***The Doctrine of Glory, No. 2
RO46-02***

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We're looking at Romans 5:1-5.

As you may remember now, Paul has established the fact that absolute righteousness is necessary for every human being; that is, to possess justification. The only basis for eternal life (life in heaven with God) is justification. So, Paul has established the absolute necessity of every sinner possessing justification. Justification means that the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ has been credited to the believing sinner's account with God. This absolute righteousness was declared to be a grace gift. It comes from God. It is secured on no other basis except grace. And that is by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Works of any kind interjected into this plan nullify God's offer, as per Romans 4:4-5.

Consequently, Satan does a fantastic job of confusing the issue of how to be born-again. And the strange thing about this is that this is confused even by people who themselves are devoted, very often, zealously to the practice of evangelism. It is fantastic how the very people who are engaged in evangelism are the ones who fall up and becloud the waters the most, relative to just exactly how a person secures the absolute righteousness which is essential to his justification, which is the foundation of his eternity in heaven.

Those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior enjoy certain consequences. In their past, they have been justified; that is, they have been declared not guilty of evil by the Father. In their present, Paul says that they have peace with God on the sin issue, and they stand permanently in the grace of justification (the doctrine of internal security).

**Hope of Glory**

In their future, which is what we are looking at presently, they look forward with joyful anticipation to the hope of experiencing the glory of God. The word "hope," we have shown, you means a sure thing. It will happen for certainty. It does not connote the spirit of uncertainty that it does in English. Furthermore, we are now looking at the other keyword relative to our future, and that is "glory." This describes what will happen to us as believers.

In an age such as we live in, in which evolutionary humanism is trying desperately to eliminate God and to deify men, we are confronted with the fact that the thinking of people is completely reversed from God's divine viewpoint. Bible doctrine, therefore, is cast aside as unimportant or false. Human viewpoint is held forward as the truth. So, instead of people worshiping and serving the Creator, they are worshiping and serving the creature – mostly the creatures of their own imaginations and their own creation, as Romans 1:23-25 has taught us.

So, the question that confronts us in one respect relative to our society is: how can this loss of awe and reverence and fear toward God be corrected? How can we do something about the contaminating influence of evolutionary humanism? Well historically, the surest way has been to confront people with the glory of God; to confront people with Who and What He is; and, to bring people into some experience in their own right with God and his functioning. Then the glory of God becomes an understandable quality in their thinking, and then their attitude toward God is put into the right perspective.

So, we've been studying the doctrine of glory. We found that the Hebrew words in the Old Testament mean the essence of God manifested visibly as a huge, blinding, beautiful brilliance of light and majestic splendor. When we talk about the essence of God, you understand that we're talking about God's nature: the fact that God is sovereignty; that He is absolute righteousness; that He is justice; that He is eternal life; that He is love; that He is omnipotent; that He is omniscient; that He is omnipresent; that He is immutable; and, that He possesses veracity (absolute truth). All of this constitutes what God is. It constitutes His holiness. We are speaking here of the glory of God visibly conveying the essence of God relative to His holiness.

The Greek word, we found, in the New Testament, means a physical likeness or splendor symbolizing God's essence. So, the Hebrew and the Greek are united in what they mean by the concept of glory. The glory of God in the Old Testament was described in post-biblical times by the term, "the Shekinah glory." The "Shekinah" glory comes from Hebrew words that mean simply the dwelling in glory (the appearance of God), therefore, in this particular magnificent form.

So, the "Shekinah" glory, we found, appeared to Moses at the burning bush incident, which we found recorded in Exodus 3:2-6. We also saw that the "Shekinah" glory led the Israelites in their escape from Egypt. We found that in Exodus 13:21-22 and Nehemiah 9:19. Let's add to the doctrine of glory now.

**The Doctrine of Glory**

1. **Protection**

We'll take up point number one, which is the "Shekinah" glory served as a protection for the Israelites from the pursuing Egyptians. In Exodus 14:19, we read, "And the angel of God (the pre-incarnate Christ) who went before the camp of Israel (in the "Shekinah" glory flame), removed and went before that. And the pillar of the cloud went from before their face and stood behind them." The cloud which normally led the Israelites went behind them at the point where they had crossed the Red Sea: "And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud in darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these. So, the one did not come near the other all the night."

