***The Doctrine of the "Shekinah" Glory
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We now continue looking at Romans 5:1-5, in considering the effects of justification, which Paul summarizes in these verses.

**The Hope of Glory**

The future consequence of justification is what we are currently looking at. And that future, Paul says, for every believer is: "The hope of the glory of God." Hope in the Bible connotes an expectation which is certain of fulfillment. The hope that we have is the hope of glory. Glory refers to something that makes a person or a thing unique, and thus influential. We have therefore been studying the glory of God, which has not only the fact that He is unique and influential, consequently, but it also connotes a visible quality. When we speak about the glory of God, there is attached a factor of visibility to it.

**The "Shekinah" Glory**

And that was identified in the Old Testament by the term that the rabbis used of the "Shekinah" glory. So, we are currently looking at the "Shekinah" glory which is the most dramatic, visible presentation of the glory of God. The whole purpose of this is to understand what the word "glory" means, so that when we go back to Romans, and Paul says, "One thing that is absolutely certain in your future is the glory of God," you'll be able to enter into what that simple statement means, because it is fraught with fantastic meaning and fantastically thrilling consequences.

All right, very quickly, we found about the "Shekinah" glory this: It called Moses to lead Israel out of the Egyptian bondage. It protected Israel's escape from Pharaoh. The "Shekinah" glory led the Jews in the wilderness travels. It was present on Mount Sinai. It illuminated the face of Moses. It marked God's presence among the Israelites. It abode over the tabernacle and on the mercy seat of the ark. We also learned that the "Shekinah" glory left Solomon's temple, and it is to return in the millennial temple. It disciplined sin among the Israelites. It demonstrated the unapproachable holiness and the power of God in grace or discipline. Isaiah saw the "Shekinah" glory in heaven displaying the awesome holiness of God. And we looked at that. Ezekiel saw the "Shekinah" glory in brilliant color display like a fantastic laser beam display. The "Shekinah" glory cloud, we found, is made up of the flaming angels of God. The flaming angels actually constitute the "Shekinah" glory. These flaming angels also, we found, form the chariot of God, which took Elijah to heaven.

**The Doctrine of the "Shekinah" Glory**

1. **Adam and Eve's Covering**

Now, continuing from that point, and with that brief review, point number one is that Adam and Eve were probably covered with a holy light of God's "Shekinah" glory before they sinned, and thus found themselves naked after sinning. Genesis 3:7 describes for us the shock that came to them when they discovered that they were naked, and that they could now see this indeed that they were naked. That did not mean that up to this time they could not see their own bodies, though they were covered with a robe of God's light glory. It was simply that they were now aware that, to the eyes of others, namely God, they were naked. Up to then, they walked in the presence of God, and they were clothed. They were covered. So, apparently what they lost was the "Shekinah" glory covering through their sin.

1. **The Flaming Sword**

Another point to observe, secondly, is that the flaming sword between the cherubim angels guarding the entrance to Eden was the "Shekinah" glory flame. This is described in Genesis 3:24. It is described as a flaming sword. It has the same description that we have found elsewhere in Scripture, in describing the nature of the "Shekinah" glory which also appeared in the form of a sword (a flame).

1. **Moses**

On one occasion, Moses desired to see God's glory, or His Holiness, fully unveiled, but was permitted only a more dazzling than normal passing display of the "Shekinah" glory (Exodus 33:18-23). Moses, after one of his very hard times with the people of Israel (one of their rebellious occasions, and a moment of discouragement for himself), apparently wanted a little more personal confident confirmation as to who it was that he was dealing with. So, he said, "God, please show me Yourself in Your true holiness – in the fullness of Your glory." And God said, "Moses, I can't do that. If I were to do that, you would die. Nobody can look upon Me in the fullness of My holiness and live;" that is, Moses could not because he had an old sin nature. He had not yet received the glorification of the removal of the old sin nature. So God said, "But I will give you a more dazzling display of My glory than I have done up to now." See, Moses had seen the "Shekinah" glory. He had seen these other demonstrations.

So, God said, "I'm going to hide you here in this break in the rock, and then I'm going to pass by. And I'm not going to let you see the fullness of My holiness, but I'm going to keep My hand on you, and after I've gone by, you won't see My face, but you will see My glory in a magnificent display passing by you." The Bible doesn't describe for us any further the nature of this demonstration of glory that Moses saw. But it was something extraordinarily spectacular from what the others had been seeing in the same kind of glory cloud.

