

## Taste & See | John 11:1-45 | April 2, 2017

A central goal of Christ in this and other passages is that his disciples might see, hear, taste and experience the glory of God. What is it about the *glory of God* that places it in the center of Christ's objective and goal throughout His life?

**Glory = *doxa*** [Found at the beginning of the passage 11:4; and at the end 11:40.]

### TDNT, Vol. II

The **Greek** use of *doxa*, found already in Homer and Herodotus, has in all non-biblical Greek a basic meaning which reflects its link with *dokew* [to believe, to think], namely, "what one thinks," "opinion." 233

In the **New Testament** the word is used for the most part in a sense for which there is no Greek analogy whatever and of which there is only an isolated example in Philo [1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish philosopher]. That is to say, it denotes "divine and heavenly radiance," the "loftiness and majesty" of God, and even the "being of God" and His world. How does the word come to have this new significance? To answer this question it is necessary that we study the OT [glory]. 237

Glory in the OT. In relation to man [glory] denotes that which makes him impressive and demands recognition, whether in terms of material possessions or striking *gravitas*, in relation to God it implies that which makes God impressive to man, the force of His self-manifestation. As everywhere attested in the OT God is intrinsically invisible. Nevertheless, when He reveals Himself, or declares Himself, e.g., in meteorological phenomena, one may rightly speak of the [glory of God], of a manifestation which makes on man a highly significant impression... When we examine passages which describe the [glory of God] more precisely, we find traits which point strongly to the phenomenon of a thunderstorm (Ps 97:1 ff; see also Ps 29; Ex 33:18 ff.)... The nature of the [Glory] itself is to be conceived as a radiant, fiery substance. There proceeds from it fire which consumes the awaiting sacrifice, and after speaking with God Moses has a radiance of countenance which dazzles the Israelites. 238-240

In reality, the term always speaks of one thing. God's power is an expression of the "divine nature," and the honour ascribed to God by man is finally no other than an affirmation of this nature. The [glory of God] is the "divine glory" which reveals the nature of God in creation and in His acts, which fill both heaven and earth. 244

When the translator of the OT [3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.] first thought of using *doxa* for [the Hebrew, *glory*], he initiated a linguistic change of far-reaching significance, giving to the Greek term a distinctiveness of sense which could hardly be surpassed. Taking a word for *opinion* [the early definition], which implies all the subjectivity and therefore all the vacillation of human views and conjectures, he made it express something absolutely objective, i.e. *the reality of God*. 245

The New Testament use of *doxa* – the Divine Mode of Being. It is obvious that the NT use of *doxa* follows the LXX rather than Greek usage. With the senses of "reputation" and "power" already

mentioned, the word is also used strictly in the NT to express the “*divine mode of being*”. This is true of all the NT authors. Even writers like Luke and the author of Hebrews, who have such a feeling for Greek, are no exception. They use the term as a biblical rather than a Greek term. It is not that they are presenting a particularly inward and spiritualized form of the concept. On the contrary, it is in Luke that we find the most impressive form of a manifestation of **doxa**, “*An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear*” Luke 2:9. 247

In the NT, as in the LXX, the meanings “divine honour,” “divine splendor,” “divine power” and “visible divine radiance” are fluid, and can only be distinguished artificially. In content, however, there is always expressed the divine mode of being, though with varying emphasis on the element of visibility (c.f. the Christmas story in Lk 2:9; the account of the transfiguration in Lk 9:31; 2 Pt 1:17; the Damascus experience in Ac 22:11; the heavenly temple and the heavenly city in Rev 15:8; 21:23. 248

The Believer and **doxa**. As regards the OT promise, when man is set in a relation of [glory], all the emphasis lies on sight. “*And Moses said, ‘This is the thing that the Lord commanded you to do, that the glory of the Lord may appear to you’*” Lev 9:6. The story that the face of Moses shone after his speech with Yahweh (Ex 34:29 f.) is an isolated one. It merely tells us that sight is something unheard of and pregnant with consequences... When the NT refers to the eschatological [end times] participation of believers in **doxa** this is simply part of the general statement of salvation history concerning the connection and parallelism between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection and new aeon of believers. Participation in **doxa**, whether here in hope or one day in consummation, is participation in Christ. 249-250

This may be seen most clearly in 2 Cor 3:7 ff. The key to this whole passage is to be found in the thesis that the believer belongs to the [Lord] who is the [Spirit] (v. 17)... In this construction, which is to be found elsewhere in Paul, we have the whole simultaneity of possession and expectation which is the basis of NT piety. This obviously leads us directly to John 17. Though other words are used, the view is almost completely identical with that presented in 2 Cor 3. The disciples see the **doxa** of Jesus “*to see the glory you have given me*” (v. 24). Jesus is glorified in them, “*I am glorified in them*” (v. 10). He has given them **doxa**, “*The glory that you have given me I have given to them that they may be one even as we are one*” (v. 22). 251

Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement In Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, (Orbis Books, 1997).

