

FROM GLORY TO GLORY II Cor. 3:18

What is our God doing? ... He is carrying on the work He began in eternity. Previously, we emphasised how He is the God of order, and even the most intricate and seemingly insignificant part of His plan He devised in eternity. The Bible shows us His plan, the pinnacle of He would enjoy glory through His people, for whom His Son would die to purchase on Calvary. In His investment, His redeemed would become the temple, - the dwelling-place of God, - inhabited on earth by the Holy Spirit.

This New Testament picture is a continuation of the Old Testament where, in the wilderness, He had the Hebrews construct a tabernacle. Then, when they settled in the land of Israel and King David made Jerusalem his capital, the tabernacle was relocated from Shiloh and be replaced by Solomon's temple. The purpose of this construction was that God would dwell amongst them. However, the tabernacle did not last, and the temple was horrendously destroyed.

This plan of our salvation began, - as we considered previously, - in eternity. The first step towards the cradle, - and ultimately Calvary, - was decided in the eternal Council Room of Heaven ... and the next step of the plan was dependent upon God's Son entering the world He created.

When He created our first parents, and from the time He first looked upon them, He loved them unconditionally. The first man was called Adam, and the first woman was called Eve ... a man and a woman ... there were no other derivatives.

When Adam awakened out of his deep sleep (Gen. 2:21), and his new companion (*ezer*, help-meet') was by his side (v.22), what a thrill it must have been for them both to have walked together through the garden of God's wonderful creation enjoying all its delights and beauties. Adam would have been showing his Eve the trees, the flowers, the rivers and the animals ... and he would have been telling her all the names he had given them (2:20). They would have watched together the wolf and the lamb living together in the same habitat, and the leopard lying down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion cub playing and skipping about together ...

Then, as our first parents would have lain down ... during the day they would have been looking up at the sun in all its beauty, and the cloudless skies. In the evenings and the nighttimes, they would have enjoyed the moon and all the constellations of the stars and planets. ... *How God smiled upon all the wonderful beauty He had created, and the man and in the woman in particular!*

It seems that each evening He came and met with them personally in the garden, 3:8 the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. This description sounds strange to our ears, but it is the translation of a beautiful Hebrew phrase that defines the intimacy which God enjoyed with Adam and Eve. ... God, being Spirit, cannot be defined in human terms and as Moses is led to write these words he combines the two terms together, אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה (Elohim, YHWH) ... and he explains the Lord God walking in the cool (רוּחַ רוּחַ ruwach {roo'-akh}) and having wonderful and personal communion with our first parents. ... It was Heaven on earth for Adam and Eve, and it was also Heaven on earth for God.

Throughout the history of the children of Israel, God cherished the relationship of the personal closeness and intimacy. He kept it as it passed from Adam and Eve to Seth, - their third son who replaced Abel, the brother who Cain killed. It had then gone on to Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon. Indeed, there was no other more blessed people than the Israelites.

Now, these were the people with whom God had made an unconditional covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12). Even after they had slipped into apostasy He promised their remnant would be restored so that the nation would continue., Jer. 31:3 I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. 4 Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel. ... There is a particular word in Gen. 3:8 that picks up on a simple understanding of His closeness, the word describes how He 'walked' (הָלַךְ halak {haw-lak'}) in the garden. It is one of the key words in Genesis, - Gen. 5:22 And Enoch walked with God ... Gen. 6:9 Noah walked with God ... Gen. 24:40 The LORD, before whom I [Abraham] walk.

In Exodus this walk developed into God living and dwelling and travelling with His people. He commanded them, Ex. 25:8 let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. When it was built and Moses

had dedicated it, the glory of the Lord entered in among His people (Ex. 40:33-35).

Sadly, when they sinned the Lord moved out, - His glory departed (I Sam. 4:21) ... However, God restored the nation during David and Solomon's reign, and the temple which was built in Jerusalem replaced the tabernacle. The temple was dedicated and again the Lord dwelt amongst His people (I Kgs. 8:1-11).

However, - as history so often does, - it repeated itself, and Israel disobeyed God and He punished the people by having the temple destroyed and them carried off into captivity ... and, - once again, - the glory of God had departed (Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4; 11:22,23).

Where is the temple today in Jerusalem? You can go to the old city ... to the Western Wall ... the remnant of the old temple. The first temple to be built on the rock on which now stands the Islamic *Dome of the Rock*, was Solomon's temple, built in the 10th century BC. When it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586BC, the next temple was built when King Cyrus allowed the Jews, - under Zerubbabel, - to return home from exile and was completed c. 516 BC.

In 63 BC, however, the Roman Pompey the Great invaded Jerusalem, and desecrated much of the interior of the second temple, so much so that c. 19 BC King Herod the Great completely restored the Temple complex on a larger and grander scale. It was Herod's restored Temple Jesus attended, and which was destroyed in 70 AD by the Roman general Titus.

