## God’s Glory

### А. Biblical Data: Old Testament

**1. Terminology**

The Hebrew word for “glory” is כָּבוֹד (*kavod*). Its basic meaning is “heavy.” In that light, one may understand Yahweh’s glory as “weightiness,” that is, His divine qualities and abilities.[[1]](#footnote-1) The word also carries connotations of “riches,” “honor,” “dignity,” and “strength.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Thus, this term speaks of the “intrinsic worth of God’s being.”[[3]](#footnote-3) It relates to the display of His “splendor, wealth, and pomp.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

R. K. Harrison describes the term glory as “a comprehensive term applicable to both men and God, reflecting such qualities as esteem, reputation, essential worth, prestige, fame, and honor.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Some terms serving as synonyms of כָּבוֹד (*kavod*) include אַדֶּרֶת (*addereth*), “glory, covering,” צְבִי (*tsevi*), “glory, beauty,” תִּפְאָרָה (*tifarah*), “glory, beauty,” חוֹד (*hod*), “glory, authority,” and הְַדָרָה (*hadarah*), “glory, adornment.” The corresponding Aramaic word is יְקָר (*yekar*).[[6]](#footnote-6)

In order to form a clear definition of the concept, we will observe the use of כָּבוֹד (*kavod*) and its synonyms in instances not referring to Yahweh.[[7]](#footnote-7) The word can connote wealth, as in the case with Abraham, who was “was very rich (כָּבוֹד) in livestock, in silver and in gold” (Gen 13:2). Concerning Jacob, we read, “Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth (הַכָּבֹד)” (Gen 31:1). People “glory” in their riches (Ps 49:16).

This word also reflects status (see Zech 12:7). Joseph said, “Now you must tell my father of all my splendor (כָּבוֹד) in Egypt (Gen 45:13). Isaiah wrote, “The glory (כְּבוֹד) of Moab will be degraded along with all {his} great population, and {his} remnant will be very small {and} impotent” (Isa 16:14). David enjoyed a glorious status (Ps 21:5), as did Joshua (Num 27:20 - חוֹד), Saul (2 Sam 1:19 - צְבִי), and Joseph (Gen 45:13). The term “glory” even characterized the graves of the kings of the earth (Isa 14:18).

Glory is displayed in a person’s physical strength: “The glory (תִּפְאָרָה) of young men is their strength” (Prov 20:29). In particular, it can refer to one skilled in war (Isa 8:7), or to a long and healthy life (Prov 16:31; Job 29:20). Human glory includes intellectual prowess (Prov 25:2).[[8]](#footnote-8) Success is also “glory”: “In a multitude of people is a king's glory (הְַדָרָה)” (Prov 14:28).

The concept of “glory” is associated with one’s reputation in the world. For example, Eliakim “will become a throne of glory to his father's house” (Isa 22:23). Samuel enjoyed a good reputation (1 Sam 9:6), as did David (1 Sam 22:14), and also Zion (Ps 86:3). In a moral sense, it is one’s glory “to overlook a transgression” (Prov 19:11 - תִּפְאָרָה) and also to “keep away from strife” (Prov 20:3). God has crowned humans “with glory and majesty” (Ps 8:5) by creating them in His image. People’s souls are their “glory” (Gen 49:6; Ps 15:9).

The term כָּבוֹד (*кавод*) and its synonyms can apply to the power and beauty of nature (Isa 10:18), for example the “glory of Lebanon” (Isa 35:2; 60:13). It is associated with other objects of beauty, such as the priestly garb (Ex 28:40) and Solomon’s temple (Hag 2:3; 1 Chr 22:5 - תִּפְאָרָה).

**2. Pentateuch**

We begin our study of Yahweh’s glory by examining references from the earliest biblical books. In these writings, the Lord’s glory is usually manifest in a visual form, as a radiance or brilliance. His glory was seen in a cloud (Ex 16:10), on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:10, 15-17; Deut 5:24),[[9]](#footnote-9) and in the tabernacle (Ex 40:34-35). It also visibly appeared to Moses (Ex 33:22).[[10]](#footnote-10) Yahweh consecrated the tabernacle by His glory: “I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory” (Ex 29:43).

Such a visible appearance of Yahweh’s glory can have a physical effect on people. After Moses experienced God’s glory, he “made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship” (Ex 34:8, сf. Ezek 2:1) and “the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him” (Ex 34:29). The Lord warned him that no one can behold His glory in its fullness and survive (Ex 33:18-20).

Yahweh’s glory appeared in connection with important dates in the religious history of His people. For example, He manifested His glorious presence to confirm the sacrificial system, and fire came out from before Him to consume the sacrifice (Lev 9:23-24). His glory also appeared in giving the Law on Sinai (Ex 19-20) and when Moses built the tabernacle (Ex 40). Moreover, God revealed His glory to the entire congregation of Israel when they complained about the conditions in the wilderness (Ex 16:10) and when they rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron (Num 14:10; 16:19, 42; 20:6). So then, a special manifestation of glory served as a visible confirmation of God’s order for His people.

The idea of “glory” also applies to the Lord’s deeds, i.e., the miracles He performs. Numbers 14:22 comments on this: “Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice…”.

Although the word “glory” does not appear in contexts dealing with praise and thanksgiving to God, nonetheless we can confidently say that people were thereby giving Him “glory.” We will cite just a few examples: Abraham “planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of Yahweh, the Everlasting God” (Gen 21:33). Abraham’s servant, who was commissioned to find a bride for Isaac, worshipped Yahweh for granting him success (Gen 24:26-27). The children of Israel triumphantly celebrated before the Lord after the fall of their Egyptian oppressors (Ex 15). God was glorified among the nations by Pharaoh’s overthrow (Ex 9:14-16). Moses twice appealed to Yahweh’s reputation among the nations to motivate Him not to destroy Israel. As a result, God forgave them for His glory’s sake (Num 14:11-20; Ex 32:11-14).

Even at the commencement of biblical history, Yahweh’s glory had an eschatological application. When God was angered by His people’s disobedience, He swore an oath, that “indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of Yahweh” (Num 14:21). Here, the term “glory” refers not so much to the visible appearance of the Lord, as to the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

**3. Historical Books**

In the historical Old Testament books, we witness the following description of Yahweh’s glory. As He did in the days of Moses, God occasionally revealed Himself is a visible form by manifesting His glory. So it was when the temple was completed (1 Kin 8:10-11; 2 Chr 5:13-14), and after Solomon’s prayer of dedication for the temple (2 Chr 7:1-3).

