

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper, Session 18, Communicable Attributes, Part 4, God is Glorious

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Theology Proper or God. This is session 18, Communicable Attributes, Part 5. God is Glorious.

We conclude our study of the attributes of God and specifically the communicable or shared attributes of God with a glorious theme and that is our God is glorious. Our loving, gracious, merciful, generous, and patient God is also glorious. God's glory is notoriously hard to define although it is as grand as any truth in scripture.

Every major section of scripture treats the glory of God and it impacts every major doctrine. Sometimes the glory of God designates God himself as when Peter calls God the Father, quote, the majestic glory, 2 Peter 1:17, talking about the transfiguration experience on the mount, 2 Peter 1:17. This rare phrase is apparently a Hebrew way of referring to God without stating his name, a circumlocution for God's name.

At other times, the glory of God refers to a quote, an attribute, or a summary attribute of God, a close quote. Christopher Morgan taught a theology of the glory of God in a book entitled *The Glory of God*, edited by Morgan and yours truly, page 157. Examples include David speaking of God as the king of glory, Psalm 24:8 through 10, and David speaking of God as the God of glory, Psalm 29:3. Stephen calls him the God of glory, Acts 7:2, and Paul calls him the glorious father, Ephesians 1:17.

Jesus is the Lord of glory, 1 Corinthians 2:8, and he is our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, James 2:1, the only reference to Jesus other than the salutation in the book of James. The Holy Spirit is called the spirit of glory and of God, 2 Peter 1 Peter 4:14. Quickly in case people are trying to get the verses down, David speaks of the God as the king of glory, Psalm 24:8 through 10, and he calls him the God of glory, Psalm 29:3. Stephen calls God the same thing, God of glory, Acts 7:2. Paul calls him the father of glory or the glorious father, Ephesians 1:17.

Jesus is the Lord of glory, whom the Gentile rulers crucified in their utter ignorance, 1 Corinthians 2:8, and Paul also calls him our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. I'm sorry, James calls him our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, James 2:1, and the Holy Spirit is less associated with God's glory in these ways in terms of name, but he is called at least once the spirit of glory and of God, 1 Peter 4:14. The Spirit is associated with God's glory much more than glory being incorporated into a name of the Spirit.

Glory often emphasizes God's special presence. This understanding of glory is emphatic in the events surrounding the Exodus, for example. The glory cloud, Exodus 13 and 14, 16:7, chapter 20, chapter 24.

See also Revelation 15:8. The manifestations of God's glory to Moses, Exodus 13 and 14, 16:7, chapter 20, chapter 24. I'm sorry, that was a mistake. Those were the verses for the glory cloud.

Excuse me, the manifestations to Moses, Exodus 3 and 4, Exodus 32 to 34, and God's presence in the tabernacle, Exodus 29:43, Exodus 40:34 to 38. All of these highlight God's glorious covenantal presence.

This connotation of God's glory also emerges in passages related to the Ark of the Covenant, 1 Samuel 4 and 5. In passages treating the temple, 1 Kings 8:10 through 11, 2 Chronicles 5 through 7. The eschatological temple in Ezekiel, 43:1 to 5. The person of Christ, God's glory emerges brightly in the person of Christ, John 1:1 to 18, Colossians chapters 1 and 2, Hebrews chapter 1. Also, God's glory is associated with the Holy Spirit, John 14 to 16, and even heaven itself, Revelation 21 and 22. What are we trying to show? Glory is all over the Bible, the glory of God, all over the place. Scripture joins God's glory and its display in a number of his attributes.

So, there's an interrelation of glory and other attributes. Holiness, Leviticus 11:44, Isaiah 6:1 through 8. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is filled up with his glory.

Uniqueness, Isaiah 42:8. Power, Exodus 13:21 and 22. Exodus 16:10 to 15. Romans 6:4 is a fascinating reference. Christ was raised by the, not the power of the Father, but the glory of the Father.

Fascinating. Is that so because glory is a summary attribute of God, and therefore, it could substitute for other individual attributes of God? Maybe so. God's glory is associated with beauty, majesty, and goodness.

God's glory is also used, is also tied to his works. Creation, Genesis 1 and 2, Psalm 19. Salvation, Exodus 13:21-22, Ephesians 1. Glory is tied to God's work of providence, Exodus 16:10 to 12 and Exodus 40:36 to 38.

Glory is associated with God's work of judgment, Numbers 14:10 to 23, Numbers 16:41 to 45, 2 Thessalonians 1:8 through 10. And also, God's glory is associated with his achieving victory, being the victor. Exodus 16:7 to 12, Psalm 57:5 to 11, Isaiah 2:10 to 21.

Even more astounding is that scripture links our triune God's glory with more holistic ideas that emphasize his very nature, his presence. Exodus 33:13 to 18, Exodus 40:34. God's name and glory are tied.

