
The Glory of God

The following is a selection of comments on the word "glory", *δοκσος (doksos)*, as used in the Bible.

Glory is used to describe the Essence of God: ROM. 3:23; EPH. 1:17; DEUT. 5:24; PS. 21:5; MT. 16:27; LK. 2:9.

The Lord Jesus Christ is said to possess glory: MK. 10:37.

Glory is used to describe the edification structure in the believer's soul: EPH. 3:21; COL. 1:27; 1 PET. 1:8; 2 THESS. 2:14. As a believer receives doctrine, he reflects the Glory of God.

A wife is said to be the glory of her husband: 1 COR. 11:7, 15.

The Grace of God is described as his glory: EPH. 1:6.

The provision of God's grace is also called wealth, "the riches of His glory": EPH. 1:18; 3:16; PHIL. 4:19.

There is a glory in the future which is beyond human knowledge, namely, the glory of eternity: 1 TIM. 3:16; HEB. 2:10; 1 PET. 5:10; 2 PET. 1:3.

Human glamour is described as glory, though often in the negative sense: 1 PET. 1:24; PHIL. 3:19; MT. 6:29.

Glory is used to describe the wonders of the universe: 1 COR. 15:40,41.

Glory is used to describe the resurrection body of the believer: 1 COR. 15:43; 2 THESS. 2:14.

The word glory is associated with the presentation of the Church to the Lord Jesus Christ: HEB. 2:10; MT. 19:28; 24:30; 25:31.

The Shekinah Glory

from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

The word "shekinah" is not found in the Bible, but is used in rabbinic literature to signify God's presence. In reaction to Hellenism and paganism, Judaism attempted on the one hand to preserve the biblical notion of God's presence while on the other hand emphasizing the vast gulf between the deity and mankind.

The promise that God would dwell with mankind goes back to Noah's blessing in Gen. 9:27: "God enlarge Japheth, may he [God] dwell in the tents of Shem" (cf. RSV "and let him [Japheth] dwell ..."). The Aramaic renders this verse: "He will cause his Shekinah to dwell in the dwelling-place of Shem."

Many passages in the Pentateuch affirm that the Lord came to dwell among His people Israel. First He revealed His glory-cloud (Exo. 13:21f), which represented His presence and protection in the wilderness. The cloud came to rest at Mt. Sinai and formed a canopy for Moses as he communed with Yahweh and received the commandments (Exo. 24:15-18).

The purpose of the revelation about the construction of the TABERNACLE and the commencement of the priestly service (Exo. 25-31) was to ensure that Israel might be blessed by the divine presence in its midst: "And let them make a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. According to all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and all of its furniture, so you shall make it" (Exo. 25:8f).

The divine presence was a guarantee of the covenant: "And I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God" (Exo. 29:45f; cf. Lev. 26:11f). Only the concept of Shekinah can explain the details of Israel's cultic, moral, and civil laws. By these means God taught Israel how to live as a holy and clean people in His presence (cf. Nu. 5:3).

When the "tabernacle" of the Lord was completed, it was crowned with the descent of the glory-cloud. The Pentateuch stresses that all Israel saw the cloud covering the tabernacle as evidence of the presence of the Lord's glory (Ex. 40:34-38; Lev. 9:23f). Israel believed that the divine presence was particularly associated with the Most Holy Place, where Yahweh dwelt between the cherubim above the ark (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Psalm 80:1). The Shekinah signified God's presence and protection; thus when the ark was carried forward an early

war hymn exclaimed, "Arise, O Lord and let thy enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee"; and when it rested the response was, "Return, O Lord, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel" (Num. 10:35f). Later in Israel's history the location of the ark signified the place of the divine Shekinah — first at Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:4) and later in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12–19). Yahweh revealed His glorious presence again through a cloud at the dedication of the Solomonic TEMPLE (1 Kings 8:10f). Upon this occasion Solomon declared, "The Lord has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever" (1 Kings 8:12f).

Closely related to the motif of the PRESENCE OF GOD are other motifs: "the angel of the Lord" (cf. Ex. 14:19; 23:20–23; 33:1–3; Isa. 63:9; see ANGEL II.C), the "glory" of the Lord (Ex. 40:34–38; Ezk. 1:28; 10:18f; 11:22f), the "word" (Isa. 55:10f), "wisdom" (Prov. 8), and "Spirit" of the Lord (Ezk. 2:2; 11:24). These reveal God's presence and the means of His judgment and deliverance.