In addition, in the period of the historical books, Yahweh was again ready to act on behalf of His glory, that is, to protect His reputation. On this basis, David anticipated victory over Goliath (1 Sam 17:45-46), and God promised Hezekiah deliverance from the advancing Assyrians (2 Kin 20:6).

As in other biblical books, in the historical books people glorify God for His greatness and mighty works. For example, after defeating Ai, Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal in honor of Yahweh (Josh 8:30-31). Deborah and Barak, together will all Israel, rejoiced in the Lord after overthrowing the armies of Canaan (Judg 5). Hannah sang to the Lord a song of thanksgiving for the miracle birth of Samuel (1 Sam 2). The exiles who returned from captivity glorified Yahweh for restoring the temple (Ezra 3:10-13; 6:16-18).

David gave thanks to the Lord for promising Him an eternal kingdom (2 Sam 7:18-24), the fulfillment of which would bring Him glory (v. 16). Toward the end of his life, the “sweet psalmist of Israel” ascribed glory to Yahweh with the words, “Yours, O Yahweh, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth” (1 Chr 29:11).[[11]](#footnote-11)

R. K. Harrison points out a special feature of 1 Sam 4:19-22, when the Philistines had captured the ark of the covenant. In response, the wife of Phinehas, the son of Eli the priest, named her newborn son Ichabod, meaning, "The glory has departed from Israel.” The ark of the covenant, which was the symbol of God’s presence, was so closely tied to the Lord Himself that its loss meant to them the loss of Yahweh.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**4. Poetical Books**

Among the Old Testament poetical books, the Psalms give the greatest attention to the theme of Yahweh’s glory. The psalmists urge all people everywhere to glorify Yahweh, “who is worthy to be praised” (Ps 18:3): “Sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious” (Ps 66:2).[[13]](#footnote-13) His praise is eternal: “Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps 41:13; сf. 104:31). All creation joins this song of praise: “Let heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and everything that moves in them” (Ps 69:34), the angels as well: “Bless Yahweh, you His angels” (Ps 103:20). The Gentiles must also glorify Him: “Praise Yahweh, all nations; laud Him, all peoples!” (Ps 117:1). Believers in Him do so with a whole heart: “Bless Yahweh, O my soul, and all that is within me, {bless} His holy name” (Ps 103:1). In summary, “Let everything that has breath praise the Yahweh” (Ps 150:6).

Various reasons are given for praising God. He is good (Ps 107:1) and showers us with blessings (Ps 21:1-6). He delivers from death (Ps 30:3) and from all foes (Ps 54:5-7). He is righteous (Ps 7:17) and judges sinners (Ps 58:11). In Psalm 3, Yahweh is the “glory” of the psalmist, being the source of his well-being (Ps 3:3). The word “glory” may refer to the state of well-being itself (see Ps 84:11; 85:9).

The psalmists testify that the Lord defends His reputation and acts on behalf of His glory and His name. The psalmists often appeal to God for aid on this basis:

- How long, O God, will the adversary revile, {and} the enemy spurn Your name forever? (Ps 74:10).

- Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake (Ps 79:9).

- For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me (Ps 31:3).

- Return, O Yahweh, rescue my soul; save me because of Your lovingkindness. For there is no mention of You in death; in Sheol who will give You thanks? (Ps 6:4-5).

- Remember, O Lord, the reproach of Your servants; how I bear in my bosom {the reproach of} all the many peoples, with which Your enemies have reproached, O Yahweh, with which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed (Ps 89:50-51).

Furthermore, Yahweh is the “King of glory” (Ps 24:10), who is “clothed with splendor and majesty” (Ps 104:1), and whose glory is “great” (Ps 138:5). God’s glory is revealed in all creation: “The heavens are telling of the glory of God” (Ps 19:1), and it even extends “above the heavens” (Ps 8:1; 113:4). His glory is evident in His dominion over the earth (Ps 57:5; 108:5). In the following poetic stanzas, the psalmist mentions Yahweh’s glory and then describes its manifestation in the world (Ps 29:1-9):

Ascribe to Yahweh, O sons of the mighty, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength. Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due to His name; worship Yahweh in holy array.

- The voice of Yahweh is upon the waters.

- The God of glory thunders, Yahweh is over many waters.

- The voice of Yahweh is powerful, the voice of Yahweh is majestic.

- The voice of Yahweh breaks the cedars; yes, Yahweh breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

- He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.

- The voice of Yahweh hews out flames of fire.

- The voice of Yahweh shakes the wilderness; Yahweh shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

- The voice of Yahweh makes the deer to calve and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everything says, "Glory!"

- Yahweh sat {as King} at the flood; yes, Yahweh sits as King forever.

- Yahweh will give strength to His people; Yahweh will bless His people with peace.

So then, “All the peoples have seen His glory” (Ps 97:6), and, “The nations will fear the name of Yahweh and all the kings of the earth Your glory” (Ps 102:15). Therefore, all people must acknowledge: “Not to us, O Yahweh, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth” (Ps 115:1).

Although Yahweh’s glory extends to all creation, the psalmist speaks of Jerusalem as a place of its special manifestation: “O Yahweh, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells” (Ps 26:8). This is the place where one may “behold the beauty of Yahweh” (Ps 27:4): “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth” (Ps 50:2).

Finally, we observe in the poetical books a theme that first appeared in the book of Numbers: Yahweh’s glory in the sense of His glorious kingdom, which will encompass the entire earth. The psalmist prays, “O God; {let} Your glory {be} above all the earth” (Ps 57:5, 11; 108:5). We anticipate the fulfillment of the prayer, “May the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and amen” (Ps 72:19). Yahweh’s kingdom, especially in its eschatological form, is a glorious kingdom:

All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Yahweh, and Your godly ones shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts and the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom (Ps 145:10-12).

To enter into God’s glory is not only an eschatological expectation of God’s people in general, but also the personal dream of every individual believer. In Psalm 73:24, we read, “With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.”