1. **Israel**

The "Shekinah" glory was associated only with the nation of Israel, and never with the pagan gentile nations (Romans 9:4). The gentiles never had this demonstration of God's glory. It was only to the people of Israel.

1. **It Burns and Consumes**

The "Shekinah" glory on occasion burns and consumes. We have pointed out to you that because these are flaming angels, they are not exactly what we normally think of as fire. Therefore, it is a controlled flame. Therefore, it could sit upon Moses and not burn him to a crisp. It could sit upon the tabernacle, and not incinerate it. It could sit upon the ark of the covenant, and not burn it up; and, so on. But there are times when the "Shekinah" glory burns and will cause death, if the person approaches it on improper ground. You have this in Hebrews 10:27, Hebrews 12:29, Isaiah 26:11, and 2 Peter 3:7. So, while it is a non-burning flame on occasion, on other occasions, it's a devastating flame.

The word "glory" in the New Testament often has the definite article not translated, which would make it *the* glory to indicate the specific "Shekinah" glory. You have several places where our English translations just leave out the word *the*, and therefore, you do not grasp that it is *the* "Shekinah" glory that it is referring to.

For example, you have this in Matthew 25:31, 1 Corinthians 2:8, Ephesians 1:17, Colossians 1:27, and Hebrews 1:3 as examples.

1. **The Shepherds at the Birth of Christ**

The glory of God shining upon the shepherds at the birth of Jesus was the "Shekinah" Glory, as you read in Luke 2:8-9. You read that the glory of God suddenly shone round about the shepherds. What was it that was shining? Well, it was the "Shekinah" glory. It was the presence of Almighty God. And these shepherds, being trained in Old Testament Scriptures, knew immediately what had happened to them. They were naturally very sore afraid, because they knew that they were in the presence of God Himself Who indwelt this flaming, torch-like, sword-like flame that was made up of these flaming angels. The shepherds, therefore, were in fear of the appearance of the fiery glory cloud, just as the Jews had been at Sinai. The fiery angels making up the Shekinah glory cloud suddenly appeared to the shepherds. You'll remember that after the initial announcement to them of what had happened in Bethlehem, that all the burning, flaming angels that were making up the "Shekinah" glory cloud became visible as angels to the shepherds. And they saw this heavenly host swirling and twirling into this sword-like a flame of fire that it appeared before them.

1. **The Magi**

The star which guided the magi to the House of the Christ child was the Shekinah glory pillar of fire. If you'll turn to Matthew 2, for just a moment, let's review the Christmas story today, since it persists in being so cold in Texas, which it's not supposed to be. We'll have a Christmas lesson today to make you feel more at home. This is one of the great passages describing the birth of Jesus Christ.

"Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem." This word "wise men" in the Greek is the word "magos." "Magos" actually means "powerful ones." The magi were from a great empire to the east of the Roman Empire. At the time that Jesus was born, Rome ruled the world. However, to the east of Rome was an empire which was practically equally as great, and certainly was militarily as powerful as was Rome. Out of that empire of Persia came these magi. The magi were actually a priestly ruling class of Persia. They were not kings. So, don't sing at Christmastime, "We three kings of Orient are," because they were not kings. Actually, they were what we would call a Congress. They formed the Senate of the Congress. They were the upper house. The magi, therefore, were called the powerful ones, as opposed to a lower house called the "sophoi," which were the wise ones.

So, actually, to translate this is "wise men" in the King James is not a good translation. It should be translated as "the powerful ones." The magi of the Christmas story, therefore, were these powerful ones who ruled in Persia at the time. They were an aristocratic class of learned philosopher priests who actually confirmed who was to rule. They actually confirmed the king. And nobody could be king until the magi, the upper house, confirmed that he was king, because they trained him, just as Moses had been trained by the priests of Egypt in all the knowledge of the Egyptians.

**Daniel**

These magi possessed great knowledge of astronomy, astrology, mathematics, science, agriculture, architecture, and the myths which had biblical origin: creation myths; and, myths of the fall, which had been corrupted in transmission, but which were based upon the original truths. And one of their great powers was interpreting dreams. This is where Daniel came in. Daniel was a magis. He was one of these powerful ones. He and his three friends, as a matter of fact, as you know, were taken because they were of the royal line. They were taken to Babylon. In Daniel 1:3-6 and Daniel 1:17-20 tell us how they were trained in Babylon to be part of the magi group, and to be part of the philosopher priests who were the counselors of the king.