Now they're facing the Red Sea. The people are gathered at the shoreline now. They're much concerned as to what God is going to do. And the Scripture tells us that the "Shekinah" cloud interjected itself between the pursuing the Egyptians and the fleeing Israelites. So, the Egyptians were in total darkness by the "Shekinah" cloud, and threw them into considerable confusion while the Israelites had total daylight conditions for themselves in their camp preparatory to crossing the Red Sea.

This same clout, therefore, was darkness and confusion to the Egyptians; and, illumination to the Israelites. That condition reminds us of the principle that the apostle Paul declared in 2 Corinthians 2:15-16, when he says, relative to believers in their service: "For are going unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are a savor of death unto death; and, to the other, a savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" The same individual believer with the information of the gospel can be, to a certain human being, a savor of death, because he tells them the gospel, and instead of that gospel being accepted, it is rejected, and the result of his communication is eternal death for that individual. For another individual, the communication is accepted, and the result is eternal life.

So, the "Shekinah" glory cloud, even in our day, in the form of God the Holy Spirit who indwells us, deals with us so that on the one hand, He is darkness to the negative volition group, while he is life to the positive relation group. God's glory, in other words, is upon believers, but it is not upon unbelievers.

1. **Mount Sinai**

The "Shekinah" glory was present on Mount Sinai as a thick cloud of the giving of the Law. This was a very impressive sight indeed. In Exodus 19:16-20, we read about this: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there was thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceedingly loud so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the lower part of the Mount. And Mount Sinai was all together in a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpets sounded long, and became louder and louder, Moses spoke. And God answered him a voice. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mount, and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up."

We may add to that picture Exodus 20:21-22: "The people stood afar off. And Moses was near unto the thick darkness where God was. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Thus you shall say unto the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I talked with you from heaven.''" So, here again, we have the indication that the "Shekinah" glory cloud was the dwelling place – the throne room of God, and thus was heaven itself, where God dwells. So, when it appeared to the Jews under these conditions here on Mount Sinai, it was heaven come down upon the mountaintop.

Let's add to that Exodus 24:15-18: "And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud cover the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai (the 'Shekinah' glory). And the cloud covered it six days, and the seventh day, He called unto the Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went up into the midst of the cloud and got up into the mount, and Moses was in the mount 40 days and 40 nights."

Now, putting this all together, how did the "Shekinah" glory demonstrate its presence on this occasion? Well, first of all, there were terrific thunderclaps. There were the lightning flashes. There was the smoke which arose from the mountain as from a great furnace. There were violent earthquakes on the mount, so that it quaked. And there was a crescendo blast of a trumpet sound – a blast of a trumpet sound that got louder and louder, and it says that it created a great fear. Then, following the trumpet sound, there is the voice of God coming from the cloud. And the whole thing just produced in the Israelites a spirit of awe and reverence and fear toward God.

Exodus 20:18-19 describe how they saw this. They heard the sound of the trumpet, and it caused them to lose from the mountain: "And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw it, they knew, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, 'Speak with us and we will hear, but don't let God speak with us lest we die.' And Moses said unto the people, 'Do not fear, for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before your face such that you do not sin.'"

So, what Moses told them was that God has a very special reason for demonstrating His power to you in this way. The Lord made it clear just who He was, and what kind of a God He was. And the result was that these people were just struck with fear. So, they said to Moses, "We don't even want to come near. We just want you to talk to God, and then you tell us what he says." This is expanded further in Deuteronomy 5:23, Deuteronomy 5:23-26, and Deuteronomy 18:16. The point being that the "Shekinah" glory of God struck a reverential and awesome fear in those who were there. They knew that it was God who was there in the midst of that cloud.

I want you to notice that Moses was not burned up. As he went into this cloud (this cloud of flame), he actually stayed there 40 days and 40 nights. And he did come back down, and he was not scorched, and he was not burned up. God said, "Come in," and Moses walked in. And you can be sure that his eyes were open and his pupils were dilated, and he was kind of really fearful as he walked into the midst of this whirling flame. And that's the idea. It's a whirling-looking structure of flame. And yet, it doesn't bother him. He comes out of it without being scorched.