**5. Prophets**

Along with all other biblical authors, the Old Testament prophets join in urging all people everywhere to glorify the Lord.[[14]](#footnote-14) Isaiah, for example, exclaims, “Praise Yahweh in song, for He has done excellent things; let this be known throughout the earth” (Isa 12:5). Furthermore:

Sing to Yahweh a new song, {sing} His praise from the end of the earth! You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it. You islands, and those who dwell on them. Let the wilderness and its cities lift up {their voices,} the settlements where Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing aloud, let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains. Let them give glory to Yahweh and declare His praise in the coastlands (Isa 42:10-12).

Angels also loudly proclaim, “Blessed be the glory of Yahweh in His place” (Ezek 3:12). His people will join in the chorus: “The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise,” (Isa 43:21) because “great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel” (Isa 12:6).

The only proper response to this glorious and almighty Being is to worship and recognize His greatness. This will take place universally in His kingdom: “To Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear {allegiance}” (Isa 45:23), and, “It shall be from new moon to new moon and from sabbath to sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me” (Isa 66:23).

Consequently, God soundly rebukes those who refuse to give Him proper glory, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar. While he was gloating over his power and greatness, a voice came from heaven: “You will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place {will be} with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes” (Dan 4:32). After this time, Nebuchadnezzar freely admitted, “I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom {endures} from generation to generation” (v. 34). Yet, the next king, Belshazzar, succumbed to the same temptation of pride and lost his kingdom as a result (Dan chp. 5).

A similar example is taken from the following chapter of Daniel. After Daniel’s miraculous deliverance from the lion’s den, King Darius was compelled to admit, “He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion {will be} forever” (Dan 6:26). At times, though, even God’s people glorified themselves instead of Him: “Have we not by our {own} strength taken Karnaim for ourselves?" (Amos 6:13). However, Yahweh will not permit such arrogance: “’For behold, I am going to raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel,’ declares Yahweh, God of hosts, ‘And they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of the Arabah’” (v. 14). God does not give His glory to another (Isa 42:8; 48:11).

Unlike other Old Testament writings, the reason for glorifying Yahweh in the prophetic books is more commonly His judgements. Concerning Sidon, it is written, “Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I will be glorified in your midst. Then they will know that I am Yahweh, when I execute judgments in her, and I will manifest My holiness in her” (Ezek 28:22).

The same judgment awaits Magog: “And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am Yahweh. My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am Yahweh, the Holy One in Israel” (Ezek 39:6-7). In the end times, all the earth will see God glorious in judgment (Isa 66:18). In summary, Isaiah writes, “Yahweh of hosts will be exalted in judgment, and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness” (Isa 5:16; сf. 33:10-13). As a result of the Lord’s judgment of the earth, “they will fear the name of Yahweh from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun” (Isa 59:19; сf. Isa 2:10, 19, 21).

The prophets advance other reasons for praising Yahweh as well. His care for His people brings Him fame (Isa 41:20). By delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage, God made for Himself “a glorious name” (Isa 63:14). Israel will also glorify God for their future restoration (Isa 57:18-19; 29:22-23) and prosperity (Joel 2:23-26). The Old Testament abounds with examples of personal offerings of praise for blessings received. For example, Jonah thanked God for deliverance from death (Jon 2:1-9), and Daniel for the revelations he received (Dan 2:20-23).[[15]](#footnote-15)

In the prophets, God defending His honor before the nations is even more pronounced.[[16]](#footnote-16) When threatened by the invading Assyrians, Hezekiah prays, “Now, O Yahweh our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, Yahweh, are God” (Isa 37:20). God answers through Isaiah, “I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake” (Isa 37:35). Likewise, Jeremiah appeals to Yahweh on the basis of His reputation and His covenant promise to Israel: “Do not despise {us,} for Your own name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of Your glory; remember {and} do not annul Your covenant with us” (Jer 14:21).

The Lord is dishonored whenever His people suffer defeat (Isa 52:5), but receives glory when they succeed (Isa 26:15). God offers forgiveness of sins for the sake of His glory: “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins” (Isa 43:25), and, “For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and {for} My praise I restrain {it} for you, in order not to cut you off” (Isa 48:9). In Ezekiel, this theme appears often. God revealed to him that for His glory’s sake He restrained from destroying Israel in the wilderness:

- But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they {lived,} in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt (Ezek 20:8-9).

- Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness, to annihilate them. But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, before whose sight I had brought them out (Ezek 20:13-14).

- So I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness. But I withdrew My hand and acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out (Ezek 20:21-22).

Yahweh not only restrains His wrath, but will also restore Israel for His name’s sake:

- Therefore say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Lord Yahweh, ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am Yahweh’” (Ezek 36:22-23).

- “Then you will know that I am Yahweh when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel," declares the Lord Yahweh (Ezek 20:44)

The prophets also testify to an aspect of Yahweh’s glory first mentioned in the Torah: a visible manifestation of His presence. Unlike the Torah, however, in the prophets God reveals Himself in visions rather than in a visible radiance. For example, Isaiah had his famous vision of God’s glory, seated on His throne (Isa 6:1).[[17]](#footnote-17) Ezekiel had similar experiences (Ezek 1:26-28; 8:4; 9:3; 10:3-4, 19; 43:1-5), and Daniel saw a vision of the “Ancient of Days” (Dan 7:9-10).

Finally, Yahweh’s glory is connected with the people of Israel, especially in an eschatological sense. In the last days, God will glorify His people: “Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, and a nation which knows you not will run to you, because of Yahweh your God, even the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you” (Isa 55:5); and, “I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off; and My salvation will not delay. And I will grant salvation in Zion, {and} My glory for Israel” (Isa 43:7). Israel is to the Lord “The branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified” (Isa 61:3).

In chapter 60 of his prophecy, Isaiah speaks of the future glorification of Jerusalem: “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has risen upon you” (Isa 60:1). The Lord promised, “I shall glorify My glorious house” (v. 7). Other nations will bring treasures to Jerusalem, because God will glorify it (v. 9, 13).

Isaiah chapter 35 deals with the glorification of Jerusalem as well: “The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of Yahweh, the majesty of our God” (Isa 35:2; сf. Isa 66:12). In addition, Yahweh will prepare favorable conditions for His chosen city, which are called “glory”: “Then Yahweh will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy” (Isa 4:5).

