

G O O D

W I T H

J U L I S



Patrick J. Griffiths

# God with Us

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# God with Us

*Immanuel, "God with Us" (Matt. 1:23)*

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,  
and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the  
Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

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# AN INTRODUCTION

## “META-NARRATIVE”

The Bible may appear to be just a collection of random stories. On a higher level, though, a unity appears. What is God saying through all the individual stories and events recorded?

This is where the word **meta-narrative** comes into importance. At its simplest, the word means “**Big Story.**” The meta-narrative of the Bible is its *Story* about God.

“**The heart and soul of the Bible is its story.** It is the real saga of a particular people, how God called them and intended for them to bring a blessing to all people. All the different part of the Bible [comes] together as one narrative. *To understand the Bible you must get to know its characters, understand its setting and follow its plot.* The ultimate resolution will make sense only if you've followed the earlier parts as a story. Learn to feel the tension and wrestle with its major conflict.”<sup>1</sup>

The Bible tells one unfolding story of redemption against the backdrop of creation and humanity's fall into sin.<sup>2</sup> As N.T. Wright has put it, **the divine drama told in Scripture offers a story which is the story of the whole world.** It is public truth.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, it is impossible to understand our own stories until they are placed within the grand *Story* of God.

This *Story* has six acts or movements and at the center of the *Story* is Jesus who is the *Christ*.

**1. God**

“In the Beginning *God*” (Gen. 1:1)

**2. Creation**

“In the Beginning God *created*” (Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:15-17; 1 Cor. 8:6)

**3. Rejection**

“You shall not eat . . . *She took and ate and He ate*” (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6)

**4. Redemption<sup>4</sup>**

“The LORD *God made garments* of skin and clothed them” (Gen. 3:15-21)

**5. Re-Creation**

“You Must Be *Born Again*” (John 3:1-21; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:1)

**6. Joy through Worship [The New Heaven and Earth]**

“*Stop weeping, the Lion . . . has overcome*” (Rev. 4; 5)

It is inside of this framework we begin to explore the biblical *Story* of why God created and how He would accomplish His desires for creating.



## IN THE BEGINNING . . .

In the beginning God acted and through this act He created a Garden where He would meet with His people for their joy. This Garden would showcase His glory. Crucial to our understanding of God's overarching *Story* is to define what is meant by the glory of God.

The glory of God is the presence of God. When God is present His glory is present. The glory of God is the aura exuded by God.<sup>5</sup> Such glory is knowable through His actions and His attributes.<sup>6</sup> It is what is felt and seen when He is present. This glory is called *Shekinah* in the Hebrew language; "Which means 'God's manifested glory' or 'God's presence.' This word does not appear in the Bible, but later Jewish scholars used it to refer to the dwelling place of God, especially the Temple in Jerusalem."<sup>7</sup>

*Shekinah* is "the majestic presence or manifestation of God which has descended to 'dwell' among men."<sup>8</sup> Thus to speak of His presence is to speak of His glory. And to reject His glory is to reject Him. This is the tragedy within the *Story* as it unfolds.

His image bearers (Gen. 1:26-28 [or icons]) rejected His glory for their own glory and in so doing darkness covered the land even as a sickness unto death penetrated their souls. They sought their own glory. This action on their part proved ruinous (See further Romans 1:18-32). In this rejection humanity was plunged into an inescapable path of destruction and pit of despair.

Rather than permit humanity to languish in this pit of despair He initiated the means of rescuing His creation from darkness to light and from sickness to health by the sending of His only begotten Son (1 John 4:10, 14; John 1:14) who is glory and brings glory fully, finally and forever to His image bearers and to creation (Rev. 21:1). This *Story* surrounds all of life. Nothing escapes its gravitational pull. Everything revolves around it.

Here is that **STORY**.

God chose to create a place where He would dwell with His people; they in turn would dwell with Him and their joy would be full. God designed His people for joy. This joy is only met and satisfied in Him. It is the joy God has within Himself as Trinity that He desired for us and designed us for. Throughout the biblical *Story* there is an intentional reiteration of a simple concept, “I will dwell in their midst.” For a moment, let us trace this thought inside of the biblical narrative.

### **“I will dwell”**

This idea originates in the Garden of Eden where God met with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day (Gen. 3). This pattern is seen by noting the presence of His glory. Notice the following passages stressing this idea.

“**I will dwell among** the sons of Israel and will be their God” (Exod. 29:45).

“**I will dwell among** the sons of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel” (1 Kings 6:13).

“This is My resting place forever; **Here I will dwell**, for I have desired it” (Ps. 132:14).