All this conveyed what is impressive in God. You remember that that was the meaning of the Hebrew word "kavod" for glory – to convey what is impressive about a person. You can pursue this (namely His holiness) in Psalm 97 which is a beautiful description of the holiness of God, which is what makes Him stand apart, and cause us to be impressed with Him.

1. **The Face of Moses Shone**

The "Shekinah" glory caused the face of Moses to shine with the brilliance that created fear in the people. It was bad enough that they saw Moses going up into that cloud. It is bad enough that they saw all that was taking place. But when they finally saw Moses break through the cloud and come back out, they were thunderstruck by the fact that his skin had taken on the illumination of the glory of God.

In Exodus 34:29, we have this described: "And it came to pass when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children were Moses, behold, the skin of his face Shone, and they were afraid to come near. And Moses called them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto them, and Moses talk to them. And afterward, all the children of Israel came near, and gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. Until Moses had finished speaking to them, he put a veil on his face. And when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the veil off until he came out. And he came out and spoke unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses – that the skin of Moses shone. And Moses put the veil on his face again until he went in to speak with Him (that is, with God)."

So, the very proximity to the "Shekinah" glory, in the case of Moses who went right into the cloud, caused him to reflect the glory of God upon himself visibly, which, of course, again, is what is going to eventually happen to each of you. Moses' experience will be repeated by every believer in this room. The time will come when your skin will literally take on the magnificent, dazzling glow that the skin of Moses took on, as the glory of God becomes actual in your experience.

1. **Communication with God**

Moses communicated directly with God in the "Shekinah" glory, Exodus 33:9-11 relate that to us: "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses." You have the picture. Here is Moses standing before the tabernacle door, and the "Shekinah" glory flame comes down and stands at the door, and Moses is communicating directly into that flame with God who is within it: "And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door. And all the people rose up and worshiped – every man in his tent door. And the Lord spoke unto Moses face-to-face as a man speaks unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp. But his servant, Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart out of the tabernacle."

So, while Moses did not see God in the "Shekinah" flame, he did hear God, and he spoke with God face-to-face as a friend speaks. He asked questions. He expressed his thinking, and he clarified issues so that he knew what God wanted him to do relative to his leadership of the people.

1. **The Tabernacle**

The "Shekinah" glory descended upon the tabernacle, which was erected in the wilderness, as per the divine specifications given to Moses on Mount Sinai." We had this in Exodus 40:34-38. Now the "Shekinah" glory cloud descends upon this tabernacle structure which was built for the place of worship in the wilderness, and which was the place of worship until the pieces gradually were lost and destroyed. And eventually Solomon's magnificent temple was built in Jerusalem to replace this tabernacle structure as the center of Jewish worship.

Exodus 40:34 says, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." What does that mean? The "Shekinah" glory, the visible brilliance. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of the congregation because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. On this occasion, the glory of the Lord was displayed in such magnificence that Moses himself, for a while, simply could not enter the tabernacle, even to communicate with God. He could not get near it. It was such a brilliant, blinding, dazzling display of God's glory that Moses simply had to retire.

"And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night in the sight of all the hearts of Israel throughout all their journeys." So, the "Shekinah" glory, indicating the presence of God, descended upon this tabernacle, this tent-like structure. And then it was thereafter the guide for the journeys of the Israelites in the wilderness.

Now, that was perfect. This is what you call a government system of theocracy. They had rulers, but all of these rulers, which were in the form of judges (after the time of Moses and Joshua). These judges were under God's authority, and they directed the people as per God who was king. God was the king. God led them. Remember that the "Shekinah" glory stayed with them for centuries. Every child who was born into Israel eventually looked out there, and he saw this looking flame in the midst of the people of Israel at the tabernacle structure. And he had to be told what this was. And he had the direct impression, every time he looked there – there as God. And especially those of the Exodus generation would see Moses going up there and talking to God. So, they knew that He was among them. And he stayed with them for many, many centuries after that.