Along with this, Yahweh will create for Israel “glory” in the sense of a brightness: “No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have Yahweh for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory” (Isa 60:19). Zechariah gives a similar prediction: “For I, ‘declares Yahweh,’ will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst’” (Zech 2:5). In a vision, Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord entering the new temple (Ezek 43:2-5: 44:4).

Habakkuk reminds us that God’s glory will not only visit Israel and its capital, but will spread across the world as well: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14; сf. 3:3). Malachi echoes this thought: “For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name {will be} great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering {that is} pure; for My name {will be} great among the nations” (Mal 1:11).

Finally, the coming glorification of Israel is associated with the coming of Messiah. Isaiah writes about Him, “His resting place will be glorious” (Isa 11:10). In the person of Messiah, “the glory of Yahweh will be revealed” (Isa 40:5). Under the figure of “Israel,” we also read about Messiah, “You are My Servant, Israel, in Whom I will show My glory” (Isa 49:3).

**6. Summary**

It is fair to say that the Hebrew term כָּבוֹד (*kavod*) captures well the concept of “glory,” since in carries such meanings as “wealth,” “honor,” “dignity,” “power,” “status” and “beauty.” All the praiseworthy characteristics of Yahweh are found in the concept of “glory.”

In the Old Testament narrative, God’s glory is sometimes a manifestation of His presence in a heavenly radiance. He revealed His visible glory at key moments in the history of His people, which underscored the importance of these events. The prophets saw this glory in visions. Yahweh’s glorious presence was also identified with the ark of the covenant, which also carried the designation “glory.”

The term “glory” is also associated with the mighty works the Lord does. He receives glory (in the sense of recognition) for His deeds from people. He values, in fact, His reputation among the nations. The Old Testament abounds with instances where God acts in judgment or in mercy for His name’s sake. On this basis, His people often appeal to Him for help.

“Glory” also refers to the favorable conditions that await the world in the end times during the earthly reign of Messiah, when “all the earth will be filled with the glory of Yahweh.” Finally, the Old Testament teaches that Yahweh is jealous of His glory. He punishes those who fail to give Him proper recognition. He will not give His glory to another.

### B. Intertestamental Period

The intertestamental writers were not strangers to the topic of God’s glory.[[18]](#footnote-18) The Greek term δόξα (*doksa*), which was employed in this literature, corresponds in meaning to the Hebrew כָּבוֹד (*kavod*). When the term is used not in reference to the Lord, it can refer to honor paid to people for their greatness, as shown below:

- These things are written in the book of the histories of the kings of Judæa, and every one of the acts that Josias did, and his glory (*1 Esdras,* 1.33).

- But when they came unto her, they all blessed her with one accord, and said unto her, thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem, thou art the great glory of Israel, thou art the great rejoicing of our race (*Judith,* 15.9).

The term “glory” describes the beauty and splendor of the Jerusalem temple (*2 Маcc.*, 5.16, 20) and also the city itself: “For Jerusalem shall be builded again as his house unto all the ages. Happy shall I be if the remnant of my seed come to see thy glory” (*Tobit,* 13.16).

Sometimes the mention of “glory” recalls a famous Old Testament event, such as Yahweh’s visitation on Mount Sinai (*4 Ezra*, 3.19; *Sirach,* 17.13), or the revelation of God’s glory to Moses (*Sirach,* 45.3). Other passages depict God’s glory as a visible entity: “I am Raphael, one of the seven angels, which stand and enter before the glory of the Lord (*Tobit,* 12.15).

In the intertestamental period, the concept of “glory” is also applied to the summation of all God’s attributes. We read in *1 Esdras,* 5.61: “His goodness and his glory are for ever in all Israel.” We read about the Lord’s wisdom, “She is a breath of the power of God, and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty” (*Wis. Sol.*, 7.25). Finally, we read in *4 Ezra*, 8.30, “Love them that have always put their trust in thy glory.”

### C. Biblical Data: New Testament

**1. Terminology**

The New Testament term for “glory” is δόξα (*doksa*).[[19]](#footnote-19) It originates from the verb δοκέω (*dokeo*), that is, “think,” “seem,” and has derived meanings like “opinion” and “reputation” (usually in a positive sense). Josephus and Philo employed the term in just such a way. Those authors also sometimes used the word for “majesty” or some type of “brilliance.” Philo had a unique interpretation of Exodus 33:18, where Moses asked the Lord, “Show me Your glory.” Philo proposed here that the word “glory” meant some type of ministering powers that surrounded God.

In their use of the term δόξα (*doksa*), the New Testament writers borrowed connotations from the Hebrew כָּבוֹד (*kavod*) and its synonyms, including: “majesty,” “beauty,” “greatness,” and “brilliance.” The meanings “honor” and “reputation” were also preserved, but are found less often.

We will first examine texts utilizing the concept of “glory” not referring to Yahweh. In 1 Corinthians 15:40-41, we encounter the ideas, “heavenly glory,” “earthly glory,” “glory of the sun,” “glory of the moon,” and “glory of the stars.” Here, “glory” refers to the summation of all the qualities of an object and thus serves as a synonym for “nature.”[[20]](#footnote-20) Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 11:7 “glory” stands in parallel to “image” and has a similar meaning – “reflection.” Finally, the “glory of Solomon,” mentioned in Matthew 6:29, refers to the summation of his riches and royal grandeur. We can ascribe the same meaning to the phrase “glory of the kingdoms of the world" in Matthew 4:8, and “glory of men” in 1 Peter 1:24.[[21]](#footnote-21)

**2. Synoptic Gospels and Book of Acts**

Our investigation of the idea of “glory” continues with an examination of the Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts.[[22]](#footnote-22) At the time of the Savior’s birth, the “glory of the Lord shone around” the shepherds (Lk 2:9). Here we are dealing with a visible brilliance, possibly emitting from the heavenly messengers. Later in the Savior’s career, He was transfigured, clothed in heavenly glory, and conversed with Moses and Elijah, also “appearing in glory” (Lk 9:29-32). Again, we are dealing with a visible radiance. Likely, Stephen had a similar experience of beholding God’s glory in a vision before his death (Acts 7:55).