“He said to me, ‘Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where **I will dwell among** the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die’” (Ezek. 43:7).

“Now let them put away their harlotry and the corpses of their kings far from Me; and **I will dwell among them forever**” (Ezek. 43:9).

“‘Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; **for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,**’ declares the LORD” (Zech. 2:10).

“Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then **I will dwell in your midst**, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you” (Zech. 2:11).

“Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, **‘I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE’**” (2 Cor. 6:16).

The idea of God dwelling with His people is relational. It is more than mere theory or abstraction. He is their God and they are His people. There is realness to His presence that resonates deeply within the makeup of every individual. When God says, “I will never leave you or forsake you,” we are connecting with this Garden of Eden event (Matt. 28:20;

Heb. 13:5; Deut. 31:6, 8). God desires to walk with His people for their joy. He designed us for this.

In God's presence is the blessing and joy we are designed to experience. Consider the following passages celebrating this idea.

<sup>8</sup> "I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. <sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. <sup>10</sup> For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. <sup>11</sup> You will make known to me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever"** (Ps. 16:8-11).

<sup>5</sup> Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. <sup>6</sup> Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast. <sup>7</sup> How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. <sup>8</sup> **They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights. <sup>9</sup> For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light"** (Ps. 36:5-9).

"And the LORD will continually guide you, and **satisfy your desire in scorched places**, And give strength to your bones; And **you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail"** (Isa. 58:11).

<sup>3</sup> "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.'** <sup>5</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' And He said, 'Write, for

these words are faithful and true.' <sup>6</sup> Then He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost'" (Rev. 21:3-6).

The Bible speaks of a lavishness that is found only in God's presence. It uses earthy language so our finite minds might lay hold of His infinite joy. The shadow we exist in enables us to experience the future reality. Our trouble will always be when we look to the shadow to meet desires that are only answered in the substance. Shadow can never provide; it can only point. When God is present our cravings will be fully satiated and finally stayed.

## THUS ALL OF **LIFE** IS . . .

Thus all of life is a platform in which God's person and work is made know in and through His creation (Ps. 19:1; Col. 1:22). In all of life there is beauty and in this beauty we can see the imprint of God. This can be seen even in painful circumstances (John 9:3; 11:4).

"Jesus answered, '[It was] neither [that] this man sinned, nor his parents; but [it was] in order that the works of God might be displayed in him'" (John 9:3).

"But when Jesus heard it, He said, 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it'" (John 11:4).

A consequence of sin is falling short of this design (Rom. 3:23). Sin shrouds and clouds this vision of God's glory. Sin smudges the imprint. Yet such an imprint is still there. It is intrinsic to the design.

We often speak of our existence as for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). The acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the Messiah declares this glory (Phil. 2:11). We give Him glory and live for His glory when we affirm all of life as coming from Him, sustained by Him and ultimately for Him. Both Joseph in his imprisonment and Job in his loss speak of this truth and through tragedy and misstep gave God glory.

<sup>19</sup> "But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? <sup>20</sup> And as for you, **you meant evil against me, [but] God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive**'" (Gen. 50:19, 20).

<sup>20</sup> “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. **The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.**’ <sup>22</sup> Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God” (Job 1:20-22).

The apostle Paul also saw God in the circumstances of his life when he lifted his voice in praise to God for the hardships he encountered in the jail of Philippi.

“But about midnight Paul and Silas **were praying and singing hymns of praise to God**, and the prisoners were listening to them” (Acts 16:25).

Jesus, likewise, saw God ordering His steps and rested in His Father's will.

“saying, ‘Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet **not My will, but Thine be done**’” (Luke 22:42).

It is because of this the author of Hebrews spoke of this event as joy.

“fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2).

The early church rested in the outworking of God's *Story* so that in suffering they could have joy (Acts 5:40-42).

<sup>40</sup> “And they took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, **they flogged them** and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and [then] released them. <sup>41</sup> So they went on their

way from the presence of the Council, **rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for [His] name.** <sup>42</sup> And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus [as] the Christ" (Acts 5:40-42).

They heeded the council offered by the apostle James in his short Letter to those scattered throughout the Roman Empire (James 1:2-4, 17, and 18).

<sup>2</sup>"**Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,** <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have [its] perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. . . <sup>17</sup> **Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.** <sup>18</sup> In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures" (James 1:2-4, 17, 18).

Friend, we can give thanks in and for all things (1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20) knowing God is involved in the writing of our story and that our story is a part of His *Story*.