Daniel and his Jewish compatriots made tremendous progress in this training program, so that Daniel was put second in command to the king himself. And Daniel, consequently, appointed his three friends to very influential positions – the three that were thrown into the fiery furnace. You may read about that in Daniel 2:48-49.

Here is something that is very significant. We have magi serving in these eastern countries who were Jews. They were Jewish magi. They were Jewish powerful ones. And they continued from Daniel's day on down to the time of the birth of Christ. So, we very likely are dealing here with magi who came from the East to worship the Christ child who were Jews. They were Jewish magi. They were Jews who were living in Persia. They were descended from the Jews who had been taken into captivity previously, centuries before, and who were serving in these government roles. Consequently, a lot of things then fall into place and make more sense to us. As Jews, they would know and believe the Old Testament Scriptures, for example. Consequently, as Jews, they would know that Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks had been fulfilled to the point where the Messiah should arrive. As they read Daniel's prophecy of the history that God had remaining for their people, which was 490 years from the time of the decree going out from Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem and to return to the land, they counted up the years and they said, "Hey, you know what? The Messiah should be arriving, because we're almost to this point in the schedule. They would know that if they were Jews who respected the Scripture.

This would also explain their knowledge that the sign of the promised Messiah King was to be a heavenly luminary. In Numbers 24:17, they would read this, and consequently, they would know that the mark of the appearance of the Messiah King would be a heavenly luminary, which used the word "star," which was just a general word for a heavenly luminary: "I shall see Him, but not now. I shall behold Him, but not near. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the foreigners of Moab," and so on. This is Balaam, whom we will be getting to in greater detail in our Sunday evening study of the letter to the church at Pergamum. But this is Balaam giving a prophecy in spite of what he wants to do to hurt Israel. God is speaking true truth through him. And one of the things he says is that there's going to come a ruler (a scepter) out of Israel, and that there will be a star out of Jacob, and that he would be marked by this luminary called the star here.

Consequently, this heavenly site would be significant to them, as Jewish magi, in connection with the coming of the King.

It is questionable that any gentile Persian magi would be interested in making such a long, arduous journey over the desert to worship some king of the Jews. That's very hard to believe that gentile magi had the motivation to do that, because it was many, many, many months of travel to arrive in Jerusalem. But the magic of the Christmas story did exactly that, so that they were obviously highly motivated, and they had to take the same many, many months to travel back home again.

How many magi came, we don't know. Generally, the old Christmas story in the Christmas card picture had three of them, because there were three gifts given. But that is an assumption. We do know that, as powerful philosopher priests of the upper house of the magi group, they would not just have traveled on some camels, for example. That's for sure. They're Persians. They're going to be riding on tremendous horses. And they're not going to just be wandering out in the desert by themselves with a couple of servants carrying a bottle of water. They're going to have a large retinue of chariots and soldiers, as well as servants along with them. So, this was quite a body. This is perhaps one reason that Herod got a little uneasy when he saw this group arrive at the gates of Jerusalem. This was not just three Arabs wandering in off the desert on their camels. This was quite a military force that suddenly appears before the gates of Jerusalem, and some very distinguished personages with whom Herod was not particularly interested in coming into conflict with, because he had enough trouble keeping peace and staying on good terms with the Roman government, which had appointed him, an Arab, to be king over the Jews. The Jews weren't too crazy about having Arab Herod as their king to begin with.

**The Star**

Now what did they follow? The Bible says that they followed the star. The word "star" in Scripture is used to cover any heavenly luminary: whether it's a planet; whether it's a comet; or, whether it's a star. What these men saw was a light display in the sky. And their knowledge of astronomy enabled them to know that it was abnormal. What they saw was probably, I'm sure, the "Shekinah" glory flame in the west. They're in the east; they look in the west; and, they see the "Shekinah" glory flame.