When we read of the glorious coming of Messiah (see Matt 24:30; Mk 8:38; Lk 21:27), we are dealing not with a visible brilliance, but with a demonstration of the power and might of the Son of God. At the time of His Second Coming, He will establish the kingdom of God on earth. Correspondingly, He will sit on “His glorious throne” (Matt 25:31). Similarly, when James and John ask for a place “one on Your right and one on {Your} left, in Your glory” (Mk 10:37), they also mean status in Christ’s kingdom. Finally, the saying, “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” likely refers to His inheriting the kingdom.

Nonetheless, cases exist where the term “glory” refers to the Lord in a general sense, serving like a name, such as “the God of glory” (Acts 7:2). It is curious to note that the glory of the Son differs from the glory of the Father. Jesus said, “…when He comes in His glory, and {the glory} of the Father and of the holy angels” (Lk 9:26). Most likely, the difference between them does not concern their dignity or quality, but their position or status. When the Son became incarnate, He thereby voluntarily humbled Himself.

As it was in the Old Testament, in the New Testament people also respond to the Lord’s greatness by giving Him glory. The leper healed by Jesus returned to “give God glory” (Lk 17:15, 18). In addition, the people glorified God for the miraculous healing of the lame man at the temple (Acts 4:21). The shepherds, after seeing the newborn Messiah, glorified the Lord (Lk 2:20) along with the angels (Lk 2:14). God received glory for the healing of the lame man in Luke 5:24-26, and at the Triumphal Entry of Messiah into Jerusalem (Lk 19:38).[[23]](#footnote-23)

In general, the Father receives glory not only for specific acts of grace and power, but also for His work *in toto*: through Paul (Acts 21:19-20), through the entire Church (Matt 5:16), or through Christ (Matt 15:31). Jesus is the “glory of Your people of Israel” (Lk 2:32).

We note two final points. God not only receives glory, but also glorifies. For example, He glorified the Son through His resurrection from the dead (Acts 3:13-15). However, those who refuse to give the Lord glory suffer the consequences (Acts 12:20-23).

**3. General Epistles and Hebrews**

Next, we examine the General Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews.[[24]](#footnote-24) Here we often see references, as is the case throughout Scripture, to God being worthy of glory. People must praise Him, especially believers, who are “a people for {God's} own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9).

Believers glorify the Lord not only by words, but also by their lives. When they successfully pass through trials and temptations, it results in “praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:7). They also glorify Him in their ministries (1 Pet 4:11). Not only believers glorify the Lord, but unbelievers will be compelled to do so as well for the good works done by the Church (1 Pet 2:12). In the final analysis, God is worthy of glory forever and ever (1 Pet 4:11; Jude 24-25; 2 Pet 3:18).

In addition, the concept of glory is closely associated with the person of God. Jesus is the “Lord of glory” (Jam 2:1). Here, “glory” refers to the sum total of His attributes. Jesus is also the “radiance of (the Father’s) glory” (Heb 1:3), i.e., the exact reflection of His nature. Benson makes the following comment: Jesus is “the living embodiment of the glory of God.”[[25]](#footnote-25) In 2 Peter 1:17, the word “glory” becomes a name for God the Father – the “Majestic Glory.” According to Jude 24, to stand before God is to “stand before the presence of His glory.” In virtue of their association with the Lord’s glorious presence in the temple, one may call the cherubim, “cherubim of glory” (Heb 9:5).

In 1 Peter 1:21, the glorification of God’s Son applies to His exaltation after His resurrection. The Father “raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory.” The idea of glory as “status” is reflected in Hebrews 2:7-8, where the status of humanity is compared to the status of angels: “…you have crowned him with glory and honor, and have appointed him over the works of your hands; you have put all things in subjection under his feet.” The next verse speaks of Christ’s position of authority, which He attained by virtue of His redemptive work: “…because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor” (Heb 2:9). The prophets foresaw this (1 Pet 1:11).

Jesus’ redemptive work not only qualified Him to receive glory and honor, but also enabled Him to “lead many sons to glory” (Heb 2:10). Christ did not seek His own glory, but received it from the Father (Heb 5:5).

2 Peter 1:3 reveals another aspect of the concept “glory.” In this verse, God “called us by His own glory and excellence.” The context of this verse is the sanctification of the believer. Additionally, the word “glory” stands in parallel with the word ἀρετή (*arete*), which can mean “excellence of character”.[[26]](#footnote-26) So then, the term may carry a moral connotation in the sense of “holiness.” God’s glory includes not only His power and greatness, but His moral excellence as well.

As was apparent in other parts of the Bible, “glory” also applies to the future glorious conditions the people of God will enjoy in His eternal kingdom (1 Pet 5:10), which will be revealed “at the revelation of His glory” (1 Pet 4:13). The benefits to be received at that time are summed up in the expression “crown of glory” (1 Pet 5:4). Peter serves the Lord with the confidence that he will become “a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed” (1 Pet 5:1).

Even in this life, the believer may experience a foretaste of this glorious state. God promises the believer enduring persecution a special experience of His glory: “If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you” (1 Pet 4:14). In light of the future salvation that is about to be revealed, believers have good reason to rejoice “with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Pet 1:8).

Final points to be made in this section: during Christ’s transfiguration, God’s glory took a visible form (2 Pet 1:17), and the Son’s glory far exceeds the glory of any other, particularly that of Moses (Heb 3:3).

**4. Epistles of Paul**

The apostle Paul devotes much attention to the topic of Yahweh’s glory.[[27]](#footnote-27) Along with other biblical authors, Paul lists many reasons to give Him glory. He is worthy of glory for the gift of salvation (Gal 1:4-5), for success in ministry (2 Cor 10:15-17), for the spiritual growth of the Church (2 Thes 1:3), for the Church’s sacrificial spirit (2 Cor 9:13), for deliverance from danger (2 Cor 1:11), for Paul’s conversion (Gal 1:24), etc.

Believers not only glorify God for blessings received, but also seek new opportunities to give Him glory. They can glorify Him in their “bodies” (1 Cor 6:20), as well as “whatever (they) do in word or deed” (Col 3:17). Paul’s desire is that “whether by life or by death” Christ would always be glorified through him (Phil 1:20).