Jesus doesn't simply make life better; Jesus is better than life. Jesus Christ restores God's presence/glory in creation. His presence, His countenance is the radiance of glory.

However, let us pause for a moment and begin at the end. It is often helpful to know the end from the beginning to help us manage the journey on which we find ourselves.



## BEGIN AT THE END

Listen to how the Bible tells the *Story* and what this *Story* will look like when fully realized.

“The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven days, **on the day the LORD binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted**” (Isa. 30:26).

When God’s glory covers the earth (i.e. His physical and tangible presence ruling over the nations) everything will be **put right**.

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one” (Zech. 14:9).

This is where all of **life is heading**. There will be no competing religions or a pushing and shoving to see who wins. The Lord only and alone will be king.

The author of Hebrews references this time when God will straighten thoroughly all the crookedness currently existing in our world. God has begun the straightening.

“since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a **time of reformation** [‘to straighten thoroughly’]” (Heb. 9:10).

Creation is the stage where God chose to manifest His presence for the joy of His people. This stage has and is experiencing the consequence of humanity’s rebellion. The

apostle Paul spoke of this time of reformation when creation itself will be fully and finally restored.

<sup>20</sup> “For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> **that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.** <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now” (Rom. 8:20-22).

The prophets speak of a time when this full reformation will take place and all will be thoroughly straightened.

“They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, **For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea**” (Isa. 11:9).

“**For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea**” (Hab. 2:14).

The day is coming when the presence of God will cover the entire creation for the joy of His people. What once was will once more be.

**IF . . .**

If His desire is for us to dwell in His presence and to enjoy Him forever, then our quest is to recognize His presence right now and to experience His joy and pleasure right now. Such an experience is not controlled by our circumstances but by His presence. And if He will never leave us or forsake us, **then today is our day of rest.**

**BUT HOW**, how might we right now celebrate the presence of God for our joy?

We celebrate His presence today by . . .

Recognizing everything is from God, sustained by God and for God. This is what Joseph did, this is what Job did and this is what Paul did and this is what Jesus does.

We celebrate His presence today by . . .

Understanding the *Story* in which we live is Jesus-centered, thus we need to see our story as an outworking of His *Story*.

## **SO WHERE DO WE BEGIN**

Let us walk through the Bible from Genesis through Revelation to show why the idea of “His desire is for us to dwell in His presence and to enjoy Him forever,” is true. And why today, right now, we can live lives of celebration and rest regardless of our circumstances.



## The GLORY of God and the Garden

*“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8).*

The Garden of Eden is God’s “first” dwelling place. It is the “temple” where He will meet with His people. The Garden of Eden was to be ever expanding through the work assigned Adam and Eve until it covered the entire globe whereby the knowledge of His glory would cover the earth for the joy of His people. This is readily seen by reaching forward to Revelation 21:1 where we read of a new heaven and a new earth.

**“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;** for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea” (Rev. 21:1).

In this new creation there is no temple for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Rev. 21:22-24).

<sup>22</sup> **“I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.** <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it” (Rev. 21:22-24).

What God began in the Garden of Eden, He will complete in the new heaven and the new earth.

Yet this plan was rejected by those for whom the Garden was intended. They believed their joy could be full through means other than God.

God could have allowed them to remain in their fallen state, but He condescended and provided a blood atonement to cover their transgression and answer His justice (Gen. 3:21).

The Book of Genesis tells us this *Story* of redemption. God would redeem His people from their sin. The Book of Genesis ends with the people of God in a foreign land. From enslavement in Egypt, God would set His people free (Exod. 12:27; 13:1ff). The Exodus from Egypt is God's great deliverance in shadow form.

# 2 The GLORY of God and the Pillar of Cloud by Day and the Pillar of Fire by Night

*<sup>21</sup> The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.*

*<sup>22</sup> He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (Exod. 13:21, 22).*

Although enslaved as a nation by the Egyptians, God remained faithful and would deliver His people from bondage in the keeping of His promise to provide a deliverer from out of the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15).

During the Exodus from Egypt God's presence was notable through a **Pillar of Cloud by day** and a **Pillar of Fire by night**. These manifestations provided His people with His presence in order to guide them on their way and to give them light while traveling at night.

"[Moses] considers the presence of God to have been in the pillar, which moved in front of the host, and showed them the way that they were to go."<sup>9</sup>

"The Lord went before them—by a visible token of His presence, **the Shekinah**, in a majestic cloud (Ps 78:14; Ne 9:12; 1Co 10:1), called 'the angel of God' (Ex 14:19; 23:20-23; Ps 99:6, 7; Isa 63:8, 9)."<sup>10</sup>

This same Cloud and Fire would be present with the Tabernacle that is to follow.

