

His Unspeakable Glory

THREE ARE NO ADEQUATE WORDS in human languages to describe the glory of the Son of God. For it is something that exists on a separate plane; it is wholly other-worldly, alien. It is one of those odd things easier to *experience* than to describe. In the Spirit, we can *feel* the grandeur, the pristine holiness of Christ better than we can describe the appearance of those attributes. We feel His glory in the compulsion to fall on our face before it. It is something that impacts us on a deep, visceral level—yet, when pressed to describe His glory, we fall mute. It is too much for feeble flesh to verbalize.

Once again we must find a way to use our inadequate words to describe someone who has existed since before time itself. There is perhaps no finer description of Christ Jesus in all His heavenly glory than that recorded by the apostle John, when he was “in the Spirit” one Lord’s day on the island of Patmos.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp

two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

Revelation 1:12-16

John does not mean that the “son of man” he saw had an actual head of white wool or snow, flames for eyes, feet of bronze, a watery voice, a tongue shaped like a sword, and the sun for a face. John, struggling for words to describe this holy vision, could only come up with inadequate earth-bound images with which to describe someone who was heavenly—someone who was very God. He could only say that portions of this figure looked *like* these things. He dug down deep in his memory for objects that came as close as possible in appearance to the figure of holiness standing before him.

Though his words surely fall short of the depth and breadth of Christ’s glory, the effect that His glory had on John is unmistakable.

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man.

Revelation 1:17a

Perhaps that is the best way, after all, for mere flesh to describe the glory of the Son of God: utter, reverential fear before it.



Just as man cannot accurately describe the glory of the Son of God, he cannot fathom its worth. And herein lies one of heaven’s

most profound mysteries.

From man's perspective, Christ's glory is of inestimable value. Since the "beginning," the Son of God possessed a glory we cannot even imagine, but on those rare occasions when that glory came into contact with mortal man, it was something of such blinding radiance that it could not be long endured.

And [Jesus] was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

Matthew 17:2-6

The glory of the Godhead was Jesus' natural state; flesh was as unnatural to Him as deity would be to us. Turn it around: What if a child of the earth, a normal human accustomed to the fertile loam, grassy plains, and earth's oxygen mix were suddenly transported to a world in which the "soil" was titanium, its foliage consisted of shards of glass, and the air was a mix of nitrous oxide and the stench of sulfur. Perhaps the shock of that to humans might just begin to describe the culture shock Jesus experienced when he forfeited His natural glory and majesty to walk the soil of earth.

What a terrible price He paid not only to relinquish that glory to become uncomfortable flesh, but to lose the *community* of that glory—the intimate communion He had enjoyed with God the Father.

But it was a price the Son of God was willing to pay, for, from *His* perspective, His natural glory was not worth more than man's salvation. He would willingly relinquish that glory, for a while, to come to the unnatural world of His creation and give His own life to save those He loved. That would be the exchange: His inestimable glory for man's redemption.

To be sure, at no point did Jesus lose His glory. He never ceased being God. But, for a time, He gave up the appearance, the benefits—the *sphere* of His glory.

It is too easy to equate Christ's sacrifice only with the nails that pierced His flesh. The pain and humiliation of the cross were, of course, part of the price He paid. His literal death, and time in the grave were part of it as well. Surely the rebukes and hatred from those He was dying to save were part of His pain. But we must not diminish His sacrifice in setting aside His natural condition—His majesty, His splendor, His radiant glory. At the cross the Father turned His back on the Son. The load of mankind's sin that was heaped upon Jesus could have no part in Their holy communion.



Man cannot comprehend the mystical glory of the Son of God. It lies far beyond our senses. For Him, it is a precious, natural condition. It is high and exalted, majestic. It is other-worldly, pristine, holy. Its worth cannot be calculated by mere flesh. Yet, in eternity past, when the Godhead determined that mere flesh would need a Savior, the Son of God set its salvation above His priceless glory.

...although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:6-11

In His incarnation
the Son veiled
His deity,
but He did not void it.

A. W. Tozer

