

The glory of God expresses the “other-ness” of God and the supreme uniqueness of his essence. It is the best word to describe the weightiness of who he is, the power of his rule as God, and the beauty of what makes him God. There is nothing more attractive, inspiring, and frightening as the glory of God.

What role has the concept of the glory of God played in your understanding of the Bible and Christianity? How would you define the glory of God? How important is this concept to your daily walk with Christ?

What are some examples in Scripture where we see the glory of God on display? What do we learn about God and his character from these texts? Look up these texts if they haven't been listed and reflect on the centrality and the importance of glory: Ex. 33:18, Ps. 29:3, Isaiah 6, John 1:14, Revelation 2:10-11.

Look up Romans 3:23. What does it mean theologically and practically that mankind has “fallen short of God's glory”? How has your understanding of that fallenness changed over the years. Where do you see it in yourself and in the world?

Revelation is written to a group of churches who are facing potential persecution. Why would the vision of God's glory be helpful to them? In light of what is happening in our own culture and around the world, how is Revelation 4 helpful to you? How does it change your perspective?

1) The Display of God's Glory (vv. 1-3)

As you look at the description of God in Revelation 4:1-3, what image or symbol is most meaningful to you and why?

Read the following quotation from Jonathan Edwards: *“To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.”* What do you think Edwards is trying to say? Why would this be on his heart as a pastor?

The difference between a believer and an unbeliever is what a person feels and thinks about the glory of God. How are they different and what are the practical implications?

Seeing and savoring the glory of God is a gift. What helps you to be mindful and thankful of the glory of God? Is there anything that could be more prevalent or frequent in your life to facilitate an appreciation of God's glory?

2) The Centrality of God's Glory (vv. 4-7)

The scene of God's glory in verses 4-7 contains some powerful and even frightening sights and sounds. Why do you think that God's glory includes such imagery? What does that tell you about God? Is that an aspect of God's character that you value or is it a struggle?

Revelation 21 talks about the glory of God being so central that there is no need for the sun. What is the significance of this statement? What are some practical implications in your life?

Romans 8:18 applies the value of glory to suffering. Read the text and talk about how “glory” serves as a motivator for endurance through suffering. Is there any hardship that you are enduring right now which would require a change of mindset in reference to glory?

3) The Response to God’s Glory (vv. 8-11)

The image of the elders falling before the throne and casting their crowns is stunning. Imagine how out of place and even dangerous it would be for one elder to not bow or refuse to cast his crown. How does the glory of God relate to the problem of our pride?

If crowns represent the honor that God has given, what does it say that these crowns are cast before the throne? How does a biblical understanding of God’s glory help us to hold our honor and our gifts loosely?

What does it mean to rob God of his glory? In what ways is it more tempting for you to steal glory from God? What strategies should you employ to defeat this temptation?

The text ends with an expansion of worship and praise. Take a few minutes and share some moments of adoration and praise to God for his glory. Confess areas where you might steal his glory. And ask him for the grace to grow in your appreciation and application of his glory in your life.