, "Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9).

Though used in the biblical record beginning in Genesis 2, the name Jehovah is first revealed by God himself to Moses at the burning bush. In reply to Moses' question as to who was sending him into Egypt, God said, "I AM THAT I AM . . . thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:14). Even the casual student of Hebrew will recognize that the root form of this word is the verb "to be."

GOD REVEALED: In Hebrew the verb "to be" does not denote the idea of absolute or self-existence. Rather it expresses what is or will be historically. Actually the very form used to signify the name Jehovah has the force of a

"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" Romans 16:25-27.

future tense in the third person, and should be translated literally "HE WILL BE."

Thus it does not refer to what God is essentially, but to what he will be phenomenally. In short, it contains the idea of what God will reveal himself as being or becoming. The concept of eternal being is present in the word by virtue of its being the personal name of God who is self-existent.

Furthermore, in Exodus 3:14 the verb form is a future tense in the first person. Referring to himself God says, "I WILL BE THAT (WHICH) I WILL BE . . . thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I WILL BE hath sent me unto thee." The immediate occasion of this revelation is the coming deliverance of God's people from bondage.

Thus we see God not merely as the *Elohim* of essential being as power, but as Jehovah, who WILL BE the Deliverer and Saviour of his people. Actually this word was a Semitic idiom meaning "I will be all that is necessary as the occasion will arise." Here, therefore, he employs not an ontological name, but a redemptive one. It does not set forth God with respect to his nature so much as to his saving operation.

REDEPTIVE NAME: Hereafter, as through the prophets, God is not merely a God among other gods. Neither is he simply God, but God in Israel—God saying, I WILL BE. As such, for example, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

Progressively he reveals himself, unveiling his face more and more until we behold the knowledge of God's glory in the face of one who will fully reveal him. Gradually he pours out his contents into the life of his people, until one day he empties himself into the form of one who will say, "I and my Father are one."

Thus we see Jehovah's word of covenant with and I appear Isaac, and un (El Shaddai) HOVAH I w (Ex. 6:2f AS While Abra in a general Jehovah gives erto known, t in their rede fore, that fro would be his

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Thus we see the full meaning of Jehovah's words when he entered into covenant with Israel: "I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty (El Shaddai); but by my name JEHOVAH I was not known to them" (Ex. 6:2f ASV).

While Abraham had known the name in a general sense (Gen. 22:14), here Jehovah gives to it a content not hitherto known, that which HE WILL BE in their redemption. It is clear, therefore, that from that time on Jehovah would be his redemptive name.

NEW COVENANT: But the full glory of God in his name is not seen in a covenant of political and social redemption made through his servant for one nation. We behold it, rather, in the new covenant (Jer. 31:31ff.; Heb. 8f.) which he sealed through his Son for the spiritual redemption of the whole human race. Such redemption called not merely for the personification of God in a name, but for the incarnation of God in a person.

Therefore, when the angel of the Lord announced to Joseph the wonder of the child who should be born to Mary, he said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Now the name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Joshua or Yeshua meaning *Jehovah is salvation*. In Jesus, therefore, the name of Jehovah is fully glorified.

GOD'S MERCY: To his cross the pagan governor unknowingly nailed the full effulgence of the glory of God in his name when he gave orders to write "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matt. 27:37). "This is *Jehovah is Salvation* (author's italics) the King of the Jews." Jesus, our Lord's human name, yet in it were the power and mercy of Jehovah! The name by which Mary caressed her helpless babe, yet the name countless sinners have whispered as they experienced the power of God unto salvation!

The name Jesus speaks of the mystery of his being and of the glory of God's redeeming love and grace. Thus we behold in him "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). It includes not only what God is but what he reveals himself as becoming. It is the name of God who became man, of Immanuel who has condescended to meet our deepest need.

It is God's saving name, "For there is no other name under heaven given



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among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It is the name before which every knee shall bow, and which every tongue shall confess as Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

*Jesus, name of matchless splendour!
Name all other names above
Glorious Son of God incarnate,
King of Kings, and Lord of love!*

From this height of awesome worship let us descend into the valley that from its vantage point we may behold.

GLORY OF CREATION: Once again shall we utter "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

When we glance at the primeval majesty of the creative record in Genesis, our heads are bowed in awesome worship as we hear the resounding voice which out of the council chambers of eternity echoed the words forming the line of demarkation between eternity and time—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

As we lift reverent eyes to behold the beauty of earth and sky, our hearts exhalt as with trembling lips we exclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psalm 19:1).

Looking upon him who laid the foundations of the earth, who has commanded the morning since Eden's first dawn, who has entered into the springs of the sea, yet also binds the sweet influences of Pleiades and looses the bands of Orion, who knows the ordinances of heaven and has set their dominion throughout the universe, we can only cry, "O the depth of the riches both

of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33, 36).