Almost a thousand years later the statesman Nehemiah remembers this event.

“You, in Your great compassion, did not forsake them in the wilderness; **The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day**, to guide them on their way, nor **the pillar of fire by night**, to light for them the way in which they were to go” (Neh. 9:19).

His presence provided a barrier between those who would do them harm and the path before them. God was leading the nation. God’s presence leads His people. The pillar of cloud by day was nothing less than the Shekinah glory. And the pillar of fire by night was nothing less than the Shekinah glory. **God’s presence protects** His people from harm. **His presence provides** for His people. He meets them in their need.

It is only when His people are in His presence that their joy is full.

# 3

## The GLORY of God and the Tabernacle

*“Let them construct a **sanctuary** for Me,  
that I may dwell among them” (Exod. 25:8).*

After their Exodus from Egypt the people of God would wander in the wilderness for forty years. During this time God gave them specific instructions to build a place where they might meet with Him. This place was for their joy. It would reflect the Garden of Eden from which they came.

The intent of the Tabernacle was for God’s presence to dwell among His people where they might encounter Him for their joy.

**“There I will meet with you;** and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel” (Exod. 25:22).

<sup>34</sup> “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and **the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.** <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out” (Exod. 40:34-36).

<sup>37</sup> “but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. <sup>38</sup> 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” (Exod. 40:37, 38).



The Tabernacle was God's Garden of Eden as **a mobile unit**. The Tabernacle was God's means of dwelling with His people as they moved from the Garden of Eden to their home in Jerusalem, Israel. Unlike the first Garden/Temple this Temple would have a place for blood sacrifice to appease the wrath of God against them because of their sin.

The Temple crafted **by the people** according to God's design would be a reminder to them of **HOME**.

# 4

## The GLORY of God and the Temple

*<sup>1</sup>Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, <sup>2</sup>that the king said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains.' <sup>3</sup>And Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that is in your mind, for the LORD is with you.' <sup>4</sup>But it came about in the same night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, <sup>5</sup>'Go and say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup>For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle'' (2 Sam. 7:1-6).*

The Tabernacle speaks to the **wanderings** of the people of God. The Temple will speak to their **permanency**. God would establish for Himself a place where He would dwell with His people for their joy.

King David would not be the one to build the Temple, but his son Solomon. The Temple would go through various stages of existence. First, there is **Solomon's Temple** built around 966BC. This Temple would be destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians. The Nation of Israel would return to their land in 536 and **rebuild the Post-Exilic Temple** in 520BC. **King Herod** would dismantle this Temple and rebuild the Temple for his own glory. This is **the second Temple**. Let us consider each.

## Solomon's Temple

<sup>1</sup> 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.** <sup>2</sup> The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house" (2 Chron. 7:1, 2).

"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'" (2 Chron. 7:3).

"**Then the glory of the LORD departed** from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim" (Ezek. 10:18).

The presence of God manifested in the Shekinah glory was present in Solomon's Temple. Again, this Temple would be destroyed in 586BC by the Babylonians. After their 70 year captivity, the nation of Israel would return to the land in 536BC and begin rebuilding the Temple once again.

The Prophet Ezekiel sees the Shekinah glory depart from Solomon's Temple because of their apostasy. Many would suggest that this removal of the Shekinah glory would not return until Jesus reenters the Temple.

## Post-Exilic Temple

<sup>2</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘This people says, ‘The time has not come, even the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.’ <sup>3</sup> Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>4</sup>‘Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?’” (Haggai 1:2-4).

<sup>3</sup> “‘Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? **Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?** <sup>4</sup> But now take courage, Zerubbabel,’ declares the LORD, ‘take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land **take courage,**’ declares the LORD, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>5</sup> ‘**As for the promise which I made you** when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!’ <sup>6</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. <sup>7</sup> I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and **I will fill this house with glory,**’ says the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup> ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup> ‘**The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,**’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:3-9).

The statement made by the Prophet Haggai concerning the Temple and its glory is truly amazing. There is coming a day when the glory of the Lord will once more be in the Temple of His making and the “latter glory of this house will be greater than the former.” **What they were looking forward to, we are looking back at in the person and work of Jesus Christ.** The life and death of Jesus is a foretaste of Revelation 21:22-27. This Post-Exilic Temple would last for almost 400 years.

## **Herod's Temple**

In the eighteenth year (20/19 B.C.) of his reign, Herod rebuilt the Temple on a more magnificent scale.

