

God Glorified in Us

2 Thessalonians 1:10—12

One thing to keep in mind as you read through 1 and 2 Thessalonians is that Paul switches between the program laid out for the Church, the Body of Christ (Mystery), with the prophetic program set out for Israel. Our program has its information contained in Paul's 13 books of Romans through Philemon, including the Rapture and our heavenly hope. Israel's program is contained in the Old Testament and the non-Pauline books of the New Testament, and includes information pertaining to the Millennial Kingdom and their earthly rulership. Most people mix these two programs, usually stealing promises given to Israel to reapply them to the Church, the Body of Christ. One of the most common reapportioned blessing is that of the Millennial Kingdom. Instead of ruling over angels in the heavens (1 Corinthians 6:3), they say we will be on the earth, ruling the world as priests.

It does get a bit confusing as Paul speaks of both Israel and the Body of Christ. Much of this confusion will be dispelled by understanding the separation between Paul's writings (Romans through Philemons) and the rest of Scripture. All of Scripture was written for our learning and understanding (Romans 15:4), but Paul's books have been written directly to us, in this dispensation of Grace.

Glory

When Scripture uses the word *glory* or *glorified*, it often is used in respect to magnificence, excellence, majesty, greatness, splendor or praise. It can relate to how something or someone looks, or their characteristic. Satan brought Jesus up to a high mountain to show Him the glory of all the kingdoms of the earth (Matthew 4:8). These inanimate kingdoms were said to have glory in the sense of being splendid. When Christ returns at the Second Coming, those watching will see Him in great power and glory (Matthew 24:30). His glory will be evident at the Rapture to those of us who are caught up to be with Him (Titus 2:13). This glory seems to be speaking of great majesty and brightness, visible to all mankind. Interestingly, the glory of the Lord was also displayed to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:9). God's glory will be the only light needed in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23).

God also receives glory from His creation (Revelation 4:11). Only one leper came back to give God the glory for his healing (Luke 17:18). Jesus received glory from the Father and He then passed this glory unto the Disciples (John 17:22). Stephen was able to peer into heaven and see the glory of God, showing God has glory apart from any of creation (Acts 7:55). In contrast, we have all fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

We will be glorified in Him

Paul has been responding to the Thessalonians' concern about the trials and tribulation they were enduring because of their newfound faith. He instructed them to let God avenge these wrongs done against them. He then proceeded to describe how God will take vengeance on his enemies during the seven-year Tribulation.

In contrast to that, Paul gives them (us) the hope of the Rapture. He states in verse 12 that we will be glorified in Him. This is accentuated in 1 Corinthians 2:7 concerning the Mystery doctrine as revealed through the Apostle Paul. Our glorification is guaranteed according to Romans 8:30. The word *glorified* is stated in the aorist tense pointing to an action that happened in the past. In God's eyes, we are so secure in our salvation that we are already glorified. This makes complete sense in light of our firm position as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17, Galatians 4:6—7). What Christ has, we will share.

This is true for anyone who has become a member in the Church, the Body of Christ, by believing in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. We will be presented to Christ holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle, in all our glory (Ephesians 5:27). We are glorified because Christ has raised us up to this high position of honor (Ephesians 2:6).

Glorified in His saints

Amazingly, not only are we glorified in Christ, but Christ is glorified in us. This is not speaking of the saints giving glory to God (1 Chronicles 16:28—29; 1 Corinthians 10:31), but that God receives glory because of the saints. This is like proud parents being given praise because of their son. In this case, the whole plan of redemption, planned out before the beginning of the world (Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:4), will bring glory to God. We, in the Body of Christ, will show off God's great plan of redemption and through that will bring glory to God (Ephesians 1:6, 11—14). These verses show the whole Godhead active in our salvation with the Father masterminding the plan of salvation (Ephesians 1:3—4), the Son making it possible for us to come to the Father through His shed blood (1 Timothy 2:5—6) and the Holy Spirit who indwells and seals the believer until the day of our redemption (Ephesians 1:13—14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22). All these things are done to the praise of the Father's glory (Ephesians 1:14).

It is very important to understand that there is nothing we need to do (beyond believing in the Person and work of Jesus Christ) for God to be glorified in us. All these things come about because God has taken care of all the details. We don't have to ask, nor do we need to do anything special. Believers are already blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Anyone who would like to become a member of the Body of Christ may do so, the Body of Christ is already decreed to be blessed and the Body of Christ will give God glory as creation marvels at God's ultimate plan of redemption.

This goes against what some teach about God being glorified in us. John Piper has coined the term *Christian Hedonism* to describe his thought that "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." Many churches have picked up this mantra and use it as their guide as if it were Scripture. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be any solid Scriptural support for this idea. It appears that he is really supporting the idea that God is pleased when we are obedient. The truth is, we cannot individually bring more or less glory to God, however, He will be glorified by the formation of the Body of Christ. It seems John Piper does not see this dispensational distinction between the individual and the group of the Body of Christ, and this points to one reason to always rightly divide Scripture.

God does not depend upon anyone or anything to bring glory to Him. By His very nature, He is glorious (2 Chronicles 5:14; Psalm 19:1) and He (the Father) is able to impart glory to others (John 8:54). It was the Father who was glorified in His Son when He was brought back to life (Romans 6:4). When Jesus Christ accepted us when we believed, it was the Father who was glorified (Romans 15:7). The Father was also glorified in the church (the Body of Christ) and in Christ for His work in redeeming the church (Ephesians 1:13—14). Paul's salvation, which came through Jesus Christ, gave God the Father the glory (Philippians 1:10). Christ is compared to the glory of the Father (2 Corinthians 4:4). These passages point to the idea that all things are ultimately designed to bring glory to the Father.

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