REDEMPTIVE POWER: But even so, we do not behold fully the glory of God in his creation merely in birds and flowers, or in solar systems and molecules. Such a vision comes into proper focus only when we realize the full import of the words of the apostle Paul when he speaks of God's "Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature . . . all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things (the universe) consist (hold together).

" . . . And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things (the universe) unto himself . . . And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight . . ." (Col. 1:12-22).

GLORIOUS LIBERTY: In his Roman epistle the Apostle Paul piles stupendous thought upon stupendous thought. We stagger at the immensity of his concept of the Saviourhood of Jesus when he reminds us that as we ourselves groan inwardly waiting "for adoption," even the redemption of our bodies, also the whole creation groans in travail even until now "because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage of decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21 RSV).

Thus in Jesus "we . . . look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

Jehovah is salvation even in his creation! And therein we behold his resplendent glory! In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God clapped their hands with joy, it was but a prologue to the song of Moses and of the Lamb, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord Almighty."

SALVATION PREDICTED: When God commanded "Let there be light," it but pointed to him in whom was life, and whose life was the light of men. As God divided the waters from the waters to form the firmament which he

called heaven, it was to the end that men might look beyond the sky of blue to behold that house of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He separated the seas from the land heralding that day when the earth would be filled with knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.

The first sprig of grass which burst forth from the fertile soil of earth's bosom was as nothing compared to the Root of Jesse which out of dry ground grew up as a tender plant, the Lily of the valley. When the sun first rose as a strong man delighting to run a race, spreading its rose tinted fingers across the virgin creation, its glory was dim minded when compared with the virgin-born Son of righteousness who rose with healing in his wings.

The first fish which darted through the waters or the first bird which soared aloft on feathered wings but reminds us of him who walked upon the waters of blue Galilee or would oft have gathered helpless men under his wings. This first animal which shaded itself under Eden's leafy bowers only pointed to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The first Adam, destined to die, could but do so looking forward in hope to the second Adam who liveth, was dead, and, behold, is alive for evermore.

Once again let us return from the envisioned future to the prosaic present as we consider —

GLORY OF HISTORY: Still we affirm, "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

Standing on Mars Hill the apostle Paul declared his philosophy of history: "God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men . . . and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord . . ." (Acts 17:24ff.).

"Thus God who created the universe also orders the history of nations, directing them toward that far-off, divine event toward which all creation moves; and at the center of history stands him whose name is *Jehovah* is salvation.

SALVATION OFFERED: In such light we can understand the treatment given to ancient history in the Bible. Therein we learn the reason for its silence and its emphasis. From it we can interpret the meteoric rise and catastrophic fall of nations. God causes a nation to emerge at a given time and place in history. When said nation re-

fuses to fit itself into the eternal redemptive purpose of God, it passes on to give place to another.

Some time ago it was my privilege to preach on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece. For the occasion we gave an exposition of Paul's message delivered there centuries before. All around us were the remains of the pagan glory which was Greece but now is but a "piece of molded bread in the garbage can of history." It was as though God was saying, "I am *Jehovah* . . . and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images" (Isa. 42:8 ASV).

BIBLICAL TRUTH: The Bible is the written record of God's work in history. While not a textbook in history, it is historically accurate. Archaeology attests its truth even where its accounts disagree with the recorded history of ancient nations. Albert Baird Cummings sums it up when he says: "The empire of Caesar is gone; the legions of Rome are smouldering in the dust; the avalanches that Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away; the Prince of the Pharaohs is fallen; the Pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for bleaching fisherman's nets; Sidon has scarcely left a trace behind; but the Word of God still survives.

"All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it; and it proves every day how transparent is the noblest monument that man can build, how enduring is the least word that God has spoken. Tradition has dug for it many a grave, intolerance has lighted for it many a fagot; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath! Many a Demas has forsaken it, but the Word of God still endures." And in its light alone can history find its true interpretation.

TRUTH ILLUSTRATED: To illustrate this truth let us look at the three peoples whose history converge upon the birth of Jesus. Little did the proud Alexander know that when he hurled his Macedonian phalanx against the Persian hordes in war of vengeance that he was God's instrument in giving to the ancient world the most perfect language ever known by which to proclaim the gospel of grace.

Ignorant was the haughty Roman as he built roads over which to send his mighty legions conquering and to conquer, and to effect the *Pax Romana*, that he was doing God a service in preparing the way over which those

who were shod with the sandals of the gospel of peace would travel. Israel should have known, but did not, that out of her social, political, and spiritual heritage would come Him who was the desire of all nations.

But unknown to all these as they moved into a spiritual vacuum created by a disillusioned paganism and a disobedient Judaism, God was working in all things for good to those who would respond to his redemptive will, as in the fulness of time "God sent forth his Son . . ." (Gal. 4:4). Thus the crux of history is the incarnation of God when *Jehovah* revealed himself as salvation.