They view it as the sign of the Messiah. As Jewish magi, they would connect it with Numbers 24:17, as we've read. So, they proceeded to the logical point to inquire of this matter, which was Jerusalem. I don't think the Bible indicates to us that the flame hopped across the sand dunes in front of them, leading them across the desert. They simply saw it in the west. They connected what its meaning was. So, they headed for Jerusalem, the logical place to inquire about the Messiah King. So, they traveled and traveled and traveled, and they finally arrived. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they had a conference, as you remember, with Herod. Herod was uneasy about this king. He was an Arab. He shouldn't be ruling. He didn't want to have a king that was going to be a threat to him. So, he pretended to be very interested in the Child King so that he could go worship him. His plan was to kill the child. He didn't want to kill anybody else. He wanted to identify the specific Christ Child.

So, he said, "You go find him, but before he sent them off, he was very careful to say, "Now let me see. How long ago was it when you first saw the sign in the sky?" And they said, "Two years ago. We've been traveling, traveling, traveling." It was very important for him to button down that time segment.

He says, "You go find him and come back and report to me." In the meantime, he had called in the scribes, and he says, "Where is this Messiah King supposed to be born?" The scribes, of course, readily turned to Micah in the Old Testament, and they say, "Here it is. He supposed to be born in the city of Bethlehem." So, he tells the magi: "Bethlehem is the place. You locate the child, and then come and tell me who and where he is."

**Nazareth**

When the magi left, to their great joy, the "Shekinah" glory flame suddenly appeared again. It appeared to them out of the sight of Herod and his servants. And the flame, instead of leading south to Bethlehem, five or six miles down the road, strangely enough, turns and starts leading them north 60 miles up the road to Nazareth where Jesus was.

You remember that the situation, as we read the story of the birth of Jesus, was that He was born. On the eighth day, He was circumcised. Then it was necessary for Him to be taken to the temple for the sacrifice to be made since he was the firstborn of Mary, as per the Jewish ritual of the Mosaic Law, for the dedication of this Child to God, and for the sacrifice in His behalf. But His mother was not able to enter a consecrated place like the temple until a period of purification following the birth of a child, which was a period of 33 days. Therefore, for 33 days they had to reside in Bethlehem until this period was over. Then we have the story of how they took Him to the temple; performed the sacrificial rite; and, then they went back home to Nazareth.

Now time has gone by; time has gone by; and, time has gone by. In the meantime, the magi are coming across the desert as a result of the illumination that they saw. That's why your Christmas cards are all fouled up when they have the shepherds and the magi all sitting in some barn all together worshiping the Christ Child. The shepherds were long since someplace else before the magi ever thought about turning up on the scene. But what did happen was that the "Shekinah" glory cloud led them down the twisting road toward Nazareth, and then it stood and marked a specific house.

This makes a lot more sense than to say it was simply a star as we think of a star, because a star that is up in the sky cannot mark a certain city. A star that's up in the sky would have marked Nazareth, or Bethlehem, or Jerusalem, or any other place. Nor can a star up in the sky mark a certain house. The artist on your Christmas cards try to get around that problem, because they put a star, and then they put a long stream of light, like the tale of a comet flashing down. Sometimes, I know, they actually put an arrow at the bottom of the stream of light, pointing down to the house: "This is it, fellas, right here." And they're trying to accommodate the fact that: how in the world do you think about a star marking a house? Well, it couldn't. But the "Shekinah" glory flame – now that could mark a house. And that's exactly what happened. The "Shekinah" glory flame let them down the road. They knew exactly what road. It was right there, just as it led the Israelites through the wilderness. Then when it got to Nazareth, it went right to the house of Mary and Joseph, and it sat right there on the house. And the wise man said, "That's it. He's in there."

They walked in, and sure enough, as you remember, they found the mother and the Child. And then they gave Jesus the three gifts: the gold; the frankincense; and, the myrrh, all of which had significance symbolically, which we won't go into now. But I just want to point out that they didn't give them to Mary, which is another indication that these were probably Jewish magi. That is because if they had been gentile, Persian magi, they would have given these gifts, and they would have worshiped the mother and the Child, because, as we shall find in our study of the letter to the city of Pergamum, it was the custom of the Orientals to worship the mother and child (the Madonna and child). That was the thing that Nimrod began back in Babylon, and then was transported over into the other nations of the world – the mother and child cult. In all likelihood, they would have seen this mother and Child, and they would have said, "Man, this is the thing we've always worshiped. This is the for-real thing. And they would have worshiped Mary along with the child, but they did not. As Jewish magi, they knew that only the Christ Child had the deity that was deserving of worship.

