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“A Tale of Two Glories”

Isaiah 39 - 40

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In the 17th Century, English and Scottish theologians wrote what is referred to as the “Westminster Shorter Catechism.” In it, we read this statement: “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” What does it mean to “glorify God” and how can we effectively “glorify God”? Too often we live for our own glory, which is evidenced by the way we revere our accomplishments and achievements, as well as our desire for notoriety, etc. For Christians the message is simple: We are to glorify God in all that we do, and not seek to glorify ourselves.

A Tale Of Two Glories

1. **Isaiah 40:5** - *“And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*
2. We see the prophesy about John the Baptist’s message in **Isaiah 40:6a**.
3. Jesus is the ultimate representation of God’s glory.
 - a. **Hebrews 1:3a** - *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being...”*
4. **Isaiah 40:6b** - *“All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.”*
5. The Hebrew word for glory is *chabod*, which means weighty or heavy (in either a good or bad sense, depending on the context).
 - a. This word means burdensome in a bad sense, and important, splendor, honor, might, or grandeur, in a good sense.
 - b. The glory of God is always referred to in a good sense.

- i. [Exodus 15:11](#) - *“Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”*
- ii. [Exodus 33:18, 21-22](#) - *“Then Moses said, ‘Now show me your glory.’ ... Then the LORD said, ‘There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.’”*
- iii. [2 Chronicles 5:13c-14](#) - *“Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God.”*
- iv. [Psalm 24:7-10](#) - *“Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty - he is the King of glory.”*

6. The glory of God is the manifest, infinite splendor and worth of God.

7. The Bible speaks in different ways concerning the glory of man.

- a. [Proverbs 19:11](#) - *“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.”*
- b. [Proverbs 20:29](#) - *“The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old.”*
- c. [2 Corinthians 4:17](#) - *“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”*
- d. [Psalm 73:24](#) - *“You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.”*
- e. [1 Corinthians 15:42-44](#) - *“So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”*

God’s Glory Is Revealed For All To See - Man’s Glory Is Limited For Some To See

- 8. [Isaiah 40:5](#) - *“And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*
- 9. Pastor Gary said: “The glory of God is revealed in his power, [in creation, in commandments, and the cross of Christ]. [Everything] that God has done, is doing, and shall do, will reveal or display his glory for all to see.”
 - a. [Romans 1:20](#) - *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being*

understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

- b. **Psalm 19:1** - *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”*
- c. **Isaiah 6:3** - *“And [the seraphs] were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ ”*
- d. **Psalm 108:5** - *“Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.”*

10. Man's glory is far different from the glory of God, especially when you consider how limited the glory of man really is!

God's Glory Is Eternal – Man's Glory Is Fading

11. **Isaiah 40:8** - *“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”*

12. Man's glory is fading, and when it fades, it fades quickly!

- a. **Isaiah 40:6** - *“... ‘All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.’ ”*

God's Glory Is Incomparable – Man's Glory Is Insignificant

13. There is absolutely no comparison between God's glory and man's glory.

- a. **Isaiah 40:12** - *“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?”*
- b. **Isaiah 40:25-26** - *“ ‘To whom will you compare me? or who is my equal?’ says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”*

God Used Isaiah To Rebuke King Hezekiah

14. Historical Background:

- a. Hezekiah had just been miraculously healed by God of a terminal illness, and he also received the gift of another 15 years of life.
- b. The news of his recovery spread everywhere in the known world, and that's what prompted the king of Babylon to send an envoy bearing gifts for King Hezekiah.
- c. The Babylonians paid tribute to Hezekiah, but instead of giving glory to

God for his healing and all that God had done in his life, he showed the Babylonian envoys everything that would bring glory to himself!

- i. **Isaiah 39:2** - *“Hezekiah received the envoys gladly and showed them what was in his storehouses - the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine oil, his entire armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.”* (Emphasis added)
- ii. **Isaiah 39:4** - *“[Isaiah] asked, ‘What did they see in your palace?’ ‘They saw everything in my palace,’ Hezekiah said. ‘there is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.’ ”* (Emphasis added)

15. Pastor Gary said: “What we need to look at here is the heart of Hezekiah... which is revealed by what he [said] and what he [did]. See, you and I can never know what’s in a person’s heart unless they say something or show by action. Then we can see their heart revealed. [Hezekiah’s heart is revealed, first, by what he said].”

- a. **Isaiah 39:5-7** - *“Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD Almighty: The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have store up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ ”*
 - i. About 115 years later, God would send the Babylonians to show the people of Judah who was the real owner and who deserved to receive the glory!
- b. **Isaiah 39:8** - *“ ‘The word of the LORD you have spoken is good,’ Hezekiah replied. For he thought, ‘There will be peace and security in my lifetime.’ ”*
 - i. By saying this, Hezekiah demonstrated that he really believed that everything was his, because God’s judgment wasn’t going to come in his lifetime.

16. Hezekiah’s heart was also revealed in what he did, which was to show the Babylonians everything he had, including his armory, which shows that he had no clue about the threat the Babylonians posed!

17. Pastor Gary said: “I’ll tell you why he did these things. [It] was because he was blinded by his own glory, rather than be raptured by the glory of God. ... When you become more impressed with your splendor than the splendor of God, [you] are in trouble.”

18. In the New Testament, we see another example of the sin of grabbing the glory in the life of King Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of King Herod the Great,¹ and

¹ Herod the Great was responsible for killing all of the boys in Bethlehem.

the nephew of Herod Antipas.²

- a. Herod was a “puppet ruler” who was put in place by the Roman Empire, and he was given charge of Judea.
 - b. [Acts 12:21-23](#) - *“On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, ‘This is the voice of a god, not of a man.’ Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.”*
 - i. “[Herod] put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of wonderful contexture, and early in the morning came into the theater place of the shows and games, at which time the silver of his garment, being illuminated by the first reflection of the sun’s rays upon it, shone after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently on him.” - Josephus³
19. We should never, never, never touch the glory, because the glory belongs to God and God alone!
- a. [Psalm 115:1](#) - *“Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”*
 - b. [Isaiah 42:8](#) - *“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”*
 - c. [Revelation 14:6-7](#) - *“Then I saw another angel flying in midair... He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory...’”*
 - d. [1 Corinthians 10:31](#) - *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Isaiah 39:1-8, 40:1-8](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared regarding the glory of God. (See #5 above)
3. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared regarding the glory of man. (See #7 above)
4. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary remarks about the glory of God being revealed in creation. (See #9 above)

² Herod Antipas was responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist.

³ Barnes Notes on the Bible - <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/acts/12.htm>

5. Provide an overview of Pastor Gary's two-point outline. (See #11 through #13 above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments concerning the heart of Hezekiah. (See #15 through #17 above)
7. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they've had when they or someone they know "grabbed the glory."
8. Spend time talking about a New Testament example of the way God deals with those who exalt themselves. (See #18 above)
9. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared concerning the fact that we should never, never, never, never touch the glory! (See #19 above)
10. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).