

27 “But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.” 28 And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray. 29 And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. 30 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. 33 And it came about, as these were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not realizing what he was saying. 34 And while he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!” 36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

I speak to our shame when I say that in 2019 we read this account and quite honestly, we're not particularly impressed.

We're bombarded with super hero's and probably even car commercials and soap commercials that have got more bling than this passage.

Shame on the devil for cheapening the glory of the Lord with a lot of Hollywood fantasy. And shame on us for letting him.

So this morning, if I may, I want to take a trip backwards in time to perhaps 1860, just to arbitrarily pick a number. No electricity, no electric lights, no movies, no computers, no television.

The brightest object anyone has ever seen is the sun. The brightest man-made glow might be the phenomenon of a blacksmith fanning flames to make enough heat to melt metals. Andrew Carnegie turning iron into steel. A

lightning show up close at night. Those are the brightest lights any human has witnessed. Are you with me?

Now then, let me take you on a whirlwind tour of the glory of God revealed to us in this ancient book, and let's consider the glory of God from an 1860 perspective. Put the Hollywood foolishness away for a few minutes.

What we just read is real. It isn't computer generated fantasy, it really happened and we have reliable witnesses to relay as best they can with words what they saw and witnessed. These events are real. And some day we will see with our eyes the glorified Christ.

Glory is a difficult word to define. It's a concept that's perhaps not definable but to get us a little closer we could say that when we see things that approach the visible perfections of the perfection of God who is the creator, we say they are glorious. A perfect fall day with warming sun and crisp air out in the unmolested beauty of creation, we might say is glorious.

The night sky in Tonopah is often glorious. We see the milky way spread out for unspeakable distances, and beyond those, we have lenses now that show us more vastness, and we say it is glorious. And that's right. Those things are right to say because the revealed word agrees with our natural emotions.

Psalm 19 David says; *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ... And of the sun he says; It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.*

Isaiah 6 says; *And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."*

And we learn that Glory is the attribute of perfection and is because of Holiness. Glory and Holiness are different facets of the same diamond. They are part of each other. Inseparable attributes of God. His perfection is His glory and His perfect creation reveals to us His glory.

The creation groans with the burden of sin and Satan and waits for the day when evil is removed and it once again fully reveals the perfection and holiness of God. That day is what this book is about.

Habakkuk 2:14

"For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 3:3

God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran Selah His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise.

That day is coming, and Peter and James and John caught the tiniest of glimpses of that future day up on the mountain. But even in this fallen world, God has from time to time revealed in a masked sense a small part of His visible glory.

After this moment of time on the mountain with Jesus, the glory of God is in His written book. We don't have the shekinah visible to us, we have His book, until the day that He is revealed in heaven coming in His glory.

This incident on the mountain is the last glimpse of the shekinah glory of God until Jesus comes again. And that event is terrifying, because the world is in chaos, God turns out the other lights and the world is in thick darkness until the light of the glory of Jesus at His coming. When He comes, His glory will overwhelm the darkness. Terror for those who are not holy like He is.

We're going to do a little whirlwind Bible study this morning about the shekinah glory of God. Quite a few passages to consider, so bear with me. In Exodus 19, just before the giving of the 10 commandments God visits His chosen people with visible and terrifying glory at mount Sinai.

16 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very

loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. 19 When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. 20 And the LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

That happened exactly as it is written for us. No Hollywood effects necessary. The people were terrified and God told Moses to go back down and warn the people that if anyone broke through the barrier to go up the mountain they would die.

God's holiness is terrifying to sinners. And it remained so with the children of Israel until the curtain separating the Holy of Holies where God dwelt was torn in too at Jesus crucifixion. God had opened up the separation between sinners and Holy God by the death of His only Son. We approach God with a righteousness not our own. We are united to Jesus. We are His holy bride.

After the ten commandments God gave Moses instructions on how to construct the tent of meeting, the tabernacle where God would dwell in all of their journeyings. Exodus 40 describes how the shekinah glory of the Lord entered that place when it was complete. Picking it up in vs. 30

30 And he placed the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing. 31 And from it Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. 32 When they entered the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 33 And he erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. Thus Moses finished the work.