Well, they were led by God (as you read the rest of the story for yourself) not to return to Herod, but to go home through another way. God said, "Bypass Jerusalem. Don't even go through it. Go home another way, and don't go back to Herod, because he's out to kill the Child. In the meantime, the word is given to Joseph that Herod will react to this when he discovers that he's been double-crossed by the magi, and he will use their time fix that he secured from them of the two-year period, and he will use it to try to destroy the Christ Child. Of course, that's what Herod did. Jesus was something less than two years old when the Magi came to him. He was not an infant – newly born. But Herod said, "2 years old – I want every baby boy in the surrounding countryside killed.

Well, in order to protect Jesus, Joseph was told to flee to Egypt. And at that time, he left Nazareth and went to Egypt until Herod was dead, and then came back and returned to their city.

The "Shekinah" glory, thus, as the star of Bethlehem, makes a lot more sense in all the features of the story that are involved. It fits the picture, plus it gives us a very identifying sign that is associated with Jesus Christ. You remember Matthew 24:29-30 tell us that when Jesus Christ returns, one of the ways that the world is going to recognize Him, and Israel particularly, will be because His sign appears in the heavens: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then there shall appear the sign of the sign of Man in Heaven." What's the sign of the Son of Man? The same thing that was a sign to the magi (to the powerful ones) that came to visit the Christ Child. That's the sign – the sign of the "Shekinah" glory flame.

And then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." There confirms it for you. Now, you've learned enough about glory to know that that is the "Shekinah" glory in which He returns. So, that is His mark.

1. **Simeon**

When Jesus was taken to the temple, it is also interesting to note that Simeon, the elderly servant of the Lord, who had been told that he would not die until he saw the Messiah king. When he saw the baby Jesus, he took Him in His arms. And one of the things he thanked God for was that now he had seen the glory of Israel (Luke 2:32). And what he meant by that was that he had seen in Christ, like Elisha's servants' eyes, being open to what was surrounding them. So, this man had his eyes opened, and saw that in the Christ child was the "Shekinah" glory. Luke 2:32: "A light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."

1. **The Mount of Transfiguration**

One of the greatest displays is the "Shekinah" glory that was displayed in Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. You have this in several places. You have it in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36. On this occasion, Jesus Christ had taken three of His disciples: Peter; James; and, John up into a high mountain. We don't know specifically what the mountain was, but He took them up there, and He proceeded to pray. And apparently, they were there overnight on the mountain. The disciples fell asleep. Suddenly, as Jesus was praying, His flesh and His clothing radiated a brilliant light. The "Shekinah" glory of the fiery flame suddenly surrounded Him. And His face glowed as Moses' face had. And His clothing was absolutely white as white as nobody on earth can get a thing white, the Scriptures say. The result was that a display of glory appeared around Jesus Christ.

There is one thing that's important to notice, and that is that it came from within Christ. This was not as in the case of Moses on Mount Sinai, where the glory was outside of him. This was internal to Jesus Christ. In other words, He, who had the essence of deity (and that's what the "Shekinah" glory is – it's the essence of God displayed), was displaying that deity and consequently, that holiness. Jesus Christ was God in human form. Colossians 1:15 and Colossians 2:9 tell us that. And the "Shekinah" glory in Jesus Christ was the glory that was natural to Him as God. Usually it was shielded, so that when you looked at Him, you did not see the glory of deity permeating Jesus Christ. But on this occasion, it was displayed. Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory because he has the essence of God. That's what Hebrews 1:3 tells us.

Well, Moses and Elijah appeared on each side of Him in the "Shekinah" glory cloud. Remember that He's surrounded by these flaming angels that make up the "Shekinah" glory cloud. And through the shining, brilliant light of the angelic presence, Moses and Elijah are glowing with a brilliant light along with Jesus Christ. Christ was the one who dwelt in the "Shekinah" glory appearance in the Old Testament, and had spoken to Moses from it. Jesus Christ was in the "Shekinah" glory horses and chariot that called Elijah up to heaven alive. So, both of these men had direct contact in the presence of the "Shekinah" glory before. They were standing there talking with Jesus about His imminent death in Jerusalem to pay for the sins of the world.