And God's holiness, Leviticus 11:44, Isaiah 6:1 to 8, God's face, God's Spirit, capital S, God's fullness and honor. 1 Timothy 1:17. Since God's glory is the extrinsic, that is an external display of so many attributes of a panorama of God's works and of holistic terms related to God's nature.

I'm going to draw a conclusion from that, but let me do it one more time. This is what we've said so far. The glory of God is overwhelming.

Since his glory is the external, the extrinsic, coming forth from his own internal glory, display of so many attributes of his attributes, of his works, and of terms related to his nature, glory is associated with God's qualities, works, and his nature. It is clear that God's intrinsic internal glory must be viewed holistically. We distinguish between God's internal intrinsic glory and his extrinsic revealed manifested glory.

Put differently, if the display of God's power is a display of his glory if a display of God's holiness is a display of his glory, and if his presence is a central meaning of his glory, then glory must be something broad enough to cover such wide-ranging depictions. This also makes sense of other biblical data, that which relates to the ultimate end of all things. The Bible repeatedly affirms that God's activities of creation, providence, salvation, and judgment are all for his glory.

Yet the Bible offers various attributes that will be set forth in display to be marveled at and displays of those attributes are not subsumed under a primary attribute but are depicted as ultimate. For example, in Exodus, God acts so that others will recognize his utter uniqueness and power in his dealings with Pharaoh and in his bringing the plagues against Pharaoh and the Egyptian deities. In Romans, God's saving action displays his righteousness, justice, wrath, power, mercy, and the riches of his glory. Romans 3:21 to 26. Romans 9:20 to 23.

In Ephesians, God acts for the ultimate display of at least three attributes. Grace, 1:6, 12, and 14. Kindness, 2:4 to 10. And wisdom, 3:10, and 11. In Ephesians, God acts with a view to finally broadcasting in the eschaton his attributes of grace, kindness, and wisdom. Grace, chapter 1, verses 6, 12, 14. To the praise of his glorious grace. To the praise of his glory. To the praise of his glory. Kindness, Ephesians 2:4 through 10. Wisdom is going to be manifest in the heavenly places. Ephesians 3:10, and 11. Such biblical data suggests that God's glory is broader than a single attribute.

His glory corresponds to his very being, and sometimes functions as a sort of summation of his attributes. Even more, the God of glory frames the biblical story

and worldview. The following reflects the good work, the work that improved our understanding of the glory of God.

Of Christopher Morgan, I call him my partner in crime. We have written and edited a number of books together. He is Professor of Theology and Dean of the School of Christian Ministries at California Baptist University.

And I might say a great partner. “the triune God who is glorious displays his glory largely through his creation, image bearers, providence, and redemptive acts. God's people respond by glorifying him.”

God receives glory, and through uniting his people to Christ, God shares his glory with them. And all of this redounds to God's glory. See Morgan, *Toward a Theology of the Glory of God*, in that *Glory of God* book.

That's the title of the book, edited by Morgan and me. Let's look at each aspect of this definition in the following paragraphs. One more time, the triune God, who is glorious intrinsically, displays his glory, everything that follows is extrinsic, largely through his creation, image bearers, providence, and redemptive acts, redemption.

God's people respond by glorifying him. It's another use of the idea of glory. We give glory to God.

That needs to be explained. God receives that praise, astonishingly, and shares his glory with his people. Through uniting his people to Christ, he shares his glory with them. And all of this is to his glory.

There are six aspects of this remarkable statement. Six aspects.

First, the triune God who is glorious. God's glory is intrinsic, internal, extrinsic, and external. Intrinsic glory, extrinsic glory. This is the most fundamental distinction when we study the theological category of the Glory of God, which, as we have seen, pervades both Testaments. God's intrinsic glory is his majesty, worth, beauty, and splendor. His extrinsic glory is his intrinsic glory revealed.

If we were to ask, how is this intrinsic glory revealed extrinsically? The answer would be, second, God displays his glory largely through his creation, image-bearers, providence, and redemptive acts. God reveals his glory in creation. Psalm 19:1, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands.

Psalm 19:1. God shows his glory in human beings, his image-bearers. Psalm 8:4 and 5. What is a human being that you remember him? A son of man that you look after him. You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor.

I want to go to the ESV. Psalm 8. What a marvelous psalm. What is it about? It's about humankind and their being crowned by God with glory and honor and being given dominion.

Excuse me. That is true, but that contributes toward a higher good, a greater good. The *sum bonum* of this psalm is not human honor and dominion.

It's this, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic your name is on all the earth. That's the frame of the song.

That is the frame. You set your glory above the heavens out of the mouth of babes and infants. You have established strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at the work of your fingers, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, when I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you're mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him? Twice now, the psalmist has gone macro and then micro. Macro. Lord, you've set your glory above the heavens.