The result was that the theocracy was the best system of government in all the world. That that was the condition under which they lived. In other words, wouldn't it be great if what problems you have today; the questions that are in your mind; and, the answers that you're looking for in some respect – if there was someplace you could go and just speak to God directly, and get the answer directly? Wouldn't it be great if you could just go and talk to God? That's how Moses did it. People brought him the problem; they brought him the question; and, they brought him the issue, and he said, "Just a minute. I'll go and ask God." And he walked up to the "Shekinah" glory cloud; God came down and he talked with Him friend-to-friend; he got the answers; and, he went back and told the people. This included things relative to national policy; national issues; and, the conduct of the government – all these things were constantly discussed with God through the "Shekinah" glory. That's the greatest thing in the world.

Weren't these people four-way fools when they looked around and saw that all the other nations had a king over them? Eventually they said, "We don't like this system where we don't have a visible king. We want all the glory and splendor. We don't just want that cloud out there to talk to. People think we're crazy. You know, we go up and we talk to this cloud. These heathens think that we're nuts. And what were these heathen? They were Hamites. Every one of them that surrounded them in the land of Canaan were Hamites. That was the particular family branch that was uniquely under the curse and judgment of God. And these people said, "We have to be like them. We have to imitate them. They had a theocracy – the greatest form of government in the world. And they blew the whole thing.

**The Tabernacle**

With the presence of God here in the tabernacle, of course, the tabernacle itself became a very sacred place. It was sanctified. It was set apart. Exodus 29:43 tells us that: "And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle should be sanctified by My glory." The "Shekinah" glory sat there in the tabernacle. And as we shall see, it not only rested upon the outside, but God specifically, in His glory, rested within the holy of holies on the ark of the covenant. But the point here is that the tabernacle became a holy place. When you were in the presence of the "Shekinah" glory, you were in a holy place. That's why when the book was burning, as the result of the "Shekinah" glory upon the bush, Moses was told: "Take off your shoes. You are in a holy place. You must act accordingly."

A building was a holy place. Is this room in which we are gathered today a holy place? Is the most magnificent church structure in the city a holy place? Not for one moment. For God has moved out of buildings. God no longer resides in a building. Therefore, a building is not a holy place. Of course, you know where God dwells today. You are his temple. Your bodies are His dwelling place. And the place of great glory is within you. And the place of great holiness is within you. Therefore, you and I must conduct ourselves commensurate with the fact that we have the holiness of God residing within us, as they have to conduct themselves in keeping with the holiness upon the tabernacle.

There always some Christians who get this all fouled up? They think that a church or a church room is some kind of a holy place; you speak in hushed tones; and, so on. I tell you, there are some Christians that would have heart failure if they walked in here and listen to us starting an evening service, playing the "Colonel Bogey March." I mean, whoever heard of a church service in a holy building like this room having a whole concert band that plays "Colonel Bogey."

Well, I'll tell you. One of the great things they had in this tabernacle setup in the Levitical system was great musicians. They had whole families that went from father to son, and from father to son. They were constantly handed down the role of musician. And I'll tell you right now that if Moses and Aaron could have had something like the Berean Band in the worship of Israel, they would have cut their wrists with joy. They would have given anything for it. If David would have been able to have the "Colonel Bogey March" playing, he would have crossed not only the River Kwai, but anything else that was in Palestine in his military exploits. They appreciated the creative expression that music represents.

This is not a holy place. The only thing holy about this room is the fact that it is filled with people who constitute God's temple, who are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. Eventually, somebody is going to turn the lights out, and walk out and lock the door. And when that last person walks out of this room, this is no more holy that some barroom on Deep Elm Street. But while believers are in it, this is a very sacred place.

However, we are not concerned with the building as such within, the restraints of using it as God's property and commensurate with that. The thing that we should be concerned with is how we are treating these bodies; what we do with them; how we are keeping our health up; how we are keeping our exercise program up; how we are keeping our weight where it should be; and, how we are keeping our mental attitudes relaxed and clean and right through the intake of doctrine, as well as what we think; what we do; where we go; and, what we say. That constitutes the holiness of God that *He* is interested in. That's what counts with him.