The disciples wake up, and they open their eyes to this spectacular sight. Their pupils dilate; their mouths dropped open; and, they are awed by this spectacular sight – of Jesus Christ radiating a tremendous blinding light, and Moses and Elijah were right there speaking with the them. Peter, James and John knew that one was Moses, and the other was Elijah. How did they know that? The same way you're going to know everybody in heaven. Nobody will ever have to introduce himself to you in heaven. There are a lot of you glad-handers that that is a very great disappointment to, because you like to go around glad-handing people; introducing yourself; and, all that. You thought that you were going to have a wonderful time in heaven with your mouthful-of-teeth smile, introducing yourself to everybody. But you don't have to. Somehow you will know everyone automatically. Therefore, they knew who these two men were.

As they watched them, having finished their discussion, Moses and Elijah started to leave. And Peter jumps up and makes an interesting statement. He says, "Lord, this is fantastic. Permit us to build three sacred tents: one for You; one for Elijah; and, one for Moses, so that we may just stay here henceforth." What was he reflecting in that statement? He was showing that he knew that this was "Shekinah" glory. And he knew that "Shekinah" the glory dwelt in the tabernacle tent in the Old Testament. That was God's arrangement. So, if these men here in the presence of the "Shekinah" glory were to dwell in anything, it should be a sacred tent. That's exactly what he suggested. It fit in perfectly with what he knew from Old Testament history.

Well, about the time he says that, God, who always has a finish to his displays – suddenly the "Shekinah" glory cloud exploded over their heads. That was something to see Jesus radiating in His brilliance with these two men standing beside Him. But then suddenly overhead, just as with the shepherds at Bethlehem, the fiery angels explode in appearance. And out of that "Shekinah" glory flame above them comes the voice of God, repeating the same words as at the baptism of Jesus: "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased. Hear him." It was God's way of confirming the deity of Jesus Christ, and confirming the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.

Well, this was more than the disciples could stand now. Now they really knew that they were in the presence of God. They knew their Old Testament history, and they knew that they were in the visual presence of the very thing that their ancestors had seen in the wilderness wanderings. So, they fell on their faces, literally into the dirt, in fear. And then they felt a touch on their shoulders, and slowly raised their heads, and saw that the cloud was gone. Jesus alone stood before them, and His glory was now again shielded. Now the "Shekinah" glory was again with Israel (it had been all along), but now it was veiled in a tent of the body of Jesus Christ.

For this reason, Jesus referred to His body as his temple. John 2:19: "Jesus answered and said unto them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Verse 21: "But He spoke of the temple of His body." While Jesus Christ was upon this earth, the "Shekinah" glory no longer resided in the tabernacle or the temple which followed it. It now resided in His body. Therefore, He called His body the temple.

This whole picture is a tremendous preview of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ when He does come in that "Shekinah" glory clouds. These disciples were told that some of them would see this manifested power return. Matthew 16:28, Mark 9:1, and Luke 9:27 tell us that. And Jesus taught His disciples that His Second Coming would be in a grand display of this "Shekinah" glory cloud. Matthew 24:30: "And then appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven. Then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." And we have this in Matthew 25:31, Mark 13:26, and Luke 21:27. He taught His disciples: "You'll see Me returning into the "Shekinah" glory. And worst of all, when He was before the Sanhedrin for His trial, you remember that they finally said to Him, "Now you tell us. Are you the king of the Jews or not? Are you the Messiah? Put it outright.

In Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62 give His answer in which He says, "You're going to see the Son of Man returning in the power of the glory of God:" "Jesus said to Him, 'You have said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'" When asked if He was the Messiah, Jesus says, "The day is coming when you'll see me returning in the 'Shekinah' glory." That was all that the Sanhedrin needed, and they concluded that He was a blasphemer: "And when He said that, the high priest took his garments and he ripped them in the Oriental custom of expressing outrage at blasphemy, because they knew exactly what Jesus was saying. Jesus said, "You know what? You want to know who I am? You want a straight out answer? Someday you're going to see Me, who stands before you now as a captive, coming out there in space, surrounded by the 'Shekinah' glory of God."

Now that was blasphemy in the worst way for a human being to say, but Jesus Christ could say it, because that is exactly the way He will return.

The disciples were told by the angels when He left from the Mount of Olives that they would see Him come back in the same "Shekinah" glory cloud as he left in (Acts 1:11). The "Shekinah" glory cloud will accompany Him to earth in such a way that it will be seen by all mankind. Matthew 24:27: "For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." When Jesus Christ returns to the earth, it will be no secret, for it will be in terms of the "Shekinah" glory visibly seen, and all the world will see it. This is His sign (Matthew 24:30).