When Judaism came into contact with Hellenism (3rd cent B.C.), it developed a theological vocabulary. Instead of referring directly to God by His names and titles, it spoke of Him in circumlocutions. The concept of Shekinah proved useful as an in-between way of speaking about God as Spirit, wisdom, the word, etc.

In the Mishnah, Midrashim, and Talmud, the Shekinah motif shows a theological rather than an apologetic development. The Shekinah, like the rays of the sun, is at many places at the same time (T.B. *Sanhedrin* 39a) and more present at some places than others. This explains Yahweh's special presence at the burning bush, Mt. Sinai, the tabernacle, and the temple. The analogy also clarifies Israel's special status, since the Shekinah was more real to the Israelites than to the Gentiles (T.B. *Berakoth* 7a; *Shabbath* 22b; Midr *Nu. Rabbah* vii.8) even after they had gone into exile (T.B. *Megillah* 29a). Moreover, the radiance of the Shekinah is more authentic wherever anyone practices the law of God (T.B. *Menahoth* 43b), or good works (T.B. *Baba Bathra* 10a) or is in need of the divine presence (T.B. *Shabbath* 12b; *Sotah* 17a).

The Shekinah resists the proud, rebellious, sinful, and lazy (T.B. *Berakoth* 43b; *Hagigah* 16a; *Shabbath* 30b; *Sotah* 42a), but rests in large measure on the saintly, wise, leaders, affluent(!), and outstanding Jews (T.B. *Shabbath* 92a; *Sotah* 48b; *Sukkah* 28).

Even the proselytes could find a special place (T.B. *Shabbath* 31a). Related designations of the Shekinah are "the Word", "the Spirit," "the Glory," "the Light," and "the wings of the Shekinah." From the Tannaitic and Amoraic literature it is apparent that these designations of the Shekinah refer to none other than the Lord. As Urbach has observed, "a survey of all the passages referring to the Shekina leaves no doubt that the Shekina is no 'hypostasis' and has no separate existence alongside the Deity" (p. 63).

This is different in Christianity, however, where the NT presents the Christ as the Word, Glory, and Light of God, and also speaks of the Spirit of God. The Shekinah motif helps to explain the oneness and separateness within the Godhead. The NT authors employed this language to explain the mystery of the incarnation (see PERSON OF CHRIST) and the indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT (II). At Jesus' birth the shepherds saw the "glory" of the Lord (Lk. 2:9). John observed Jesus' glory and identified Him with the ("word") of God: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (Jn. 1:14). At Jesus' baptism the Holy Spirit descended and "remained on him" (v 32). The Messiah's glory was especially transparent on the mount of transfiguration (Lk. 9:29; cf. 2 Pet. 1:16–18). In the context of giving sight to a blind beggar, Jesus Himself declared, "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 9:5). Shortly before His death Jesus prayed the high priestly prayer, in which He stated that the Son shares in the glory of the Father and prayed that believers may also share in this glory (17:22).

In his epistles Paul used the concept of "dwelling" (Shekinah) to set forth the mystery of the incarnation (the dwelling of God in human flesh; cf. Col. 1:19; 2:9). The "glory" of the Shekinah rests on all those who are in Christ (e.g., Rom. 9:23; Eph. 1:18; 3:16; Col. 1:11, 27). Jesus is "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). The "glory" of the incarnate Christ has been greatly magnified in His

Resurrection (Rom. 6:4). Through the Spirit, all who are in Christ already share in the benefits of the risen Christ in anticipation of His glorious appearing (cf. Rom. 8:15–18; 2 Cor. 1:20–22; Eph. 1:13f). Paul stated the Christian hope thus: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17f).

The association of Jesus with the Shekinah is also apparent elsewhere in the NT. Paul saw the glory of the resurrected Jesus and was blinded by His brightness (Acts 9:3–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–18). He. 1:3 speaks of God’s supreme revelation in Jesus, who “reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by the word of his power.” Jas. 2:1 addresses the Christian community as those who “hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.”

The presence of the Holy Spirit is also a representation of the Shekinah. The Spirit descended and remained on Jesus (Jn. 1:33). At Pentecost the Spirit came down and rested on the 120 disciples: “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and *resting* on each of them” (Acts 2:3, emphasis supplied).

The NT is clearly set against the Jewish background. The NT authors attributed to the Spirit and to the Son the glory associated with the

Shekinah. Jesus is the *me^mra* (“Word”), filled with the Spirit of God and full of glory, and He reflects the glory of God. The Holy Spirit bestows the glory of God on all who are filled with the Spirit, and thus they are gloriously renewed in the image of God (see Kline).

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