CENTRAL EVENT: When Jesus was born all the forces of God's universe converged upon the event. Government gave the order which set in motion the fulfilment of prophecy that he should be born in Bethlehem. The heavens lighted a path for wisdom as it brought him gifts. Humble shepherds left their flocks that they might worship him. Angelic hosts hovered low to sing his glory. God himself "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6f.).

From Bethlehem to Olivet the life of Jesus was one sudden burst of the glory of God among men. His words—as he spoke as never man spoke. His deeds—as his miracles "manifested forth his glory." His character—as "he received from God the father honour and glory," saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." His death—as God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

His resurrection—as he was "declared to be the Son of God with power." His ascension—as he received once again the "glory which (he) had with (God) before the world was." His church—as through his continuing incarnation the Holy Spirit worked through "the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," unto "the praise of (God's) glory," as unto "him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end."

But all these manifestations of God's glory are made understandable in —

REDEMPTIVE WORK: Reminding ourselves that the ultimate glory of God is not to be seen in *Jehovah* simply as the Eternal Being, but specifically in him as "I WILL BE," the Redeemer, we reiterate, "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

Like Moses it is impossible for the present that we should look upon and

comprehend the full story of God. We can only stand with the disciples on Transfiguration's Mount to behold Jesus in transfigured glory as his face shines as the sun and his raiment is as white as light. Now we see as "through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

Until that glad hour let us stand with John who was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and through his enlightened eyes behold him who is Alpha and Omega. Words fail the Seer as he wrestles in an endeavor to describe him: girded with a golden girdle, his hair as white as snow, with eyes as flames of fire and feet of burnished brass, his voice as the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:13ff.).

Our hearts leap to his words, "I am he that liveth, and was dead and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades) and of death" (Rev. 1:18). And as the symbolic scene unfolds we behold the exalted and glorified Jesus as the ultimate expression of the fulness of the glory of God.

GLORY IN NAME: Behold God's glory in his name! "Faithful" and "True" is he who rides upon the white horse of final and complete victory. With eyes as flames of fire, and on his head many crowns, he has a name which none knew but himself. Clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, his name is called the Word of God.

Treading the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, out of his mouth goes a sharp sword with which he will smite the nations. And on his vesture and on his thigh is written—**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS!** (Rev. 19:12-16).

Behold again God's glory in his redeemed creation! Casting their crowns before him the four and twenty elders worship him that lives forever, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

RECREATION: Look again! And see him who is recreating all things a new heaven and a new earth. No longer will he weep over the holy city, for a new Jerusalem comes down beautiful as a bride adorned for her husband. No more flaming sword before the gates of Eden, for the tabernacle of God is with men. No more "Lazarus, come forth," for God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death."

No more healing miracles, for there is no more pain. No temple, for "the Lord God Almighty and Lamb are the temple of it." No more sun or moon, for there is no night there, because "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." No more curse, for "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads . . . and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 21-22).

GLORY IN HISTORY: Behold in Jesus God's glory in history! We see God sitting on his throne holding in his hand a book written within and without and sealed with seven seals. We weep as we learn that no man is worthy to unseal the book. But our tears are dried as one of the elders says, "Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, that prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof (Rev. 5:5).

This book we interpret to be the roll of history from eternity unto eternity. It is held in the firm grasp of God. To open it is to reveal and interpret its contents. No man in heaven, or earth, or under the earth is able to do so. Neither angels, men, nor devils can give to us the key to history. The "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11) is realized and interpreted only in the light of the redemptive will of God.

NEW SONG: For that reason we blend our glad voices with those of the heavenly hosts as they sing a new song: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9f.).

In our crucified, living, and coming Lord Jesus, therefore, we behold "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:6), who at his blessed appearing will deliver up the kingdom "to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet . . . And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28 ASV).

PROMISE: Until that glad hour let us be his messengers as one flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Rev. 14:6).

For—

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts (living creatures) said, Amen" (Rev. 5:12-14).

And so say we all, Amen!

EXPANSION:

25th SBC State

Baptists in Michigan plan to become the 25th convention co-operating with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Fred Hubbs, superintendent of missions for the Detroit area, said "it seems certain there will be more than 50 churches when the state convention is organized" in late October or early November. None of the churches is a former member of another Baptist group.

The Michigan Baptists are promoting a program to organize 40 new missions in one day—July 14. Southern Baptist work in the state has been promoted by the Arkansas Baptist Convention.

Southern Baptists now boast their 1,000th church north of the Ohio River in the eight-state Great Lake area. It is the Woodmar church at Hammond, Ind., constituted with 63 members. It is being assisted by the Home Mission Board.

Illinois reported its 800th church which meets a goal set by the time of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is the Southside church in Mount Vernon, Ill.

And, in New York City Southern Baptists have organized their first regular preaching service. Services are being held in the YMCA chapel in downtown Manhattan.