

# I WANT TO KNOW MY BIBLE

## *The Glory of the Lord*

TEXT: Ezekiel 1

INTRODUCTION: A little boy was drawing a picture in class. His teacher looked over his shoulder and asked, "Who are you drawing a picture of?" He answered, "God." The teacher said, "But no one knows what God looks like." To which the young man responded, "They will when I get through!"

I wish Ezekiel had been an artist as well as a prophet to offer us a picture of what he saw, because he wrote

Ezk. 1:1, 4, 5, 13, 26-28 <sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. <sup>4</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness *was* all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. <sup>5</sup> Also from within it *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. <sup>13</sup> As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning.

<sup>26</sup> And above the firmament over their heads *was* the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne *was* a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. <sup>27</sup> Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the brightness all around it. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord!

And you may be thinking, "I wish I could see that."

Dear friend, you can do more than see it. You can experience it. And I am going to tell you how this morning. But first, you have to know what it is.

### I. WHAT IS THE GLORY OF THE LORD?

#### A. The glory of the Lord is the revealed presence of God.

The glory of the Lord is what you see when God desires to show Himself.

#### B. As with Ezekiel, the glory of the Lord is usually accompanied by fire, brightness, and light.

So, has anybody else besides Ezekiel ever seen this brilliant, shiny, fiery light of the glory of the Lord? I'm glad you asked. The answer is "Lots of times."

## II. APPEARANCES OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD

- A. Moses at the burning bush
- B. Moses and the elders on Mt. Sinai

Exodus 24:17 The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

- C. Pillar of fire
- D. In the tabernacle
- E. In the temple

2 Chronicles 5:13–14 <sup>13</sup> indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying:

"For He is good,

For His mercy endures forever,"

that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, <sup>14</sup> so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

- F. Ezekiel, out on the plains outside of Babylon, near the main canal called the River Chebar
- G. But **Ezekiel not only saw the glory of the Lord revealed, he saw it depart.**

Ezk. 8:1-4 <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there. <sup>2</sup> Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire—from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber. <sup>3</sup> He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy. <sup>4</sup> And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

Ezekiel is in his house and the glory of the Lord appears to him, and then the Lord carries him to Jerusalem. Did God physically carry Ezekiel to the temple or did He carry the prophet there by way of vision? We do not know, nor does it matter. Paul said God took him to the third heaven. He said I don't know whether I was in the body or out of the body, but I know I went and saw things there so glorious that God will not let me describe them to you.

So, God took Ezekiel to the temple

Ezk. 8:5-6 <sup>5</sup> Then He said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north." So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the

entrance. <sup>6</sup> Furthermore He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations.”

The “image of jealousy” mentioned here was an idol that had been erected in the courtyard of the temple. And God said, “This adulterous worship of other gods, which is an abomination to me, causes me to leave the place that I allowed to be built as my sanctuary.”

And Ezekiel watched as the glory of the Lord departed from above the cherubim on the mercy seat, paused at the threshold of the temple, went over the Kidron Valley and out to the Mount of Olives, and back to heaven.

### **For the next 587 years no one saw the glory of the Lord!**

When the glory came back, it came back only 5 miles away from the place it departed.

Luke 2:8-11 <sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

H. When the glory of the Lord, the revealed presence of God, returned to the earth, it came back inside Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

The apostle John summarized it this way:

Jn. 1:1, 4, 14 <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

1. The glory was back, and it was the same glory! The glory of God now shone in the person of God’s Son.
2. For the next 33 years, God revealed Himself, God showed Himself, through the Lord Jesus Christ. So when Philip said, “Show us the Father,” Jesus responded, “He who has seen me has seen the Father.”
3. Then Jesus went to the cross, and allowed the sin of the world to be placed on him. The wages of sin is death, and Jesus died for our sins.
4. On the third day He rose from the dead. He arose in power and glory, revealing God wherever He appeared to men.
5. Then He ascended. Guess where Jesus departed from? The Mount of Olives! Once again the glory of the Lord departed from heaven, but this time it was only gone for ten days.

I. The glory of the Lord returned at Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-3 <sup>1</sup> When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them.

Tongues as of fire. Have you ever wondered about that? Tongues we understand because God gave these disciples the gift of languages to share the gospel with the people at the Feast of Pentecost that had come from all the nations round about. But why did they take on the appearance of fire settling upon each of them?

To signal that the glory was back! When the Holy Spirit filled the believers, the glory of the Lord came upon them.

Now here is the number one most important question of the day: Where did it go? **Where did the glory of the Lord**, the revealed presence of God that fell upon the believers at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled them, where did the glory **go**?

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul is writing to believers, to people born again through faith in Jesus. When we believers look in a mirror, we see the glory of the Lord. The glory of the Lord went inside the lives of believers as the Holy Spirit took up residence in their hearts.

So, Paul says,

1 Cor. 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

The glory of the Lord used to dwell in the temple, but now you are the temple. The Spirit of God dwells in you, and in you is the revealed presence of God.

Col. 1:27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**The glory of the Lord is now inside every person who has trusted Jesus as his Lord and Savior.**

**And when the glory of the Lord is within you, you will have**

- a fire in your bones,
- a brightness about your countenance,
- and light in your life that shines upon others who will see Christ in you!

CONCLUSION: Does this truth not bring new meaning to the words of the prophet Isaiah when he said,

**Isaiah 60:1** Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.

**My dear friend, if the glory of the Lord, the revealed presence of God is not within you this morning on which we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, it can be!**

**2 Thessalonians 2:14** to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The way to have the glory is through the gospel. Believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead.

Confess Jesus as the Lord, Master, Savior of your life.