**The Temple in Jerusalem is the permanent placement of the Tabernacle. Both the Tabernacle and the Temple are reminders of the Garden of Eden.**

Both reminded people of God's desire to dwell with them for their joy.

First Kings 6:1ff, 1 Chronicles 22:1ff, 3:1ff, Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai describe the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylonian captivity. This is the so-called "Second Temple" which Herod the Great later greatly enlarged. Jesus was dedicated in the Second Temple, He cast out money chambers there on two occasions, and He frequently taught in the temple courts.

Since the terrible destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in AD 70, temple sacrifices, offerings, instruction, and worship have ceased in accordance with an Old Testament prophecy of Hosea (about 746 BC).

"For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or terephim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:4, 5).

King Herod's Temple is the Temple of our Lord Jesus. The Greek word "Temple" [**naos**] comes from a primary word, **naio** meaning "to dwell" and can refer to a shrine or temple.

"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple [**naos**], *that* is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple [**naos**] is obligated" (Matt. 23:16).

"You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple [**naos**] that sanctified the gold?" (Matt. 23:17).

"And whoever swears by the temple [**naos**], swears *both* by the temple and by Him who dwells within it" (Matt. 23:21).

"so that upon you may fall *the guilt of* all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple [**naos**] and the altar" (Matt. 23:35).

"And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple [**naos**] sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself" (Matt. 27:5).

"And behold, the veil of the temple [**naos**] was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split" (Matt. 27:51).

Another word is used for "Temple" [**hieron**] to refer to a sacred place, i.e. the entire precincts (whereas **naos** denotes the central sanctuary itself) of the Temple (at Jerusalem or elsewhere).

"Then the devil \*took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple [**hieron**]" (Matt. 4:5).

“Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple [**hieron**] break the Sabbath and are innocent?” (Matt. 12:5).

“And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple [**hieron**], and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves” (Matt. 21:12).

“And *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple [**hieron**], and He healed them” (Matt. 21:14).

“But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple [**hieron**], ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they became indignant” (Matt. 21:15).

“When He entered the temple [**hieron**], the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?’” (Matt. 21:23).

“Jesus came out from the temple [**hieron**] and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple [**hieron**] buildings to Him” (Matt. 24:1).

“At that time Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as *you would* against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple [**hieron**] teaching and you did not seize Me” (Matt. 26:55).

The intent of this short read is to put the reader in the context of the Temple’s biblical lineage. It reaches back to the Garden of Eden and continues in Herod’s Temple. The person and work of Jesus Christ is linked to the Temple of His day. Although the Post-Exilic Temple as well as Herod’s Temple was probably devoid of the Shekinah glory, the

people of God were left with promises of this glory returning to the Temple once more.



# The GLORY of God and Promise



*“And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east” (Ezek. 43:4).*

*“And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house” (Ezek. 43:5).*

Although the glory/presence of God left the Temple prior to the fall of Israel, God promised His return to the Temple for the joy of His people.

We have read this text earlier, but let us consider again the words of the Prophet Haggai 2:3-9.

<sup>3</sup> “Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? **Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?** <sup>4</sup> But now take courage, Zerubbabel,’ declares the LORD, ‘take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land **take courage,**’ declares the LORD, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>5</sup> **‘As for the promise which I made you** when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!’ <sup>6</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. <sup>7</sup> I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and **I will fill this house with glory,**’ says the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup> ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup> **‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’** says the LORD of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:3-9).

What humanity lost, God would restore.

**“They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).**

**“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).**

What God intended to do, HE WILL DO. God always keeps His Word. His design from the beginning is to dwell among His people for their joy. The means to this end is found in the fulfillment of the Seed Promise (Gen. 3:15) and the completion of the Blood Picture (Gen. 3:21). Jesus is and will be the fulfillment of this promise to once more bring back God’s glory into the Temple.

Everything prior to the incarnation of Jesus the Christ was shadow. All of it pointed to Him. He is the fullest and final fulfiller of every Old Testament promise.

# G

## The GLORY of God and JESUS

<sup>18</sup> “The Jews then said to Him, ‘What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?’ <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, ‘It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ <sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body” (John 2:18-21).

In God’s *Story* Jesus is the fulfillment of all preceding shadow. As it relates to the idea of God dwelling among His people for their joy it is clear Jesus identified Himself as the Temple.

“But I say to you that something greater than the temple [**hieron**] is here” (Matt. 12:6).

“And said, ‘This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple [**naos**] of God and to rebuild it in three days’” (Matt. 26:61).

“And saying, “You who *are going to* destroy the temple [**naos**] and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matt. 27:40).

