

# THE GLORY OF THE LORD (PART 1)

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In Deuteronomy 7:6-11, God spoke these words to the children of Israel: “For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. *Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.*” The Lord’s glory was manifested to Israel to emphasize his authority, and continues to serve as a reminder to us to do what he says as we follow his Son Jesus Christ.

## **God’s glory in the tabernacle and the temple**

God signified that the tabernacle and later the temple was the seat of his authority. Exodus 40:33-35 tells what happened when the tabernacle was constructed and set up: “And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, *and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*” When Solomon completed the building of the temple, the same thing occurred (1 Kgs 8:1-13; 2 Chr 5:1-6:2). “And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: *for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord*” (1 Kgs 8:6-11). But Solomon understood that the most High dwells not in temples made with hands (Isa 66:1; Acts 7:48; 17:24). Solomon said, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer,

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which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, *My name shall be there*" (1 Kgs 13:27-29; see also 2 Chr 6:6,20).

God's *name* (i.e. authority) was in that temple. But this was contingent upon Israel submitting to that authority by keeping God's commandments.

## **The departure of God's glory**

In the Book of Ezekiel, we read about cherubim, which were associated with the glory of God (Ezek 1:28; 3:12-13,23; 8:4; 10:19; 11:22; 43:2-3). In Ezekiel 10:19, those cherubim lifted up their wings and went up into the air, departing from the temple: "*And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight.*" And when the cherubim departed, God's glory departed from the temple: "*Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims*" (Ezek 10:18). "*And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city*" (Ezek 11:23).

The departure of God's glory from the temple and from the city of Jerusalem in this vision was very significant, as it symbolized the fact that God was no longer associated with the city or the temple. God had removed His protective eyes and His divine authority from this place that His people had so corrupted (see Ezek 7:20-22; 8:3-18; 9:5-7). The fact that God had "left" the temple and Jerusalem foreshadowed the imminent destruction of both the city and the temple. God did this because Israel had forsaken him. In Amos 3:1-3, the Lord said to these people he had once chosen, "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*"

## **God's eternal glory**

God's requirement that mankind walk with him by submitting to his authority and keeping his commandments has not changed. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but *if we walk in the light, as he is in the light*, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7). Having fellowship with God and with the faithful members of his family requires us to walk in his light. This is the only way we will ever inherit as our eternal dwelling place that heavenly Jerusalem, where God's glory eternally abides. Revelation 21:10-11 says, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God.*" Revelation 22:14 says, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*"