Paul not infrequently expresses eloquent praise to the One worthy of glory:

- Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, {be} honor and glory forever and ever (1 Tim 1:17).

- To Him {be} the glory forever and ever (2 Tim 4:18).

- To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever (Rom 16:27).

- Now to our God and Father {be} the glory forever and ever (Phil 4:20).

- To Him {be} honor and eternal dominion! (1 Tim 6:16).

- For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him {be} the glory forever (Rom 11:36).

In Paul’s writings, we again encounter the phenomenon that the word “glory” describes the Lord in a total sense to the degree that it becomes a name or title for God. For example, in 1 Corinthians 2:8, Christ is called the “Lord of glory.” In addition, Paul speaks of the Father as the “Father of glory” (Eph 1:17). The term can also refer to specific attributes of the Lord, such as His incorporality (Rom 1:23), holiness (Rom 3:23), power (Rom 6:4; Eph 3:16; Col 1:11; 2 Thes 1:9), and mercy (Rom 9:23; Eph 1:6).

A key feature of God’s glory is the role it plays in His overall plan. The main Scripture passage for our consideration here is the first chapter of Ephesians. In verses 5 and 6, we read, “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, *to the praise of the glory of His grace*, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” Later, in verses 11-12, we read, “We have obtained an inheritance… to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be *to the praise of His glory*.” Finally, in verses 13-14 is states that our redemption results in “*the praise of His glory*.”

It appears, then, that bringing God glory is a primary goal in His redemptive plan. Both through the saved and through the Savior, God receives eternal glory (Eph 3:21; Phil 2:11). This theme appears in other epistles of Paul as well (see Phil 1:11; 2 Thes 1:11-12).

God’s salvation plan not only brings Him glory, but also provides further insight into the concept of His glory. In 2 Corinthians 4:4-6, Paul describes the gospel as “the gospel of the glory of Christ” and “the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” In other words, the glory of the Lord is especially evident in the wisdom and mercy that He displayed in saving people through Christ. The mystery of the gospel not only brings us a revelation of God’s glory, but also was “predestined before the ages to our glory” (1 Cor 2:7).

We already saw in Peter’s second epistle that the idea of “glory” can apply to the Lord’s moral character. Paul reflects this understanding as well. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, he teaches that believers “are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” Clearly, Paul’s meaning is the progressive transformation of the believer’s character. Consequently, “glory” can connote the moral quality of believers in Jesus. This agrees with Paul’s words that God calls us “into His own kingdom and glory” (1 Thes 2:12). We need this spiritual renewal because we all “fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23), i.е., we do not measure up to the Lord’s moral excellence.

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul compares the glory of Moses’ ministry with the glory of the new covenant in Christ. Paul shows that the glory of God that transforms a person’s life far exceeds in significance a visible manifestation of glory, as seen in the giving of the Law (2 Cor 3:7-11). E. F. Harrison summarizes, “The old is symbolized by the glory on the face of Moses, a glory that faded. The new is expressed in terms of a glory that is a permanent element and also permits of increasing participation by the saints.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

In Ephesians 3:16, the Lord’s glory is presented in a different light – as a source of strength: “…that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.” Likewise, God’s “riches in glory” is the source for meeting every human need (Phil 4:19). E. F. Harrison comments on Philippians 4:19 by saying, “The divine resources will prove ample to meet the needs of God’s pilgrim people.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

Finally, along with many other biblical writers, the apostle Paul sees in the term “glory” a reference to the future inheritance by believers of God’s eternal kingdom (Rom 8:30). At that time, the full glory of the Incarnate Son will be revealed (Tit 2:13). Believers who endure to the end will share that experience of glorification (Rom 8:17), which includes receiving a body that is “raised in glory” (1 Cor 15:43) and corresponds to the resurrected body of Jesus (Phil 3:21). For believers, Christ is the “hope of glory” (Col 1:27). The Christian’s hope is that “when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Col 3:4). Not only people, but also “the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:21). Christ has already entered “glory” (1 Tim 3:16).

For now, our glorious inheritance remains a future hope (Rom 5:2), and we acknowledge, “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom 8:18; сf. 2 Cor 4:17). Such a hope motivates Paul for ministry: “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus {and} with {it} eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10). In addition, Paul considers the congregations that he planted during his ministry his “glory and joy” (1 Thes 2:20).

**5. Writings of John**

Ιn John’s Gospel, we read where Jesus associated God’s glory with the resurrection of Lazarus. On the one hand, the manifestation of resurrection power serves as a demonstration of God’s glory (Jn 11:40). On the other hand, the Son is also glorified thereby (Jn 11:4). John highlights Jesus’ glorification in order to inspire the readers to believe in Him (Jn 20:31). The first miracle Jesus did was a demonstration of His personal glory, not the glory of the Father (Jn 2:11). In one way or another, all the signs recorded in the Fourth Gospel give grounds for its reader to embrace faith in Jesus Christ.

Additionally, throughout the Gospel of John we observe that the relationship between the Father and the Son involves a “reciprocal glorification.” As was mentioned before, the manifestation of God’s glory in the resurrection of Lazarus also brought glory to the Son. John 8:50-54 reveals that the Son does not seek His own glory, but that of the Father: “But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges…. If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me.” Jesus seeks glory from the Father, not from people (Jn 5:41, 44; 7:18).

The Son’s glorification by the Father occurs not only in His miracle ministry, but also in His redemptive sacrifice, prior to which Jesus prayed, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You” (Jn 17:1; сf. 12:23-24, 28; 13:31).[[30]](#footnote-30) In addition, the Father glorifies the Son by restoring His heavenly glory, which he enjoyed from eternity past, and which Isaiah saw (see Jn 12:41). The Son prays “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (Jn 17:5; сf. 17:24). Christ is glorified by the Father in all things: “All things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them” (Jn 17:10). The giving of the Holy Spirit is also connected to the glorification of the Son (Jn 7:39).

In this reciprocal relationship, however, not only does the Father glorify the Son, but the Son glorifies the Father. John 17:4 indicates that Christ accomplished this by completing His mission: “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.” The Father receives glory not only through the Son’s ministry, but also through His redemptive work (see Jn 13:31). In summary, the Father glorifies the Son in life, death and resurrection, and reciprocally receives glory through Him. In the words of the Savior: “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.” (Jn 13:31-32). In turn, the Holy Spirit also glorifies Jesus (Jn 16:14).