The Apostle John speaks to this idea. In John 2 we have the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). Verse 11 tells us this was at the front end of His earthly ministry, “This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and **manifested His glory**, and His disciples believed in Him.”

Verse 12 has Him celebrating the Passover in Jerusalem and clearing out the Temple. This would be different than what is experienced in Matthew 21 with Palm Sunday. What this

would suggest is that this saying was common with our Lord. Notice the wording in John's Gospel.

<sup>18</sup> "The Jews then said to Him, 'What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?' <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' <sup>21</sup> **But He was speaking of the temple of His body.** <sup>22</sup> **So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.** <sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, <sup>25</sup> and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man" (John 2:18-25).

In Jesus the glory returns to the Temple. He is the amalgamation of those two themes. Jesus as the Temple in which the glory of God resides is the theme of the New Testament. He is the presence of God in flesh and the glory of God seen.

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt [**tabernacle**] among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

John would say it in the following manner in his first Letter to the churches of Asia Minor (1 John 1:1, 2).

<sup>1</sup> "What was from the beginning, **what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands,** concerning the Word of Life— <sup>2</sup> and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you

the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us" (1 John 1:1, 2).

John will use the same word for God dwelling [tabernacle] among His people in the Book of Revelation. "In Revelation it is used of God tabernacling with men and here of the Logos tabernacling, God's **Shekinah** glory here among us in the person of his Son."<sup>11</sup>

It is important to remember how the glory of God had departed from the Temple prior to Israel's fall and did not return to Herod's Temple in THAT form.

God literally was in the temple when Jesus was presented to Zacharias when he held the eight day old child, and when twelve year old Jesus taught the Elders in Herod's Temple and when Jesus overturned the tables. The glory was literally present in human form.

God as Trinity was literally "with us" in the Garden. He occupied the Tabernacle and the Temple. Now Jesus begins to turn us back to what it was: God literally with us as He "invades" this planet with his presence at the time of His birth. He again tabernacles among us, as John says, literally, pitched His human tent in our midst, strolled among His people as He had once done in the garden. Thus, the glory of God was here once again. Here is how the Gospel of Luke captures this idea.

<sup>8</sup> "In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and **the glory of the Lord shone around them**; and they were terribly frightened" (Luke 2:8, 9)

<sup>10</sup> “But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, **I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;** <sup>11</sup> **for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.** <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:10-12).

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> **‘Glory to God in the highest,** And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:13, 14).

Consider what he notes for us in Luke 2:9, “The angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them and **the glory of the Lord shone around them . . . .**” The shepherds were looking for Messiah, for a sign, and recognized “the glory of the Lord shining around them” for what it was: **Shekinah**, and were terribly frightened. God would now be among men. This same idea is present when aged Simeon came into the Temple to see the newborn Christ child.

<sup>26</sup> “And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. <sup>27</sup> **And he came in the Spirit into the temple;** and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said” (Luke 2:26-28).

<sup>29</sup> “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> **A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, and the glory of Your people Israel**” (Luke 2:29-32).

We can add to this thought **His Transfiguration** in Matthew 17.

“And He was transfigured before them; and **His face shone like the sun**, and His garments became as white as light” (Matt. 17:2).

What Peter, James and John saw was the glory of the Lord. What they saw was the Shekinah glory, the presence of God in Jesus Christ. The author of Hebrews speaks to this idea of Jesus being the glory of God.

“And **He is the radiance of His glory** and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3).

Our Lord’s entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday speaks to this idea of the glory returning to the Temple.

<sup>8</sup> “Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; Hosanna in the highest!’” (Matt. 21:8, 9)

<sup>10</sup> “When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, ‘Who is this?’ <sup>11</sup> And the crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.’ <sup>12</sup> And **Jesus entered the temple** and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves” (Matt. 21:10-12).

In Jesus Christ the glory would once more return to the Temple of God. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of ancient promises whereby God’s glory would return.

In His death and resurrection and ascension into heaven we will once more witness the departure of God's glory from the Temple.

## DEATH/RESURRECTION

"Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, '**It is finished!**' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit" (John 19:30).

"He is not here, for **He has risen**, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying" (Matt. 28:6).

These events must be seen as one event. Notice the language of His ascension.

## ASCENSION

<sup>9</sup> "And after He had said these things, **He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.** <sup>10</sup> And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them, they also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? **This Jesus**, who has been taken up from you into heaven, **will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven**'" (Acts 1:9-11).