Micro. You have ordained strength out of the mouth of babies and infants. Macro.

When I look at the heavens, it's remarkable. They're remarkable. In light of that, he goes micro.

What is a puny man, a mortal man, that you're mindful of and care for? I might mention in passing, son of man in the life of Christ, his favorite self-designation, always in the third person, not only confounding his hearers in the first century but liberal scholars to this day have two sources of Old Testament background. The divine Danielic son of man, Daniel 7. The humble, mortal, limited son of man of Psalm 8:4. What is man you're mindful of him, the son of man you care for him? Of course, Christ in the incarnation is the God-man.

He is Daniel's son of man and Psalm 8's son of man. He's both divine and human. You've made him a little lower than the heavenly beings.

And here it is. Crown him with glory and honor. You've given him dominion over the works of your hands and put all things under his feet.

The rest of the psalms simply list those things and it concludes as it began, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. God declares his glory extrinsically in his creation. Think of the sky and sun and moon and stars.

He has stamped his glory on humankind, making us like him in certain ways. The Lord discloses his glory in Providence. For after speaking of God's providential care for the world and its creatures, the psalmist declares, exclaims Psalm 104:31, may the glory of the Lord endure forever.

May the Lord rejoice in his works, Psalm 104:31. God makes known his glory in his redemptive acts, including the Exodus, Exodus 14:13 through 18, and Christ's resurrection, Acts 3:13 through 15. Those two are perhaps the most important examples of God's extrinsic glory.

Extrinsic glory. There we go. Exodus 14:13 through 18, the Exodus itself is recorded in chapter 12 and 14:13.

And Moses said to the people, fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.

The Lord said to Moses, why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it so that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them. And I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots and his horsemen.

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. If that is the greatest event, greatest, yes, event, divine event of the Old Testament, the resurrection of Jesus, inseparable from his death on the cross, of course, is the greatest divine event in the New Testament. And Acts 3:13 through 15 records.

Peter is preaching in Solomon's portico. After healing, God healed a man who couldn't walk. The God of Abraham, Acts 3:13. The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him. But you denied the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead.

To this we are witnesses. God got glory to himself in the resurrection of his son. So, six statements.

Number one, God is intrinsically glorious. It's actually hard to show that biblically because almost all the passages are extrinsic. But surely there is something in God, and there's glory in God, intrinsic glory.

That is shown outwardly, extrinsic glory. Still, it's hard to show it. Second, God displays his glory through creation, human beings, God's providence and redemption.

Third, God's people respond by glorifying him, as scripture often reminds us. Psalm 115: 1. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory. Psalm 15:1. Revelation 19:1. After this, I heard, John writes, what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven crying out, Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just.

For he has judged a great prostitute, who corrupted the earth with her immortality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants. Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God. Third, we need to talk about this.

How can human creatures, as puny as they are, as sinful as they are, even believers are still sinners, saved by grace. Granted, they're genuinely new, but as Anthony Hoekema tells us in the book *Saved by Grace*, we're not totally new yet. How can we give glory to God? The answer is, this is in a very small sense compared to his intrinsic glory and even his extrinsic manifestation of his glory.

Nevertheless, we do give glory to him, not increasing his intrinsic glory, it's absurd, but in recognizing his inherent and revealed glory. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, Psalm 115:1.

Fourth, God receives glory as we see in both testaments. In Psalm 29, the thunderstorm Psalm verses one and two, the psalmist calls upon the angels. Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory, do his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

In that same Psalm, as the thunderstorm comes in from the Mediterranean Sea to the north of Israel, sweeps over Israel, and goes out into the desert, the people in the tabernacle or temple use the word temple they cry out glory. Not only do angels give God glory, technically not only are they summoned to give God glory, it doesn't actually say they did it, but we can I think, assume that, the good angels, but plainly God's people, cry out glory at this small, insignificant, from God's side, revelation of his power and his glory in the thunderstorm. Psalm 29, one and two, and verse nine.

Psalm 57:5 and 11, and then Revelation 4:8 through 11, Revelation 5:12 through 14, God delights in the sincere worship of his people. My, oh my, he doesn't need us, he doesn't need our worship, our giving him glory is so insignificant. From all eternity past, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit basked in their own glory.

Psalm 51 and verse 19. Then you, Lord, will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings, and bulls will be offered on your altar. God doesn't need bulls, lambs, and goats in sacrifice; they all belong to him. But he

ordained a sacrificial system, and he is pleased with the sweet-smelling aroma of the sacrifice and the incense, and he delights in the worship of his people.

That is, he receives their paltry attempts at glorifying him. Ah, glory be to God. Fifth, and through uniting his people to Christ, God shares his glory with them.