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD

filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 And throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; 37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. 38 For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

Numbers chapter 9 describes the phenomenon of the Glory of the Lord as Israel traveled towards the promised land.

15 Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning. 16 So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. 17 And whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. 18 At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. 19 Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD'S charge and not set out. 20 If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped. Then according to the command of the LORD they set out. 21 If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out. 22 Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out. 23 At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the LORD'S charge, according to the command of the LORD through Moses.

Visible glory. A cloud of glory by day and a pillar of fire at night accompanied Israel in their journeys.

When Solomon finished the Lord's house, the temple in Jerusalem that David collected the money and materials for but wasn't allowed to build because of the blood on his hands, a similar visit of the glory of the Lord filled the place.

2 Chronicles 7: 1 *Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. 2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. 3 And all the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, "Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

God had told Moses that He would dwell with Israel in Exodus 25:22 *And I will meet with you there above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the Ark of the Testimony; I will commune with you about all that I command you regarding the Israelites.* And many times you see the kings and the prophets acknowledge God's very presence with them in just that way.

Hezekiah when given the letter from Sennacharib describing imminent defeat took the letter in the temple and spread it out before the Lord and said these words. 2 Kings 19: 14 *Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. 15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth. 16 "Incline Thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open Thine eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.*

God who is enthroned above the cherubim. His Glory was physically present

in the temple, and the day came when it departed. Some of the saddest script ever written. Ezekiel tells us of a vision in chapter 10 of the glory departing the temple;

18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. 19 When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house. And the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.

And then in chapter 11 it continues; *22 Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. 23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.*

The Glory of the Lord didn't return to Israel until one morning in Luke 2, we read; *8 And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

*14 "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

The brightness of the shekinah glory of God was present to announce that Jesus was born. But notice who saw it visibly. Not Israel, who is under judgement, but a few shepherds in their fields.

The next time the glory of God appears is in our story this morning, up on the

mountain. Jesus, glorified, speaking with Moses and Elijah. Just a glimpse of future glory. 3 witnesses, one of whom, James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, was murdered by Herod Agrippa in 44AD.

That left two living witnesses. John writes; 1 John 1:1 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have gazed upon and touched with our own hands--this is the Word of life. Jn. 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John says we saw His glory, revealed before our eyes, the only begotten of the Father. And Peter likewise says this; 2 Peter 1:16 *For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*

In 96AD, John, an ancient man, imprisoned for Jesus on the isle of patmos saw a vision of the risen, glorified Christ that our eyes will see some day. Listen to his words, struggling to find anything we know of, to describe what the Lord, Jesus looks like in heaven. The same Jesus who will return to this earth to depose Satan and all evil rebellers.

Revelation 1: *9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." 12 And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. 14 And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; 15 and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His*

voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 "Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

Write the things you see. This is not Hollywood. This is not super-hero's from some wild imagination. Not *cleverly devised fables* as Peter said. All of the glory written about and described in this book is real. It will be horrifying to sinners. It will be exultation to the forgiven who belong to Him.

That's our introduction. Let's look at the verses that Luke gives us directly from the witnesses who were there;

27 "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

This is the bridge verse from our study last week. And to put it back in context, Jesus has just mentioned the Shekinah glory that will accompany Him when He comes in fiery wrath with all His angels (and saints). To get the context back we'll back up a couple of verses;

*25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes **in His glory**, and the **glory of the Father and of the holy angels.** 27 "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."*

Jesus uses the "kingdom of God" and the "glory of God" interchangeably. He says some of the ones standing here are going to see with their eyes, the kingdom of God, which in the previous verse is the shekinah glory of Jesus

coming with His angels in wrath at the second coming.

And then Luke tells the story of how that **phenomenal prophecy** became true just days later. How did Jesus know that James and John and Peter would view the visible shekinah glory of God before their death.

What would it have meant if He had said those words and then it didn't happen. Goodbye Jesus. Phony Jesus. Making prophecies that don't materialize. But this prophecy was completed just days later, and we are the more sure of all of the other prophecies He spoke. Every word is true.

