

Some Glories of our Lord

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Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 37, 1952, page 149.

Whilst each of the Gospels gives its own presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ; viz., Matthew — the King of Israel; Mark — the steadfast Servant-Prophet; Luke — the Perfect Man; John — the Divine greatness and glory of the Son; we remember that He is all that He is in **each** of them. Let us consider some presentations of Him in Matthew.

In Matt. 1: 1, He is the Son of David. As such the government shall be on His shoulder, and from Zion He will send forth the rod of His strength, ordering the earth according to God. But in Matt. 22: 41-46, He emphasizes the fact that David's Son is David's Lord. The complex glory of His Person is here before us. A Man — yes, truly a Man — but more, He is God. Hence the prophetic word, "They shall call His name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, God with us."

Long before, Isaiah had cried, "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down!" (Isa. 64: 1). He pleaded for a terror-striking, judgment-executing intervention of God. Now God had come down, but in wondrous mercy. Hence the angelic intimation, "**He shall save.**"

But had not God before this interposed in mercy in Israel's history? Yes, assuredly. Read His words from the burning bush, as recorded in Exodus 3: 7, 8. He came down then to deliver, but it was after an impersonal sort in the pillar of cloud and fire, and as the Angel of the Lord, delegating authority to Moses and Aaron. It was even as Isaiah had said, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them" (Isa. 63: 9).

But now, God had visited His people of a truth for, said the angel, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." So that at once there is intimated to us the proper Deity of Jesus, as well as His true Manhood. The lowly Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the burning bush.

Then too He is presented to us as the Son of Abraham, to whom the promises were given. He shall bring to fruition every promise of God, for all the promises of God are yea and amen in Him. As Son of David He will establish God's kingdom in the earth. As Son of Abraham He will fulfil the promises to Israel, and in Him all the families of the earth will be blessed.

At the close of Matt. 11, we see Him as the Son of the Father, for there He addresses the Lord of heaven and earth as "Father." In that day when Israel refused Him He uses the confident language of victory. In the day of Abraham's victory Melchizedek came on the scene as priest of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth; and here the Son says, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father:" Compare with this, John 3: 35.

Though Israel despised and rejected Him, the Father wrought in sovereign power and grace, producing a new generation, whom He speaks of as the "babes." These would receive the revelation, and treasure every precious thought of Him to the Father's praise. Yet, with all that is revealed, there is an unrevealed depth of glory in the Person of the Son, for, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." So while we worship and adore Him in the appreciation of all that has been made known, we gladly confess at the same time that there is in Him that which is beyond our finite comprehension, and defies all exposition.

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame

The creature's grasp transcend;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of Son can comprehend."

Then in Matt. 16 He asks, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" He adopts this title when Israel's attitude of hostility and rejection becomes apparent. In Matt. 8 it bespeaks His lowly path — "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." But it is also the title of His official glory for, as such, all things are put under His feet, as stated in Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2.

Men's opinions at their best extolled Him only as a servant of God, and they had in common the thought that He was only a Man. Being thus astray as to His Person, they were sure to be astray as to His work. His work is **what it is** because of **who it is**, that has done it. But Peter — one of that new generation — the "babes" — declares that He is the Son of the living God. Resurrection power is implied here and on this rock-confession of who He is the-assembly is to be built. Death's portals must be passed before Hades' gates come into view. The Son of the living God has stooped to death, and has prevailed. Praise Him for evermore!

He is also the Christ, as Peter here confessed. This marks Him out as the Lord's Anointed, who, as the Man of God's good pleasure, will be the Head of all things in heaven and earth, and who will fill all things to the glory of God. To Peter it meant that He was the promised Deliverer, who would fulfil to Israel all that God had promised them. But Israel refused Him, and so the old must give place to the new.

In Matt. 13 we read, "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven . . . bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The "Christ" in Matt. 16 has reference to the old, and hence the injunction that follows to "tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ." On His rejection the time had come to set aside the old and reveal the new — all that is connected with Him as the Son of the living God.

Flesh and blood could not perceive this glory of the Lord Jesus. It lies outside the natural order. It belongs to the unseen, spiritual order and can only be apprehended as the fruit of the Father's revelation. The Son now speaks to Peter, in the consciousness of His oneness with the Father, and gives to Him a new revelation — "I say also unto thee . . . upon this rock I will build My church."

He has now gone from the earth by death and resurrection. But such is the Divine work that, in the very world that crucified Him, an entirely new thing has been built — His assembly. It is distinct from all that preceded it, and is that which will answer for God's pleasure to the revelation that has been made. This building is the house of God. It is here in testimony now, and will be for the manifestation of His glory in the coming Kingdom, and finally His eternal abode.

Then there is the unique relationship of the assembly to the Lord Jesus Christ, for by the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost it was constituted not only the house of God but also the body of Christ. We are united to Him the glorified Man, and "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Just as Eve was taken out of Adam, to be presented to him for an helpmeet, so the assembly is of Christ as His body, and awaits the day of presentation to Him in heaven, then to display His glory. Meantime it is here in testimony to all that has been revealed.

The assembly is the object now of Christ's affection, and as His body is to be the expression of His life in the world where He was crucified. Ere long it will radiate His glory, when, "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day" (2 Thess. 1: 10).

May it be ours then, as forming part of His assembly, increasingly to grow in the apprehension of His glory, that more affectionately, intelligently and faithfully we may represent Him now, while waiting for the day when He shall fill all things.