

Glory

Thursday 23rd January



Icon: Christ, High Priest (public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

Scripture: Hebrews 7.23 – 8.7

Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

Now the main point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They offer worship in a sanctuary that is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly one; for Moses, when he was about to erect the tent, was warned, ‘See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.’

But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one.

To reflect

Glory is a word that appears in different ways across the scriptures – Hebrew Bible and New Testament. It can mean that aspect of a person or God worthy of praise, honour, or respect; often associated with brightness or splendour in a visible or audible encounter with God. It can be used of people or creation, glory is that characteristic which people typically honour: wisdom, might, wealth. It can refer to a quality of land, people, age, strength of outward appearance.

In the New Testament, glory is an essential attribute of God, whose radiance is displayed at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2.9) and is part of the hope of the final destiny of the soul and humanity. As a response people are to glorify God. Glory is part of the work of the Messiah, in deliverance and salvation. The Gospel of John presents Jesus as the revelation of the glory of God (John 1.14), with Jesus' works being a sign of the glory of God (such as the wedding at Cana, John 2.11) and invite belief. In the Gospel of John the Cross is the culminating sign, the hour of Christ's glorification.

As we walk through Epiphanytide what are the signs of the glory of God you see in the work and ministry to Jesus in the Gospel readings?

The Glory of God in Creation by Thomas Moore

Thou art, O God, the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from Thee.
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine.

When day, with farewell beam, delays
Among the opening clouds of even,
And we can almost think we gaze
Through opening vistas into heaven,
Those hues that make the sun's decline
So soft, so radiant, Lord, are Thine.

When night, with wings of starry gloom,
O'ershadows all the earth and skies,
Like some dark, beauteous bird, whose plume
Is sparkling with unnumbered eyes,
That sacred gloom, those fires divine,
So grand, so countless, Lord, are Thine.

When youthful Spring around us breathes,
Thy spirit warms her fragrant sigh,
And every flower that Summer wreathes
Is born beneath Thy kindling eye:
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rf2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'Glory to God' and 'And the Glory of the God Shall be Revealed' from G.F. Handel's Messiah, performances include those by the London Philharmonic and the Toronto Symphony.
- 'Glory to God' by Dan Schutte, a contemporary Mass Setting of the Gloria.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.