

Prayer Store

Restoring the glory

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This material follows on from “Mending the broken altar.” As with that material, so here I have assumed that readers are serious about praying for the restoration of nations.

What is the glory?

The Hebrew word for “glory” is the word “kaboud.” This means “honour, splendour, dignity, reputation, reverence.” The Greek word, which translates this Hebrew word is “doxa”, which means “having such an opinion of someone that it leads to giving them praise and honour.” The “kaboud” is seen in Isaiah 60:1-3:-

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”

But what is the glory? What is the “kaboud?”

*** The glory of the Lord is the sign of his presence**

When Solomon dedicated the new Temple, the glory fell, and the people knew that the Lord was with them:-

“When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.” (2 Chron. 7:1-3)

Expressing the same feeling, John says: - **“we have seen his glory”**
(John 1:14)

*** The glory of the Lord is the victory of the cross**

The disciples walking to Emmaus were full of sorrow, because in the cross they saw only failure and defeat. The Lord had to teach them that the cross was his glory, his victory, his triumph:-

“Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”
(Luke 24:26)

*** The glory of the Lord is a sign of his authority and a sign of his power**

The glory or the Lord is a reflection of his power and position. When it is seen, everyone knows who he is and where power rests. Solomon and the people saw and knew this:-

“When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, ‘He is good. His love endures forever.’”
(2 Chron. 7:1-3)

The people were glad that the glory had been shown to them. The “kaboud” (“glory”) is a blessing to God’s people. John also felt the same:-

“The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

*** The glory of the Lord is a powerful experience**

The glory of the Lord can be felt and experienced, and it has a powerful effect on our lives. In the Old Testament, the priests found this out:-

“The priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the Temple.” (1 Kings 8:11)

In the New Testament Peter found this out:-

“After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” (Mark 9:2-7)

*** The glory of the Lord is a mark of his purity**

The glory of the Lord demands a pure life. Any impurity is exposed, but as long as we are aim for purity we need not be afraid of the glory. But like so much of God, it must not be taken lightly. We must remember the Lord's command: - **“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” (Matt 5:23-24)**

We must aim for purity, if we want to see and move in the glory. Matthew explains further:-

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.” (Matt 25:31)

After this, his purity and righteous judgments will separate the holy from the unholy, the pure from the impure.

The history of the glory

If we want to restore the glory to our national altar, we have to understand how our knowledge of the glory of the Lord has developed.

*** The Lord reveals his glory**

For his creation to understand his glory, that glory has been revealed in certain ways.

*** He invested his glory in buildings:-**

“And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple.” (1 Kings 8:11)

*** He invested his glory in nature:-**

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14)

*** He invested his glory in Nations. Isaiah writes of Jerusalem:-**

“Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.” (Isaiah 60:1)

*** He invested his glory in people:-**

“You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour.” (Ps.8:5)

From our point of view, it's the issue of Nations which is facing us. Nations need the glory in them and over them. Only then can they be safe, and walk in the ways of the Lord. But Israel, God's own people, sinned so greatly against him that in the end he withdrew his glory from them. This stands as a warning to every nation - the glory can depart. Ezekiel, in his vision of the Temple - the corrupted and desecrated Temple - saw this event take place:-

“Then the glory of the Lord departed from over the threshold of the Temple and stopped above the cherubim. While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the Lord’s house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.”
(Ezek. 10:18-19)

This broke the altar of relationship between God and his people, and denied them his glory - his covering, his presence and his joy. Such a departure can only lead to a decline in national faith and national security. It also exposes the nation to serious spiritual attack and even the possibility of destruction. Is this where your Nation is today?

It’s important to note that the Lord did not abandon his people - his glory remained close by. God is a loving God who never wants and never does abandon his people totally.

*** The Lord invests his glory in the cross**

Can the glory be restored? Only by the sacrifice of the King of Glory.

“For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” (Romans 5:10)

Jesus removed the stain of sin and separation. The glory could be restored.

*** The Lord places his resurrection glory in the church**

But where would the Lord’s glory be restored? In his letter to Ephesus, Apostle Paul gives us the answer:-

“And now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work in us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21)

In the new covenant, the glory of the Lord rests in the church. In one way we are the glory of the Lord. We are to live pure and holy lives. We are to put aside corrupt and underhand ways. We are to live as servants, humbly walking in the way of the Lord. We are to show his power and healing to the broken world. In this way, we bring our nations back under the covering, protection and love of the glory. We restore the glory.

Here is the heart of restoring the glory - by being God's holy people we can bring the nation back to safety.

Restoring the glory - what must happen now?

God's church has the power and the ability to restore the glory of the Lord to the nation. This will bring the nation back under the protection of the Lord. What a privilege. What can we do?

*** Be thankful**

"Give thanks on all occasions, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
(1 Thess. 5:18)

If the Lord had not truly loved us, there would be no way back. But our God only judges to bless. He is longing and waiting to bless us with the restoration of his glory. Thanksgiving must be our first reaction, and it generates a positive spirit in us. When we realise what God is offering, and offering it willingly, we will truly want it.

*** Recognise that his name is the issue.**

"At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." (Phil 2:10)

"The Apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name." (Acts 5:41)

The Apostles considered suffering **"for the name"** to be a privilege. They realised that the name of Jesus was precious, and should not be damaged.

If the glory is not in the church his name is being held in dishonour. If his glory is in the church the name is being “**held in high honour**” (Acts 19:17). Restoring the glory becomes an issue “**for the sake of the name.**” This should generate urgency and a desire in us.

*** Cleanse the church by releasing the power of the blood.**

“How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:14)

For the glory to be restored, the church must become a holy vessel, purified by the blood of Jesus. Does this look too big a task? It is not when we remember that the church is made up of individual members. It would only have taken ten righteous people to save Sodom. It only takes a few people, willing to repent and be cleansed, willing to live in a new and pure way to begin to affect whole body of Christ.

*** Live in a new purity**

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.” (Phil 2:14-16)

We must live the new life, the pure life of Christ. We have to be transformed - different people living to different standards. This will be tough to begin with, because it will seem to set us against the world. But as we gain a new purity by the working of the Spirit within us, so others will have a clear choice as they see what we are doing. The glory can only rest on purity.

Reflections

We will be helped in the restoration of the glory by meditating on that glory. Here are two passages which are central to our meditation:-

“Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!” The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev. Chapter 5)

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

(Ephesians 1:18-23)

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