It has not been built since ... and just recently, - in October 2016, - another hurdle has been erected for the Jews in that the United Nations (i.e UNESCO - United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) reclassified the Temple Mount and the Western Wall as exclusively Muslim, - it is now officially known as the *Haram al-Sharif* (Islamic, "the Noble Sanctuary). ... It is now officially a Muslim area ... It no longer officially is a Jewish site.

God is watching though ... He has never stopped watching over His beloved people and He has kept them, and He will continue to keep them. Throughout the centuries, at the Western Wall, the most commonly recited prayer continues to be [Ps. 79, 1 O God, the heathen are come into](#)

thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. 2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. 3 Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them. 4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. 5 How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? 6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. 7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. 8 O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. 9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake. 10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed. 11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die; 12 And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. 13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations.

For the Jewish religion, *that* is where the temple now stands, - n matter what the UN says! It is for them the most sacred place on earth because it was where God used to dwell among them. They congregate there, waiting for the coming of the Messiah ... Sadly, - *very sadly*, - they are not willing to believe the Messiah has already been and gone. Jesus, for them, was a pretender, - He was a 'false' Messiah. They would not and did not receive Him, **Jn. 1:11** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not*

What a privilege has been opened up to us, though, ... that God has opened up our understanding that the King of kings, the Messiah, has already come. He no longer dwells in a tabernacle or in a temple. Bricks and mortar, - no matter how resplendent, - is not what He has chosen to come and be resident in. Instead, He came to be born in a manger, **Jn. 14:9** *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father).* God came in human flesh in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, - His body was the Temple in which Jehovah dwelt.

Early in His ministry the Lord Jesus told the Jews at the Jerusalem temple, - referring to His own body, - **Jn. 2:19** *Destroy this temple, and in*

three days I will raise it up. They could not understand, v.20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

In the tabernacle dwelt the glory of God ... but the tabernacle was no more. In the temple dwelt the glory of God ... but the temple had become polluted with vain religion, and God had moved out. ... But when Jesus came, in His earthly body dwelt the glory of God, for His body was the dwelling-place of God ... **Jn. 1:14** the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

But evil men took Him and nailed Him to a cross, and left Him to die the most horrible death, ... the Lord of glory (I Cor. 2:8), - they crucified Him. ... All this was part of God's wonderful and eternal plan though ... This is the reason Jesus came. They killed Him ... and they thought they had gotten rid of Him ... but up from the dead He arose ... and He returned to Heaven, where He is awaiting the command from His Father to enter this world again to establish His millennial Kingdom on earth.

In the meantime, where is the glory of God dwelling on earth today? ... His glory abides in every redeemed child of God Who has been washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ and whose sins have all been taken away, **I Cor. 6:19** know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's ... **Eph. 2:19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; **20** And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; **21** In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: **22** In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

... But it doesn't finish there ... Then the final habitation of God's glory will be in another place ... From Heaven, to the garden, through the wilderness to the temple, to the Lord Jesus, to the saints ... and there is coming a day when this world and all that we know within it will come to an end, - it will pass away and be no more, as Peter wrote. The people of God, - in who dwells the glory of God, - shall be taken out of this scene of time and into an eternal Kingdom. It will be more wonderful than any words can describe. It will be a new Heaven and a new Earth, - the paradise of Eden restored. ... Not even the apostle John could convey

adequately what he saw when he wrote, Rev. 21:2 I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

The journey will finally be completed! From the garden of God's perfection through the wildernesses and the barren lands, the battles and the trials of life ... *and home to glory!*

Believer, are you looking forward to it?! Do you thank God daily for the wonderful salvation with which He has gloriously and eternally saved you? He could have left you and looked in grace upon another, ... but in love, tenderness, and mercy, He saved you. He placed within you His Holy Spirit to guide, , strengthen, and prepare you for the day when Jesus will come back for you ... That is the day when He will present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27).

It's amazing, isn't it! Unsaved, what do you think about it all ... what the Bible describes to us about the glory of God. His glory did not just begin to appear on the Bethlehem hillside when the announcement of Christ's birth was brought to the shepherds. The glory of God is as eternal as God Himself.

This same God loves you, in fact He says He is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance* (II Pet. 3:9). He loves you with such profound depth of love that He sent His only-begotten Son into this world to die on the cross of Calvary.

If, as yet, you have not repented of your sin, cry out to Jesus for forgiveness, and be saved. Invite Him into your heart to be your Saviour and your Lord, and He will come and abide with you. And here is how it will be with every redeemed child of God, Paul describes it like this ... To the Roman he wrote, **Rom. 8:29** *For whom he did foreknow [i.e. those whom He loved before time began], he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* **30** *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* ... And that is how he could go on to write to the Corinthians, **II Cor. 3:18** *But we all,*

with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

That is the wonder of Christmas, ... that is the wonder of our salvation, **I Tim. 1:15** ... that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners

Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know ...
His forever, only His:
Who the Lord and me shall part?
Ah, with what a rest of bliss
Christ can fill the loving heart.
Heaven and earth may fade and flee,
Firstborn light in gloom decline;
But, while God and I shall be,
I am His, and He is mine.