We are to take the ascension narrative and couple it with the **Icabod** [event]: "**The glory departing**" in 1 Samuel 4:21-22 when Eli's daughter-in-law gave birth during Israel's defeat at the hands of the Philistines. It can also be coupled with the glory departing the temple in Ezekiel 10:4, 18.



Acts 1:9 could almost be that event again. Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, God's glory departing **"after He said these things He was lifted up while they were looking and was lifted out of their sight."** He departed. **Except** that we have verse 8 before verse 9 and we know this is different: **"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."** This refers back to the upper room discourse where Jesus assures His disciples that the glory will not leave (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7).

**"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever"** (John 14:16).

**"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father,** that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me" (John 15:26).

**"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you"** (John 16:7).

This departing isn't the same; He leaves us God the Holy Spirit. God is **STILL** with us to carry on. God remains now in the Church, His body. **"Don't you know your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you"** (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). Immanuel remains. God is still with us not in a general sense but in a literal, spiritual sense inside His Church, His Temple.

Jesus is the glory of God. He is the Temple of God. Inside of God's *Story* He will leave by ascension, but in His absence He leaves another, the Holy Spirit. And **the Holy Spirit is the Shekinah glory.** Forty days after His ascension from

earth into heaven, the glory of the Lord will once more occupy His Temple.



## The GLORY of God and His Church

*<sup>1</sup> “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1, 2).*

On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the Shekinah glory returns to the Temple. All of these acts are indicators of God’s faithfulness to keep His Word. He will do what He says will be done.

*<sup>3</sup> “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:3, 4).*

*<sup>16</sup> “Do you not know that **you [plural] are a temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you [**plural**]? <sup>17</sup> If any man destroys **the temple of God**, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you [**plural**] are” (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).*

*“Or what agreement has **the temple of God** with idols? For **we are the temple of the living God**; just as God said, ‘**I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE**’” (2 Cor. 6:16).*

*“to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you [plural], the hope of glory**” (Col. 1:27).*

“This is to be understood of the community of Christians, or of the church, as being the place where God dwells on the earth.”<sup>12</sup>

“They are his temple, the place of his abode. His residence is with them; and he is in their midst. This figure the apostle Paul several times uses, 1Co 6:19; 2Co 6:16; Eph 2:20-22.”<sup>13</sup>

There is such beauty here. God is with His people and it is for their joy. If we push back to those initial days of creation we can once again see God building a place where He would dwell with His people for their joy. He instructs them “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:22, 26-28). Now, it is in and through the Church that He will extend the boundaries of His Garden and it is in and through the Church being fruitful and multiplying that the entire earth will be filled with the knowledge of His glory.

This is the *Story* Luke unfolds for the reader in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. God wins in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and God shows us what that win looks like by the expansion of His glory in and through the establishing, building and reproducing of local churches.

Our tendency is to read the Bible as individuals without much thought given to the corporate gathering. Yet it is the corporate gathering that is the recipient of this glory. The gathering is the Church. It is improper for any individual to say they are the church. The church is what happens when

the people gather. And it is in the gathering that God's glory exists.

# The GLORY of God and the Heavenly Temple



*“For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24).*

*“And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm” (Rev. 11:19).*

*“And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished” (Rev. 15:8).*

All earthly Temples are simply shadows of a greater substance. There are several places where this truth is substantiated. Jesus Christ is our Great High Priest who stands before the Father in behalf of His people.

*“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that **He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God**, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).*

*“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, **consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession**” (Heb. 3:1).*

See also Hebrews 4:14, 15; 6:20; 8:1; 9:11.

There is coming a time when God will once more be on earth even as He is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). **The entire *Story* rescued through Jesus will be restored by Jesus.** All of the various pieces throughout history connect. In connecting they paint an incredible picture that is wonderfully laid out for the reader in the Book of Revelation.

# The GLORY of God and the New Heaven and the New Earth



*“And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying,  
‘Behold, **the tabernacle of God is among men,  
and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people,  
and God Himself will be among them**’” (Rev. 21:3).*

*<sup>22</sup> “I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty  
and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of the sun  
or of the moon to shine on it, **for the glory of God has illumined it,  
and its lamp is the Lamb**” (Rev. 21:22, 23).*

God’s intent is for His people to dwell in His presence for their joy. The New Heaven and New Earth will have no Temple for “the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” God will finish what He began in the Garden of Eden. He will return to the Garden of Eden where He will dwell with His people and in His presence their joy will be full.

His presence will permeate all of creation and thus fulfilling the promise cast by Isaiah 11:9 and Habakkuk 2:14.