2 Thessalonians 2:14, Paul says, God called you to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is yet future. Oh, astonishingly, 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, now we are progressing from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit.

Boy, if that isn't a hard one for me to understand. Whose Christian life does that describe? God says it, I believe it, whether I can fully understand it or not. In any case, God saved us; he effectively summoned us through the gospel so that we might finally obtain the glory of Christ.

Colossians 3 is quite remarkable in this regard. What we're showing is the fourth statement. Not only is God intrinsically glory, not only does he reveal his intrinsic glory extrinsically, we're actually showing the fifth statement.

Not only do God's people give him glory, they glorify him in worship. Not only does he receive that glory, but amazingly, in grace, he shares his glory with his people, glorifying them. Colossians 3 is an amazing place.

You say you keep saying that about the Bible. I can't help it. It's an amazing book.

Colossians 3:1, if then you've been raised with Christ, union with Christ in his death, 2:20. Union with Christ in his resurrection, 3:1. Seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. Does he mean by that we're to not care about what goes on in the planet? That we're not to fulfill our responsibilities in the family? Absolutely not.

He doesn't mean that, because later in the same chapter, verses 18 through 4:1, 3:18 to 4:1, he talks about, he gives a household code and talks about our responsibilities. The meaning is we're not to focus on our problems or our weaknesses, but in the exalted Christ, who will empower us to live for God in the midst of our family life and other struggles. For you have died, Colossians 3:3. He doesn't say it, but the meaning plainly in context is with Christ.

They're not dead people to whom he's writing, physically. And your life is hidden with Christ in God. And here comes the zinger, Colossians 3:4. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

One of the ways God teaches union with Christ is to say believers, by God's grace, share in Jesus' narrative, in his story. Specifically, we suffer with him, we die with him, we ascend with him, implied. We sat down at the right hand of God with him, or we sat down with God with him.

Ephesians chapter 2:6. God seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I don't think it ever exactly says at the right hand of God, but we're with him in the heavenly places, so to speak. Not only that, not only do we share in Jesus' sufferings, death.

Oh, we were raised with him. Did I leave that out? We ascended with him, implied. We sat down in the heavenly places with him.

But in two places, Romans 8, which says we will have a revelation, a second coming word. And here, so plainly, scripture teaches there is a sense that by virtue of union with Christ, believers will have a second coming, so to speak. When Christ, who is your life, appears, that is a second coming word, his appearing, then you also will appear with him in glory.

How in the world do we have a second coming? By virtue of union with Christ. A real second coming? No. Well, yes.

Spiritually real, but we're not coming back with him physically. The meaning is, having joined us to his son now, and having put us to death to sin, so it has no right to dominate us by virtue of union with Christ at his death, and also having united us to Christ in his resurrection, that we live in newness of life, both of those are Romans 6 early on. We are joined to Christ, but now we only give glimpses of what that means, but when he comes again, then our full union with Christ will be so manifested that it could be said we will appear with him in glory.

Last, sixth. Scripture ascribes intrinsic glory to Christ. He manifests it extrinsically in creation, redemption, in his image bearers, in conforming them to the image of Christ, in his providence, in the exodus, and in his raising his son from the dead.

His people give him glory and praise. He receives that glory. He shares that glory with his people.

I should have cited 2 Corinthians 3:18, a verse I really don't understand. We all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. Now is the meaning, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

I believe it. In John 17, Jesus says to the Father, I reveal to them his struggling, wayward, halting disciples. I reveal to them your glory.

So be it. There's an already sense of the glory of God. Surely, it is largely not yet.

But Paul says, God is transforming believers from glory to glory now by the Spirit. Saying by the Spirit helps me, but it is still overwhelming. But again, my canon is not my imagination or my mind.

My canon is the word of God. Sixth, all of this, all these senses of glory are to God's ultimate glory. God's intrinsic glory is the communication of God's intrinsic fullness and sufficiency.

In Romans 11:36, Paul concludes, for from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. See Colossians 1:16 of Christ and Hebrews 2:10.

God is the creator. From him are all things. He's a sustainer.

Through him are all things. He's the goal. To him are all things.

God is the creator, the sustainer, and the goal or end of everything. The self-sufficient and independent God creates out of fullness, guides out of fullness, and receives back according to his communicated fullness. Jonathan Edwards captures it well, quoting his, The End for which God created the world.

In a John Piper book, edited book, *God's Passion for His Glory*. Edwards captures it well, quote, The whole is of God and in God and to God and he is the beginning, middle, and end. That ends our systematization.

With scriptural exposition of the communicable attributes of God. One more time, God is personal, sovereign, wise, truthful, faithful, holy, just, loving, gracious, merciful, generous, long-suffering, and glorious.

In our next lecture, we will survey God's works.

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