Well, indeed, the Old Testament tabernacle was a pattern of the fact that we are sanctified. We are set apart to God's purposes, as this place was once the "Shekinah" glory descended upon it. Until the "Shekinah" glory descended upon this tent, it was nothing. But the moment the glory of God descended on it, then it became everything.

The "Shekinah" glory was the visible evidence, then, of the presence of God among the Israelites. Exodus 29:45 indicates that. God says, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and I'll be their God. He dwelt among them in the form of this fiery cloud.

This fiery cloud of glory filled the tabernacle, and it resided specifically in the holy of holies. This cloud indicated when they were to travel, as we saw, and when they would not travel there. But again, I want you to notice that the tabernacle, while completely in contact with the "Shekinah" glory (the fiery cloud), the tabernacle did not burn up. The fiery cloud set upon the mercy seat. The mercy seat was the lid to the ark of the covenant – that box in which resided the evidences of the sin of the people: the broken Law; the manna; and, Aaron's rod that budded. This love was made of acacia wood and was covered with solid pure gold. And on this lid there were two angels. This thing was made of material. And the "Shekinah" glory set right there between these two cherubim. And the gold could have melted, and the acacia could have burned, but it did not.

1. **The Levitical Priesthood**

The Levitical priesthood was confirmed by a dramatic display of the "Shekinah" glory. We have this in Leviticus 9:23-24: "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people. And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people." Now when you read a phrase like that. I hope by now you know exactly what to think of: "The glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people."

They would see this brilliant burst – this fantastic, eliminating flame of fire and of light. So, here the whole system of the Levitical priesthood has been put into operation. They have placed an offering upon the altar. And here is the dramatic confirmation. The visible glory of God appears. Verse 24: "And there came a fire from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat, which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces." I cannot believe they did. Suddenly, out of the "Shekinah" glory cloud, there reached out a burst of flame. It hit that altar, and began consuming the sacrifice that was on it. This was confirmation that God was pleased with what they had done. They had obeyed Him. They had built the tabernacle. They had set up the Levitical priesthood. And now their communication line with God was established, and He demonstrated it in this way.

1. **God Spoke to the Israelites**

The "Shekinah" glory cloud was God's method of speaking with Moses so the Israelites could hear Him, and be assured that Moses was God's spokesman. We have this in Exodus 19:9. The Lord said, "I'm dealing with you in this way, Moses – out of this cloud, so that these people know that when you come, and you report to them, they have spoken with Me." That again, it would seem, would have been conclusive to them that what Moses told them to do, they would not have murmured and complained about it; but, they did.

1. **Discipline**

The "Shekinah" glory, on occasion, signified God's presence to discipline negative volition of the Israelites. You may read about this in Numbers 14:10 and following. Then we have one verse that we can read here in Deuteronomy 4:24, which reads: "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." And there were times when God, in the "Shekinah" glory, simply came and He punished them. He actually literally destroyed them – on several occasions. They would not go into the land at Kadeshbarnea. Then they decided: "We were fools. We should have listened." But God said, "It's too late. You're never going to go in now. The next morning they said, "Yes, we are, Lord. You're going to go before us," and they stormed over that hill, and, boy, those Hamitic Canaanites tore them to shreds. And the "Shekinah" glory of God brought discipline upon them.

1. **The Mercy Seat**

The "Shekinah" glory resided on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies. We have this in Exodus 26:33-34: "And you shall hang up the veil under the clasps that you may bring within the veil the ark of the testimony. And the veil shall divide between the holy place and the most holy, and you shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place." So, they brought the ark of the covenant into the holy of holies.

Then add to that Leviticus 16:2: "And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Speak unto Aaron, your brother, that he never comes into the holy place (that is, the holy of holies) within the veil before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, so that he does not die. For I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy." So, for centuries, and later in the temple itself (Solomon's temple), the holy of holies was the place in which God resided, right there upon the ark of the covenant on the mercy seat.