This whole picture has an interesting summary of the Second Coming – the Lord there on the mountain, appearing in power and glory as the conquering line of the tribe of Judah rather than in the role of the humiliated Lamb of God. Moses will be representing the glorified saints who enter the Millennial Kingdom via death; and, Elijah will be representing those of us who enter the Millennial Kingdom without dying via rapture.

The three disciples who stood there will be representing Israel in their non-glorified bodies who are alive and who enter the Millennial Kingdom at the Second Coming of Christ. And down at the bottom of the mountain were some gentiles representing the gentiles, who, in their non-glorified bodies are going to enter the Millennial Kingdom alive.

So, here on the Mount of Transfiguration, you have a perfect little picture of the whole event.

Later, Peter and John referred to this very event (2 Peter 1:16-18, John 1:14). In both those cases, they say, "We saw His glory," meaning: "We saw the 'Shekinah' glory." When you understand what really took place on the Transfiguration, you understand what the disciples were referring to.

1. **Jesus Christ**

Paul described Jesus Christ, whom the rulers of Israel crucified as the Lord of the "Shekinah" Glory in 1 Corinthians 2:8. Here the Lord Jesus Christ is described by Paul as the Lord of Glory; that is, the "Shekinah" glory one, whom the rulers of Israel had crucified.

1. **Christ's Ministry**

Jesus Christ prayed that His humanity would experience the same glory which His deity possessed. John 17:5: "And now, O Father, glorify Me with Your Ownself with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Before there was ever any creation, Jesus Christ in His deity, as the second member of the Trinity, shared the glory of God. Now here He was in human form. And what He is asking God the Father to do here, in John 17:5, is to permit Him, in His humanity, to enter that same experience of "Shekinah" glory that He knew as deity. So, Jesus Christ, at His ascension into heaven from the Mount of Olives was actually, as a human being, taken up in a "Shekinah" glory cloud of flaming angels.

We have this described for us in Acts 1:9. If you will compare Acts 1:10-11 with Matthew 24:30, I think you will see that what took Him up out of their site was something more unusual than simply a cloud that we ordinarily see up in the sky. It was a particularly brilliant special kind of cloud.

Notice Acts 1:10-11: "While they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up (that is, Jesus), behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as You have seen Him go into heaven.'" So, this angel said: "The way you have seen Him depart from the Mount of Olives is the way He will someday be seen returning.

Now look at Matthew 24:30: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven. And then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Here we have the description as to how He's going to return. He's going to come in the glory cloud of the "Shekinah." He is very clearly described here as returning in the "Shekinah" glory cloud. Therefore, we take that back to Acts and say: "Then that's the way He must have departed – in that 'Shekinah' glory cloud." That is because the angel said, "The way you saw Him leave is the way you will see Him return."

Furthermore, we should observe here that Jesus Christ ascended in the "Shekinah" glory cloud in His humanity into heaven. We have this pointed out to us in 1 Timothy 3:16: "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the spirit; seen of angels; preached unto the nations; believed on in the world; and, received up into glory." Who was? This one Who was manifested in the flesh? Who was God-manifested in the flesh? Obviously, it was Jesus Christ. He was received up into glory.

So, there is now a human being who has been able to enter the kind of glory cloud, and to be received up in it into heaven. So, Jesus Christ now dwells in this cloud in heaven, and it is a cloud which no human being can approach.

Notice 1 Timothy 6:16, which says, "Who only has immortality dwelling in the light (the 'Shekinah' glory) which no man can approach; who no man had seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting."

Also, you may add to that Luke 24:26. He is in a glory cloud which would cause the death of any of us, were we to approach it. Yet we are told that what has happened to Jesus Christ is the pattern of what will happen to us. So, if He is in that cloud, then we are someday going to be associated with it as well. We're not fully qualified now, but we will be in time. Jesus Christ therefore will return to earth in the same "Shekinah" glory cloud in which He departed (Acts 1:11). Christians, therefore, are to look for that "Shekinah" glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, because when you see that glory, it will signal the return of Christ in the rapture. You have this in Titus 2:13. According to the Greek translation, this should be: "Appearing in glory" rather than "His glorious appearing."

So, Jesus Christ is the pattern for our entrance into the "Shekinah" glory of God. He's going to come in that tremendous display of the "Shekinah" glory, and when He comes the second time to this earth, you are going to be in that glory.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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