28 And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray.

We assume Mt. Hermon which is east of Cessaria Philippi. Snow capped in winter at 7336 elevation. It would be about 10 miles from the town up to the summit. Assuming summer temperatures, think how pleasant it would be to retreat to the mountain coolness for a retreat of prayer.

Jesus takes with Him the inner 3 disciples. Peter and John and James walked with Him up on the mountain.

29 And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming.

The glory of God had departed the temple 625 years ago. It returned when Jesus was born, but in judgement, Israel is blinded to the glory in their midst. Three men witness a miraculous snippet of the glory up on the mountain. A tiny portion of the glory that will come. But it must have been fully breath taking to witness what they saw.

30 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Two glorified saints are having a conversation with the Lord who purchased and glorified them. The Law, Moses, and the Prophets, Elijah, and the Author of the entire revelation, Jesus the Son of God, are having a conversation about the death that will give us life.

32 Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. 33 And it came about, as these were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not realizing what he was saying.

Thank goodness for Peter. If it were me I'm quite sure I would have said something even dumber. 3 tabernacles. Really. Does Jesus get a bigger tabernacle than Elijah and Moses?

Luke adds; -- not realizing what he was saying. We've got other ways of expressing what Peter was doing but we don't need to go there. Peter had the gift of his mouth, speaking whether his brain was connected, or not. I get it. I consciously try to keep my mouth shut, because when it's open it's often saying something really dumb. It happens.

When the shekinah glory filled the temple, it says the people bowed to the ground in worship. That would have been the better choice. Soooooo much better than what happens next. God tells you to shut up.

34 And while he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"

I wonder if John and James are ever like, hanging out with you Peter is a liability. Another fine mess you've gotten us into.

Remember the shekinah glory is cloud and fire. Dazzling light sometimes, and cloud others. We see them both in the old testament. Can you imagine

the cloud of God descending on you. And a voice comes out of the cloud. In direct answer to your mouth that should have been shut while you were face to the earth worshipping.

Peter, less talk, more listen. *“This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!”* Unimaginable terror.

36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent,

Ya think? How gracious our God is. We say dumb stuff and He doesn't strike us dumb. Zecharias said dumb stuff to an angel and got his tongue tied in a knot for several months.

God is so incredibly patient with us.

36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

625 years the Shekinah glory was vanished from Israel. 3 witnesses saw the return of that glory. Satan had one of them killed. 2 were left and Herod Agrippa was going to do Peter next, since he saw how much it pleased the jews.

But God intervened. His law requires two witnesses. Herod couldn't have killed Peter or John with an atomic bomb. They lived to tell of the glory they witnessed on Mt. Hermon. The Kingdom Glory. We may live to see it with our eyes. That possibility is real.

Israel was blinded to the glory. God in His wisdom first showed it to shepherds in fields, and then to the most common of fishermen. Such is the judgement of God. Nobodies in Tonopah can know Him, intimately and personally while the elite's on the coasts are blinded to Him. Professing to be wise, they become more foolish by the day.

How interesting that Ezekiel sees the glory depart, first over the eastern gate, and then over the mount of Olives, and Zachariah tells us Jesus feet will touch the mount of Olives and split it in two, and He will enter Jerusalem at the Eastern gate, which the muslims have sealed shut with stones.

The shekinah glory departed, and in the glorified Christ, the glory of God returns to the very places mentioned when the glory departed, but it's Jesus, risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, returning in glory when the glory returns.

What is our take-away this morning? Listen carefully. Every eye will see Him in His glory. Sooner or later, the dead and the living will present themselves before this Glory, this Christ. The bible is clear; Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God.

When that day happens, a day like no other, there will be two groups of people. One group will meet Him with joy inexpressible because they will come into His presence with a righteousness not their own. They will have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, their sins removed as far as the east is from the west, and they will join Him in His glory.

Then, sadly, there will be a second group who will appear before Him in unimaginable terror. The terror that cries out for a mountain to fall on them to hide them from the terror of His righteousness and their sin.

The words we read this morning are true. It isn't an account of Hollywood tricks. Or as Peter said, cunningly devised tales;

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

They saw with their eyes the Glory of His coming. We think it will be soon.

We think the wickedness of this present world is at a level never before allowed by God without intervention, and that the next intervention will be the final one. Are you ready?