However, John has more to say about “glory” than just the reciprocal glorification of the Father and Son. Christ gives the glory of God to His disciples: “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them” (Jn 17:22). We must not understand this as a communication of deity to the disciples. The context makes clear that Jesus is transmitting moral qualities, which are characteristic of the Father, to His disciples. God’s glory as “moral attributes” is highlighted in other passages in this context as well. Correspondingly, the Savior prays that the Father will keep them from evil (v. 15), “keep them in Your name,” (v. 11), and, “sanctify them in the truth” (v. 17). Again, we are dealing here with the sanctification of believers. “Glory“ is associated with His name (v. 6, 26) and His Word (v. 8, 14), which reflect His character as well.

God not only gives glory to the disciples, but also receives glory by the fruit His glory produces in their lives. Jesus charged His followers, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and {so} prove to be My disciples” (Jn 15:8). The Father is also glorified by answering the disciples’ prayers (Jn 14:13). The disciples can glorify God not only in life, but also in death (Jn 21:19).

John 1:14 is a key passage for our topic: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” First, we note that Jesus brings the Father glory not only through His miracles, redemptive death, etc., as mentioned above, but He Himself is the perfect reflection of the Father’s nature. The phrase “His glory” refers to all aspects of Jesus’ life and work: His behavior, relationships with people, miracle ministry, moral quality, etc.

As the “Only Begotten from the Father,” Jesus demonstrates by His life the Father’s character. This is why it says, “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him}” (Jn 1:18). Howe describes the glory demonstrated by Christ as “the fullness or sum of all the perfections of the Godhead.”[[31]](#footnote-31) At the same time, Howe makes the important qualification that in His incarnate state, it was impossible for the Son to manifest the Father’s glory in every respect.[[32]](#footnote-32)

A highly dramatic demonstration of God’s glory is seen in the final book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. Joining in the worship of Yahweh are angels, elders, and the “four beasts” (4:9-11; 7:11-12; 5:11-12), the saints (7:9-10; 15:2-4; 19:5-7), and all creation (5:13). Even unbelievers are summoned to glorify Him (14:7; 16:9) and at times do so (15:4; 11:13). All glory rightfully belongs only to Him (19:1; 1:6).

The following episode from the book of Revelation reminds us of a similar demonstration of the Lord’s glory in the Old Testament. When seven angels prepare to pour out their bowls of wrath, “the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power” (Rev 15:8).

Finally, the book of Revelation closes with an interesting passage where the word “glory” is used in various senses in a single context:

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp {is} the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it (Rev 21:23-26).

On the one hand, concerning the nations, “glory” refers to riches. On the other hand, it also describes the radiance emitting from God’s presence.[[33]](#footnote-33) Earlier, it was said of the New Jerusalem that it has “the glory of God” (Rev 21:11), likely another reference to divine radiance. The angel of God mentioned in Revelation 18:1 glowed to such a degree that “the earth was illumined with his glory.”

**6. Summary**

The New Testament usage of δόξα (*doksa*) differs from its secular use. In particular, it lacks the meaning “opinion.” Due to the influence of the Septuagint, the term δόξα (*doksa*) began to carry the full semantic weight of the Hebrew כָּבוֹד (*kavod*) and its synonyms.

Consequently, in the New Testament the term δόξα (*doska*) can refer both to Yahweh Himself, and to any of His attributes as well. We also observe instances where δόξα (*doksa*) describes a visible manifestation of God’s presence as a radiance. Yet, we encounter this usage less often than in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, God’s glory is perfectly manifest in the person of Jesus Christ.

The concept of “glory” is closely connected with the Son’s mission and His relationship with the Father. In Christ’s miracle ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation, the Father glorified the Son and was reciprocally glorified through Him, since God’s plan of salvation accomplished in Jesus brings the Father praise as well. The Son’s exaltation included the restoration of the heavenly glory that He enjoyed with the Father from before creation.

God’s glory serves as a source of strength and provision for the people of God. “Glory” applies not only to the Lord’s might, but also to His holy character, which believers are called to emulate. To enable followers of Jesus to attain that calling, God gives “His glory” to them in the sense of spiritual endowment and renewal.

In the New Testament, we often encounter the idea of “glory” in respect to the end times. The Second Coming of Messiah will be accompanied by great glory, as will be His earthly reign. Believers will participate in God’s kingdom in glorified bodies. Even in this life, they can taste of this future glory, and anticipating the full experience of this glory can enable them to endure trials in this life.

Finally, the word “glory” is synonymous with “praise” and describes the suitable response of people to the Lord and His great works. The book of Revelation provides us with many examples of those who glorify God, even cases where unbelievers do so.

### D. Conclusions

In our study of the biblical idea of “glory,” we are struck by its various shades of meaning. It is difficult to summarize it in a narrow definition. R. K. Harrison correctly comments that this concept includes such various factors as “nature,” “status,” “praise,” “reward,” “recognition,” and “works.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

All the various meanings of this term, though, relate to the person of God Himself. It denotes the sum total of all His qualities, including His visible manifestation and His external deeds. Various authors have captured this sense in the following definitions.

According to Erickson, “When used with respect to God, it (i.e., כָּבוֹד) does not point to one particular attribute, but to the greatness of his entire nature.”[[35]](#footnote-35) Likewise, Blessitt comments, “The glory of God in essence is ‘all that God is!’… every quality that is desirable in God.”[[36]](#footnote-36) E. F. Harrison speaks of it as “the totality of God’s revealed perfections,” or “the absolute uniqueness of his person in view of the completeness and perfection of his attributes.”[[37]](#footnote-37) R. K. Harrison adds that this term also applies to “His moral uniqueness and grandeur as Lord of the universe.”[[38]](#footnote-38) Henry contributes the thought, “When it refers to the panoply of God’s attributes, we may consider the term glory to be the preferred biblical equivalent for the term infinitude or infinity in respect to the divine nature.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

Strong writes, “Glory is not itself a divine attribute; it is rather a result – an objective result – of the exercise of the divine attributes…. He does all for his own glory. All religion is founded on the glory of God. All worship is the result of this immanent quality of the divine nature.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