This required that heavy veil to separate the holy place from the holy of holies. This separated the priests who normally ministered in the holy place and the people who are outside, lest they should be consumed by the approach to the "Shekinah" glory. The high priest himself was only permitted to enter the holy of holies once a year on the great day of atonement, on very strict ritual procedures. To be in the presence of the "Shekinah" glory in the holy of holies was to be in the place of death. Again, we remind you, that this cloud did not burn up the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant symbolized the divine presence of God in the form of the "Shekinah" glory which was resting upon it. Therefore, when the cloud wasn't there, this was very, very serious to the Jews, because it was very clear to them that then God was no longer in their midst, and no longer operating in their favor.

In 1 Samuel 4:3, the Philippians had been beating the tar out of the Israeli army. So, the Israelites decided what they needed to do to win the battle against the Philippians. They decided to take this sacred object of the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, which was the residing place of God's "Shekinah" glory, and take it into battle with them. So, that's what they did: "And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, 'Why has the Lord smitten us today with the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it comes among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

"So, the people went to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim (that is the "Shekinah" glory cloud). And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, 'What does this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?' And they understood that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp. And the Palestinians were afraid, for they said, 'God has come into the camp.' And they said, 'Woe unto us, for there has not been such a thing here before. Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.'"

Now the Philippians knew that this ark represented the very divine presence of the God of Israel, Who had so devastated the mighty army of the Pharaoh back in Egypt. So, this did cast fear into the hearts of the Philistine enemies. However, the Philistines rallied themselves, and they decided to charge in the battle: ark, or nor ark; and, presence of God, or no presence of God. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten: "And they fled every man into his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, for 30,000 footmen of Israel fell." And, the worst thing of all: the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

Now the thing is really terrible. Now the glory is gone from Israel. When the word is brought back to Eli the priest, he falls over backward when he hears that the ark has been taken. He's horrified that the glory of Israel is now removed, and all the presence of God is gone. Do you see what that means? That means that Israel is just another tribe of people. They're nobodies. As long as the presence of God was not with them, then they're nobodies. When the presence of God was with them, they were everything. There was nobody who could conquer them, and there was nobody who was superior to them. They had the "Shekinah" glory right there with them. And that was everything.

**Ichabod**

So, Eli falls over backward; breaks his neck (he's an old man); and, he dies on the spot. One of his son's wives (Phinehas' wife) is pregnant. In verse 19, she gets the word: "And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with a child, near to be delivered. And when she heard the tidings, that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed in travail, for her pains came upon her." And about the time of her death, the woman who stood by her said unto her, 'Do not fear, for you have borne a son,' but she did not answer. Neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod."

**No Glory**

You remember that the basic Hebrew word for glory was "kavod." The word that represented the "Shekinah" glory was "kavod.". She gave this boy this name: "Ichavod," which is Ichabod, which means "no glory," in this moment of her great travail. Her husband is dead; her father-in-law, the priest is dead; now the ark of the covenant is gone; the "Shekinah" glory presence of God is gone; and, everything is gone that's worthwhile to her. So, the women are telling her, "Be happy. You have a son," which would have been a great moment of joy for her. Instead, she says, "This is not a moment of glory for me. This is a moment of no glory because this little part of the word here at the beginning (this "Ich") means negative – no glory. And she names her boy "no glory" – "Ichabod." And it is a term of great distress and of great humiliation, because God's presence is gone. Every time this boy walks around and they call out his name "Ichabod," they're reminding themselves of the great tragedy that has befallen the nation – that the presence and the power of God has departed from them. So, while it abode among them, they were great; and, without it, they were nothing.

1. **Solomon's Temple**

The "Shekinah" glory later filled Solomon's temple at the dedication. After the temple was finally built, and they were ready for the great day of dedication, there were many tremendously wonderful things that took place on that day, not the least of which was Solomon's prayer of dedication, but nothing could hold a candle to the display of the coming of the "Shekinah" glory upon this temple, thus confirming God's pleasure with it, and that His presence was now there in the temple with the people, as it had been previously with them in the tabernacle.

1 Kings 8:10-11: "And it came to pass, when the priest would come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord. So, the priests could not stand to be minister because of the cloud. For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." And the people were, of course, overjoyed that this magnificent temple now had God's "Shekinah" glory dwelling in it.