*“They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, **For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea**” (Isa. 11:9).*

*“**For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea**” (Hab. 2:14).*

**WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US NOW?**

God With Us



# AN INVITATION

*<sup>2</sup> Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; **And all the nations will stream to it**"*  
(Isa. 2:2).

*<sup>16</sup> "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.' <sup>17</sup> **The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'** And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Rev. 22:16, 17).*

God has promised that all the nations will be gathered around His throne. They will come to the Temple to worship Him. This is an inevitable and immutable event. Nothing can or will stop this from happening. Even now the triumph of God is going forth. The good news of God's victory for the joy of His people has gone global and is being experienced even though it is couched in the context of a world in open opposition to Him. Yet there is coming a day when the final page will be turned and the final chapter entered into.

**All who hear this *Story* and confess their sin against Him and see Jesus as their only hope of dwelling with God forever for their joy are welcomed into this full and final Garden Temple.**

Friend, what is keeping you from coming? Do you see yourself as a sinner who has rebelled against God by

rejecting His joy for yours? Should you find yourself hopelessly lost and immeasurably empty, I invite you to consider Him. He desires for you to come and to experience His joy.

# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.biblica.com/niv/reading-the-bible/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.globalopps.org/training/articles/onestory.htm#note6>

<sup>3</sup> N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 41-42.

<sup>4</sup> The redemptive activity of God comes first through shadow in the form of Seed Promise and Blood Picture. This shadow or type will find its fulfillment and completion in the antitype or substance that is Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Pastor theologian John Piper provides this answer to the question, "What is God's glory?" "The public display of the infinite beauty and worth of God is what I mean by 'glory,' and I base that partly on Isaiah 6, where the seraphim say, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of his—'and you would expect them to say 'holiness' and they say 'glory.' They're ascribing 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of his—'and when that goes public in the earth and fills it, you call it 'glory.' **So God's glory is the radiance of his holiness, the radiance of his manifold, infinitely worthy and valuable perfections.**" <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/ask-pastor-john/what-is-gods-glory>

<sup>6</sup> English Pastor Charles Haddon Spurgeon provides a stimulating idea of this in his sermon, "A view of God's Glory." "Now, what attribute is God about to show to Moses? His petition is, 'Show me thy glory.' Will he show him his justice? Will he show him his holiness? Will he show his wrath? Will he show him his power? Will he break yon cedar and show him he is almighty? Will he rend yonder mountain and show him that he can be angry? Will he bring his sins to remembrance, and show that he is omniscient? No; hear the still small voice—'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.' Ah! *the goodness of God is God's glory. God's greatest glory is that he is good. The brightest gem in the crown of God is his goodness. 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.'* There is a panorama such as time would not be long enough for you to see." <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/3120.htm> "A View of God's Glory," A Sermon (No. 3120) Published on Thursday, November 26th, 1908. Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark. Also see *Jesus is Enough: Readings on the Greatness of God* by Patrick J. Griffiths.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.behindthename.com/name/shekinah>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13537-shekinah>

The unedited full-text of the 1906 *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

<sup>9</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary* on Exodus 13:21.

<sup>10</sup> *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* on Exodus 13:21, 22.

<sup>11</sup> A.T. Robertson's NT Word Pictures on John 1:14.

<sup>12</sup> [*Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on 1 Cor. 3:16].

<sup>13</sup> [*Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on 1 Cor. 3:16].



## IN THE BEGINNING . . .

In the beginning God acted and through this act He created a Garden where He would meet with His people for their joy. This Garden would showcase His glory. Crucial to our understanding of God's overarching *Story* is to define what is meant by the glory of God.

The glory of God is the presence of God. When God is present His glory is present. The glory of God is the aura exuded by God. Such glory is knowable through His actions and His attributes. Thus to speak of His presence is to speak of His glory. And to reject His glory is to reject Him. This is the tragedy within the *Story* as it unfolds.

His image bearers (Gen. 1:26-28 [or icons]) rejected His glory for their own glory and in so doing darkness covered the land even as a sickness unto death penetrated their souls. They sought their own glory. This action on their part proved ruinous (See further Romans 1:18-32). In this rejection humanity was plunged into an inescapable path of destruction and pit of despair.

Rather than permit humanity to languish in this pit of despair, He initiated the means of rescuing His creation from darkness to light and from sickness to health by the sending of His only begotten Son (1 John 4:10, 14; John 1:14) who is glory and brings glory fully, finally and forever to His image bearers and to creation (Rev. 21:1). This *Story* surrounds all of life. Nothing escapes its gravitational pull. Everything revolves around it.

Here is that **STORY**.