Manser’s definition is concise, but accurate. He feels that God’s glory is “the revelation of God’s power and characteristics, sometimes accompanied by visible phenomena.”[[41]](#footnote-41) In Benson’s view, God’s glory is “the revelation of God’s being, nature, and presence to mankind, usually with physical phenomena,” or “*a manifestation of His person or His power*.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

Bilaniuk makes a distinction, where ”God’s intrinsic glory is God Himself (attributes),” while “His extrinsic glory is expressed in creation, a manifestation of intrinsic glory.”[[43]](#footnote-43) Similarly, Kittel describes “glory” as “a term for this divine nature or essence either in its invisible or its perceptible form.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

In discussing God’s glory, one must not fail to mention that its most complete manifestation is found in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Henry emphasizes, “The glory of God is supremely revealed in the God-man Jesus Christ. Christ is the effulgence of divine glory (Heb. 1:3), that is, his life and work make known the divine perfections.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

The term “glory” can refer to the recognition of what God is worthy of in virtue of His perfections. Kittel clarifies that when people “give” the Lord glory, they not so much “give” Him something, as they simply acknowledge who He already is.[[46]](#footnote-46) Von Rad concurs: “In relation to man, כָבוֹד (i.e. “glory”) denotes that which makes him impressive and demands recognition…. In relation to God it implies that which makes God impressive to man, the force of His self-manifestation.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

In response to the objection that it seems inappropriate for Yahweh to seek His own glory, we respond that He is worthy of it. Strong explains that when God seeks His own glory, He in not displaying an unhealthy self-absorption, but rather “self-respect, self-preservation, self-vindication.” His glory “constitutes an important characteristic of holiness.” The basis of His self-respect is “the purity and righteousness of the divine nature.” Strong concludes, “God’s self-respect implies that God respects himself for something in his own being.”[[48]](#footnote-48)

Finally, the Lord invites believers in Him to share in His glory. E. F. Harrison comments on the development of this idea in the Bible. In the Old Testament, “glory” for the most part applied to God, and the people of God merely gazed on His glory. In the New Testament, however, God’s people are not simply spectators, but also participants in God’s glory through Christ.[[49]](#footnote-49) Consequently, the blessed eschatological expectation of the saints is described by the word “glory.”

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1. Von Rad shares the interesting observation that, although the basic meaning of כָּבוֹד is “heavy,” in Scripture it is rarely associated with that idea (see Ex 24:15ff; Ezek 1:1ff, Ps 29). God’s glory is usually associated with light. Von Rad notes that describing “glory” as light corresponds to the typical understanding of the term in antiquity (see Von Rad G. כָּבוֹד in the Old Testament // Kittel G., Bromiley G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament / trans. Bromiley G. W. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964. – V. 2. – P. 240). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Harrison R. K. Glory // Bromiley G. W. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988. – V. 2. – P. 477. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Howe F. R. Glory // Pfeiffer C. F., Vos H. F., Rea J. The Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia. – Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1975. – V. 1. – P. 687. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Erickson M. J. Christian Theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983. – V. 3. – P. 997. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Harrison R. K., v. 2. – p. 477. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Von Rad, т. 2, p. 238 -242; Harrison R. K., v. 2, p. 477-478; Harrison E. F. Glory // Bromiley G. W. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988. – V. 2. – P. 478-482; Huttar D. K. Glory // Elwell W. A. Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996. – P. 287. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Huttar, p. 287. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Manser M. H. Dictionary of Bible Themes. – London: Martin Manser, 1999. – P. 512-514; Huttar, p. 287-288; Benson C. The Glory of God // Jarman R. C., Benson C. The Grace and the Glory of God. – Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1968. – P. 70; Bloesch D. G. God the Almighty. – Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1995. – P. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Huttar insightfully comments that the fact that God “manifests” His glory implies that His glory exists “prior to and apart from any manifestation of it” (see Huttar, p. 288). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Harrison R. K., v. 1, p. 478. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Von Rad, v. 2, p. 241; Benson, p. 75; Harrison E. F., v. 2, p. 478, 480-481; Manser, p. 30-31; Huttar, p. 278-288; Tozer A. W. The Attributes of God. – Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1997. – V. 1. – P. 186-187. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Benson, p. 69-70, 83; Manser, p. 30-31; Bloesch D. G. God the Almighty. – Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1995. – P. 124-125; Huttar, p. 278-288. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Interestingly, the Lord’s glory is displayed not only in revealing mysteries, but also in concealing them (Prov 25:2). See Huttar, p. 287-288. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Grudem proposes that the concept of God protecting His glory is connected to His jealousy, as noted in Exodus 20:5, that He is “a jealous God” (See Grudem W. Systematic Theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994. – P. 205). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Howe feels that the main goal for God manifesting His glory to Isaiah was for the latter to experience His holiness (see Howe, v. 1, p. 687). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Harrison R. K., v. 2, p. 478. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Harrison E. F., v. 2, p. 478; Kittel G. δόξα // Kittel G., Bromiley G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament / trans. Bromiley G. W. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964. – V. 2. – P. 233-244. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Huttar understands these examples as a “light” or “brilliance,” which finds confirmation in the use of δόξα (*doksa*) in Acts 22:11 (see Huttar, p. 282-288). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Harrison E. F., v. 2, p. 479-480. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See Benson, p. 73; Manser, p. 30-31; Erickson, Christian Theology, v. 3, p. 998-999. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Also see examples in Matt 15:31; Mk 2:12; Lk 4:15 (Harrison E. F., v. 2, p. 483). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See Benson, p. 78; Erickson, Christian Theology, v. 3, p. 998-999; Bloesch, p. 124, 128; Manser, p. 30-31; Howe, v. 1, p. 687. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
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27. See Bloesch, p. 124-125, 128; Manser, p. 30-31; Harrison E. F., v. 2, p. 480-482; Benson, p. 75-77; Kittel, p. 248; Erickson, Christian Theology, v. 3, p. 998-999. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Harrison E. F., v. 2, p. 482. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid., p. 480. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Bloesch, p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Howe, v. 1, p. 687. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. In Rev 1:16 we also see a visible brilliance in the face of the glorified Christ (see Bloesch, p. 124). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
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47. Von Rad, v. 2, p. 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Strong, p. 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Harrison E. F., v. 2, p. 482. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)