However, down the centuries, the Jews just could not resist the idolatry that they picked up from the nations round about them. They could not refrain from the negative qualities, and the negative attitudes that characterized them toward doctrine and toward God's instruction to them. So, finally a very sad occasion occurred in the history of Israel.

Ezekiel 9:3: "And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, upon which He was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writers ink horn by his side." We'll not go into all the details here. We will just point out to you the fact that here the "Shekinah" glory one day suddenly moved out from the holy of holies from off the mercy seat, and moved out to the threshold of the temple.

Ezekiel 10:4: "When the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house. And the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory." The "Shekinah" glory has moved out from the holy of holies. It has moved through the holy place. It has moved out of the temple itself, and it has moved into the courtyard. And, of course, the whole place burst into a blaze of glory. For here is the flaming tongue of fire now out here in the courtyard. And Ezekiel is seeing this.

Verse 18: "Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the house and stood over the cherubim." Ezekiel 11:23: "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain, which is on the east side of the city." What you have here is that the thing "Shekinah" glory then left the courtyard area; went to the Mount of Olives (which was on the east side of the city); and, then from the Mount of Olives went up into heaven. And just the way the description is given, of the Spirit of God moving, almost suggests that it was with a lingering departure that the "Shekinah" glory of God moved from amongst the people of Israel: first, out of the holy of holies; to the threshold of the temple; out into the courtyard; then away from the city of Jerusalem; eastward to the Mount of Olives; and, then upward to heaven. And the holy cloud is almost pausing and looking back, reluctant to move out after all these centuries. Since the time that Moses first put up the tabernacle, God dwelt among his people. And now it's all over. The prophets knew what it meant. Anybody who was versed in doctrine among the Jews knew what was happening, when they saw the "Shekinah" glory ascending off of the Mount of Olives into heaven.

This brought a very tragic condition, because as long as the "Shekinah" glory remained in Solomon's temple, the Jews as a nation were invincible militarily. So, gentile nation could touch them. But once the "Shekinah" glory departed from them, they were very quickly destroyed by the Babylonians, who invaded. And in 586 B.C., Jeremiah 52 describes the horrendous things that were done to them as they were taken captive, and the city and the temple were destroyed.

So, the departure of the "Shekinah" glory from among the Israelites signaled the end of God's protective presence against His enemies. And now the theocracy was completely dead.

1. **The "Shekinah" Glory will Return**

We are going to add one more point just to close this picture, so that we don't close on too dark a note. And that is where we will stop for now. And that is that "Shekinah" glory is again going to return to the nation of Israel, and to the temple in the millennium. In Ezekiel 43:2-5, you have just described: "And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East. And His voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city. And the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar. And I fell on my face, and the glory of the Lord came into the house by way of the gate, whose prospect is toward the east. And so the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner court, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house;' that is, the temple.

So, Ezekiel remembers the terrible things that happened as he saw the glory of God departing. But God said, Ezekiel, you've been my faithful man. And I don't want to leave you with a great burden of heart relative to what is being done here, for the glory has gone. I want to tell you, Ezekiel, I'm going to show you a vision out in the millennium. This temple will again be built, when Christ rules here upon this earth, and the "Shekinah" glory will once more fill it."

When they came back from Babylon, and they built the temple again, it was not as magnificent as Solomon's temple. And on the dedication day, the people wept. Why did they weep? It should have been a time of joy. They finally restoring their system of worship after 70 years captivity in Babylon. Well, I think one of the reasons they wept is because they had the temple; they had the system; and, it was respected even by the Lord Jesus Christ as the house of God, but in the holy of holies, the "Shekinah" glory no longer resided. They could no longer go and talk with God face-to-face, as a man can with his friend.

The "Shekinah" glory has been replaced today by the indwelling Holy Spirit. And as Moses could talk with the "Shekinah" (friend-to-friend), so you can talk with the Spirit of God. We'll get into that in more detail in the future. But I do want to at least leave you with the fact that you have everything that they had in the tabernacle, and a whole lot more. So, when Paul says to us, "We are in hope (a certain anticipated expectation) of the glory of God," all you can say is, "Wow."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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