Translation is the art of the impossible. Exact transmission of meaning from one linguistic medium to another is continually hampered not only by structural and cultural difference; the words of the receptor language are pre-loaded, and the old cargo drags the new into areas uncharted in the source language. In the end the translator has simply to do his best and take risks in a high risk business. In the light of the frustrations inherent in the translation process, it is the more astonishing that God chose translation as his mode of action for the salvation of humanity. Christian faith rests on a divine act of translation: “*the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). 26

In prophetic faiths God speaks to humanity: in Christian faith, God becomes human... Incarnation is translation. When God in Christ became man, Divinity was translated into humanity, as though humanity were a receptor language... But language is specific to a people or an area. No one speaks generalized "language"; it is necessary to speak a particular language. Similarly, when Divinity was translated into humanity he did not become generalized humanity. He became a person in a particular locality and in a particular ethnic group, at a particular place and time. The translation of God into humanity, whereby the sense and meaning of God was transferred, was effected under very culture-specific conditions. 27

It appears that Christ, God's translated speech, is re-translated from the Palestinian Jewish original. The words of the Great Commission require that the various nations are to be made disciples of Christ. In other words, national distinctive, the things that mark out each nation, the shared consciousness and shared traditions, and shared mental processes and patterns of relationship, are within the scope of discipleship. Christ can become visible within the very things which constitute nationality. The first divine act of translation into humanity thus gives rise to a constant succession of new translation. Christian diversity is the necessary product of the Incarnation. 27-28

The translation principle was at work even in Christianity's ante-natal period. At least by the second century before the Christian era, the Jewish Scriptures were being turned into Greek. It is significant both that the traditional Jewish story about the origin of the Septuagint translation ascribed to that translation a missionary purpose, and that the reality of its origin probably has little to do with any Jewish mission to the Gentiles. The likely origin of the Septuagint lies in the fact that Greek was fast becoming the first language of so many Jews in Alexandria and other extra-Palestinian Jewish communities; it was, in fact, a Jewish vernacular translation. 30

Early Christianity was thus already touched by the translation principle. Not even Jewish Palestine could be culturally and linguistically sealed off from the Hellenistic [Greek] world; and the very words of Jesus come to us in Greek dress. The radical Stephen slashes at the heart of traditional Judaic religiosity about the Temple with the sabre of the Septuagint [Acts 7:2-53]; and the process which called the Septuagint into being is given Gospel authentication as the Pentecost crowd of Dispersion Jews hears the wonderful works of God, not in the sacred language of the Temple liturgy (the object of their pilgrimage), but in the languages of the various nations that were their real mother tongues (Acts 2:11). 32

At the very heart of Christian faith – when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us – he became *an actual person*. He did not become generalized humanity, or a personification. The Gospels show us a person, with a vivid personality, with the whole range of human emotions, and a localized human body. The Christ does not come recurrently into the world... He came once, into a particular family at a particular period and place, spoke a particular language, shared in a particular culture—a culture which, if not the most parochial in the world at that time, was certainly not the most cosmopolitan either... The Lord accepted the limitation that taking a seat in the theatre of life means taking a *particular seat*. 47

At the heart of Christian faith is the Incarnate Word—God became human. The divine Word was expressed under the conditions of a particular human society; the divine Word was, as it were,

*translated*. And since the divine Word is for all humanity, he is translated again in terms of every culture where he finds acceptance among its people. 47

Complete discipleship implies both the plastered cistern and the ever-flowing spring... (The special marks of his disciples are love and servanthood, readiness to take the towel and basin and do the dirty jobs). It is a dynamic, developing, growing, creative factor in the mind; ever fresh, ever bringing out new things, never getting stuck in the past, never getting stale or out of date. The disciple is an ever-flowing spring. There are echoes of this in the Gospels. We are told more than once that the disciples of Jesus understood some word of his, or of Scripture, only at a later time. We are told also that a function of the Spirit is to lead the disciples into all truth, and bring his words back to their memory. So the holy word does not stay simply in the disciple's memory, to be passed on (though this is very necessary); it invades the disciple's whole personality, to bring its influence to bear on the developing situations in which that disciple becomes involved. Discipleship, that is, involves the word of the master passing through the disciple's memory and into all the mental and moral processes; the ways of thinking, choosing, deciding. 50

Throughout Christian history two forces are distinguishable in constant tension. One is an indigenizing principle, a homing instinct, which creates in diverse communities a sense that the Church belongs there, that it is "ours." The other is a "pilgrim" principle that creates within the Christian community the sense that it is not fully at home in this world, so that it comes into tension with its society from its loyalty to Christ. The one tends to localize the vision of the Church, the other to universalize it. The two principles are recurrent because each springs directly out of the Gospel itself. On the one hand God accepts us in Christ just as we are, with all our distinctive—even the things which mark us off from others—still on us. On the other he accepts us in order that we may become something different; that we may be transformed out of the ways of this world into the image of Christ. 53-54

The homing and the pilgrim principles are in tension. They are not in opposition, nor are they to be held in some kind of balance. We need not fear getting too much of one or the other, only too little. To understand their relationship we have only to recall that both are the direct result of that incarnational and translational process whereby God redeems us through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It is his life which enters the life of each new community where he is received by faith, and which is to be realized through all the courses of that community's thoughts and traditions. One result is the rich diversity of Christian life and experience. Another is a new transcendent commonality, shared across diverse communities... Christians of all communities, with all their distinctive discipleships, are brought together "in Christ." If his likeness is to be formed in each community of Christians, some sort of family resemblance should be developing across them. All these cultures which they represent, all the nationalities belong alike to the fullness of Humanity described so graphically in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is a delightful paradox that the more Christ is translated into the various thought forms and life systems which form our various national identities, the richer all of us will be in our common Christian identity. The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us—and we beheld *his* glory, full of grace and truth. 54