

SABBATH THOUGHT 2025-08-02—GLORY TO GOD

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The Bible demands we “give glory to God” in many, many scriptures. Maybe it is just me, but I have often wondered just what it means to give Him *glory*. I understand *honoring* God, but what is GLORY and how does one give it to Him? Biblically, glory is something that can be given, received, and possessed. Here are but a few examples:

God is glory:

PSALMS 29:3 The voice of the LORD *is* over the waters; **the God of glory** thunders; the LORD *is* over many waters.

God possesses glory:

ISAIAH 42:8 I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name; and **My glory I will not give to another**, Nor My praise to carved images.

God glorifies some people:

DANIEL 2:37 “You, O king [*Nebuchadnezzar*], *are* a king of kings. For **the God of heaven has given you** a kingdom, power, strength, and **glory**;

People can give glory to God:

1 CHRONICLES 16:28-29 Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, **give to the LORD glory** and strength. 29 **Give to the LORD the glory due His name**; bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!¹

PSALMS 29:2 **Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name**; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

People can possess glory:

PSALM 108:1 O GOD, my heart is steadfast; **I [David] will sing and give praise, even with my glory**.

Even things can possess a glory:

HAGGAI 2:9 ‘**The glory of this latter temple** shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

The Hebrew word *kabowd*, which is almost always translated *glory* (sometimes honor) means WEIGHT. Even the root word *kabad* means to be heavy or make heavy so it, too, involves weight. It seems a rather odd word to use for *glory*. The Hebrew is also quite different from the Greek words, which simply mean glory. But neither the Hebrew or Greek *explains* glory. Perhaps, if glory is like a weight, then

¹ Duplicated in Ps. 96:7-8.

it is something that is lifted up, which would beautifully describe giving glory (whatever that is) to God. After all, God is above and we are below. In the opposite sense, if God glorifies someone, He 'lowers' it to the person. But that still does not tell us what glory IS.

I would guess that most understand what it means to honor someone, but honor is translated from different Hebrew and Greek words than glory in the Bible. What tipped the scales (pun intended) in understanding glory was this distinction: "Glory is very great honor, praise, or distinction bestowed by COMMON CONSENT." *Honor* is defined as high RESPECT and great esteem and *glory* is high RENOWN and great esteem. Notice the difference? Honor is esteem but it is a *personal* expression. Glory is also esteem but is RENOWNED esteem, a widespread and public attribution.

DEFINITION: Biblically, honor is a private or personal recognition and attribution of esteem for someone whereas GLORY is esteem that is publicly accepted and acknowledged rather than simply a privately or personally held expression.

One example of glory as a public honor involves King Herod:

ACTS 12:22-23 [*Speaking of Herod*] the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" 23 Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him [*Herod*], because **he did not give glory to God**. And he was eaten by worms and died.

Herod gave a powerful speech dressed in radiant royal apparel and the people were moved to publicly proclaim him to be a god. Publicly proclaimed honor is glory. Instead of giving the glory to God Most High, he held onto to the glory of being identified as a god and was killed by an angel. If he had publicly redirected that glory to God, it would have gone well for him and he would have kept his personal honor of being a servant of God as king.

Glory is a public outpouring of honor to someone and that is why the Bible says to give glory to God, not honor. (When honor is used it is usually translated from the Hebrew word for glory.) Here is one of the few that mention God's honor:

PSALM 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great:
You are clothed with honor and majesty,

Notice this describes God as being *clothed* with HONOR, not being *given* honor. Technically, God possesses honor but He demands honor from others in the form of glory—to be publicly RENOWNED because He alone is God. Even prayers are described in the Bible as giving God glory rather than honoring Him. But if glory is publicly proclaiming honor to someone, how does the definition of glory (public honoring) apply to private prayer? Would not private prayers be technically *honoring* Him instead? The answer is that none of our prayers, even those done in a private setting, are private matters in *heaven*:

MATTHEW 6:6 "But you, **when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place**; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

It says God is IN the secret place, not that God HEARS in secret. The throne of God is concealed (one meaning for *secret*) because it is not visible to men, but our

prayers come before God and Jesus Christ and are collected by the four Living Creatures and 24 Elders who sit upon their thrones:

REVELATION 5:8 Now when He [*the Lamb*] had taken the scroll, **the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.**

The prayers of the saints are then gathered by an angel who offers them upon the Golden Altar:

REVELATION 8:3-4 Then another **angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.** 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

Even though prayers might be private on earth, they are not so in heaven. Prayers are special to God that they have a dedicated public ceremony in heaven where they are offered upon the Golden Altar before His throne. When we honor God in prayer, we are actually GLORIFYING Him before all the angels! And that is as it should be! ALL *honor* belongs to God. It should not be withheld from the lips of heavenly or earthly beings! Glory to God is RENOWNED honor to Him!

As for people receiving glory, that should not be expected in this life. It is mainly reserved for a time yet to come. Even Paul objected to any personal glory:

GALATIANS 6:14 But **God forbid that I [Paul] should boast [or glory]** except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Last week I wrote about being "Disciples of the Gospel" (Sabbath Thought 2025-07-26). In short, we should NOT withhold from spreading the Gospel to others as we have opportunity. Proclaiming the message of Life or communing about it with others is one of the greatest acts we can do to glorify our Father in heaven:

MALACHI 3:16 Then **those who feared the LORD spoke to one another,** and the LORD listened and heard *them*; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and **who meditate on His name.**

This does not say it is only 'converted' people speaking to one another but those who "feared the LORD." And guess what? GOD was listening in heaven. What were they discussing? The greatness of God! People cannot talk about the majesty of God *without* glorifying Him! But that is just one aspect of LIVING our lives to the glory of God:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 Therefore, ... whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**

Do EVERYTHING to His glory! Even if the glory we give to God is despised by some, it is always a blessing to us:

1 PETER 4:14 **If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.** On their part He is blasphemed, but **on your part He is glorified.**

On the other hand, NOT giving glory to God comes with a terrible price:

MALACHI 2:2 **If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name,**” Says the LORD of hosts, **“I will send a curse upon you,** and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart.

God was speaking to the Temple priests but this is no less a warning to us. Flesh and blood are not worthy of glory from God (or, for that matter, anyone) YET, but the saints are called unto a glory still to come. It is quite astounding to consider:

1 THESSALONIANS 2:12 that you would walk worthy of **God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.**

1 CORINTHIANS 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages **for our glory,**

In that day, Jesus Christ HIMSELF will glorify the saints:

JOHN 17:20-22 “I [*Jesus Christ*] do not pray for these alone, but also **for those who will believe in Me through their word;** 21 “that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 “And **the glory which You gave Me I have given them,** that they may be one just as We are one:

There is coming a time when the saints will receive glory from GOD! Why?

REVELATION 12:11 “... **they [the saints] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony, and **they did not love their lives to the death.**

As spirit children, we will finally behold the grandeur of God’s glory as we stand before Him in our own glories:

1 JOHN 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that **when He [God] is revealed, we shall be like Him [including having our own glory],** for we shall see Him as He is.

Until the days of our flesh are over, tear down any fences of fear or shame of the Gospel or glorifying God. To any who will listen, pour out the thoughts of your minds, the words and songs of your lips, and the goodness of your works as praise, worship, and thanksgiving to God! To GOD be the GLORY—in all the EARTH, as it is in HEAVEN!

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>
sabbathreflections@gmail.com