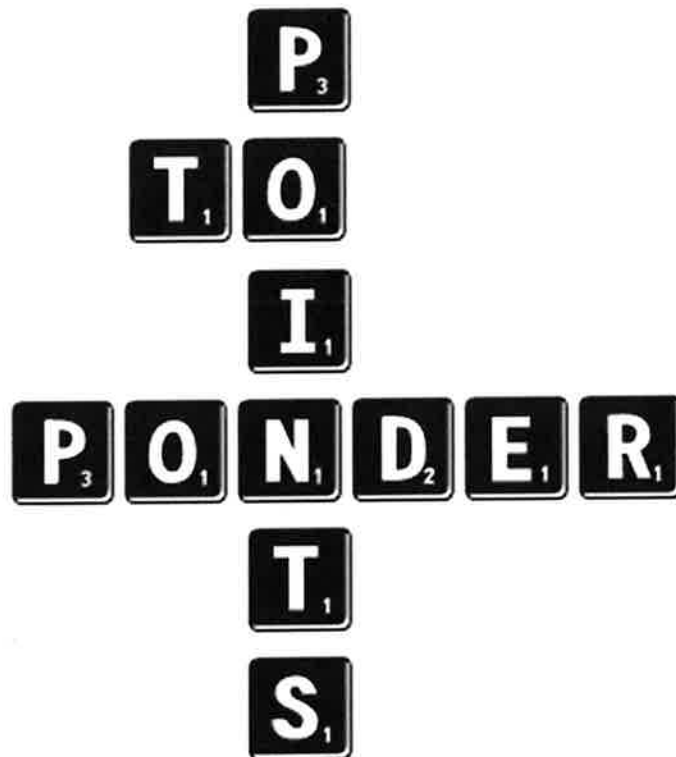




2026 Weekly Devotions

Week of: July 20th - 26th

Sermon: July 19th



July 20

Genesis 31:1

Exodus ends by describing the scene as the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. The final few verses of chapter 40 constitute a great end to a book that began with the people of God enslaved in Egypt. From captivity to freedom in the Lord, the book of Exodus is a story of God liberating and leading His people. The culmination of the final chapter includes a word that is often used but rarely defined.

The term I have in mind is “glory”. What is the glory of the Lord? Have you thought about it? How would you describe it? This week we are going to do a deep dive into this concept. We are going to attempt to explore and define the idea of the glory of the Lord by doing an old-fashioned word study. What we will find is that the Bible gives us many data points that help us understand the glory of the Lord.

Today, we are going to begin our journey with a seemingly unrelated passage. You may have read the text of Scripture first and, if you did, you may wonder what in the world this passage has to do with the glory of the Lord! The answer is that the term often translated “glory” is used in this passage as well. While it is true that Genesis 31:1 does not refer to the Lord, we can explore this passage and learn something important about God’s glory.

The same Hebrew word that is translated as “glory” in Exodus 40:34 is rendered “wealth” in Genesis 31:1. The treasures that Jacob had accumulated have some connection with the idea of God’s glory. What is the parallel? Glory is a treasure! When we speak of God’s glory, we speak of the riches of His presence. Just as a treasure communicates the value of a person, so the glory of the Lord demonstrates the weight and worth of our great God.

Our God adorns Himself with greatness and splendor. He is an inexhaustible well of goodness and, consequently, His presence is glorious in evoking a sense of His value. The glory of God is the refulgence of His splendor; it exudes a sense of value that is overwhelming. When the people of God witnessed the glory of God fill the tabernacle of God, they knew that something truly valuable had taken place. A wealth of blessing came to the people because the One who is more valuable than all other things had made Himself known in His entrance.

July 21

Genesis 45:13

Part of the trouble we have in defining the term “glory” when we speak of the glory of God is rooted in the fact that it refers to a multi-faceted reality. The glory of God is not a trite, truncated thought. Instead, the glory of God encompasses many different and beautiful traits. Part of my goal in writing this week’s devotions is to shine a light on how the Bible uses the word in different contexts so that we can better grasp the scene as described in Exodus 40 when the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

My assumption is that Genesis 45:13 is not easily connected to the idea of the glory of God upon first glance. To be clear, the point of this passage is not to detail the glory of God, but it does contain the same word we translate as “glory” when referring to the glory of God in Exodus 40.

In Genesis 45, the same term is translated as “honor”. The phrase is used by Joseph to describe his place of prominence and esteem in the Egyptian empire. His desire is for his brothers to go home and tell Jacob (his father) about the glorious ascent the Lord has allowed him to make so that his name is revered amongst the Egyptians. This was an unthinkable development just a few years prior but, by God’s grace, Joseph had become a revered foreigner in the land.

The connection to glory is rather obvious once we paint the picture. God is to be revered in the same way, and His glory is a testimony of His qualifications for esteem. God’s glory is the weight of His honor. Stated differently, the glory of God is the tangible, weighty testimony of His place of prominence. When the people of Israel witnessed the glory of the Lord fill the tabernacle, they must have experienced and felt the presence of the most honorable being in the entire universe.

This term helps us understand our response to God’s glory because it demonstrates the connection between God’s glory and our praise. Why do we worship in response to the glory of God? The answer is that God is honorable! We sing and proclaim His excellencies because he stands far above the rest of creation. Giving glory to God is really a reaction to our seeing and savoring God’s glory as revealed to us. Consequently, the more we see God and walk with God, the more prone we will be to offer praises to His name.

God deserves the place of honor in your heart because God is the most honorable being you could ever know. His glory is simply the weight of His identity as God, made tangible to the world for their response.

July 22

Esther 5:11

Today's passage translates the term sometimes rendered "glory" as "splendor". In its context, it refers to Haman's summation of the king's riches. The term splendor can mean beautiful or magnificent. In this case, the phrase refers to the breathtaking sight of the king's riches as they were on display for Haman, and the rest of the citizens, to observe and behold.

The idea of God's glory as manifesting itself in glorious splendor is easy enough to understand. His presence is breathtakingly beautiful. In fact, the Bible teaches us that the sight of His glory is overwhelming for its majesty. When God filled the tabernacle, the sight would have been overwhelming to those who saw it. The picture that Moses paints for us in Exodus 40 is not simply a "neat" sight, the picture is one that could not have been ignored. When the Lord's glory filled the tabernacle, the people of Israel stopped and beheld with wonder and awe.

God's glory is splendid! One of the more discouraging trends in modern day "Christian" circles is seen when we consider the way that the splendor of God's glory is cheapened by imitations. I recall reading a story about a church that desired to simulate the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle by placing glitter in the air vents and turning on the ac so that the glitter could fall from the sky. This idea that glitter from a vent in any way parallels the glory of God is sickening and a declaration that the people involved have no idea about the God they supposedly serve.

The glory of God is not a flippant thing. It is magnificent and beautiful and overwhelming. Just as Haman was amazed by the splendor of the king's possessions, so God's people should be overcome with the splendor of God. Just as Haman went back to his camp to report on all that he had seen, so God's people should be dedicated to telling the world about the glory of their great God.

When a person catches a glimpse of the splendor of God, they are changed. His beauty and majesty is life-changing and this is part and parcel of His glory. I pray that you continue to see more of the splendor of God's glory and, as you do, I pray that your response is like that of Haman who saw the splendor of the King and told his contemporaries about all that he observed.

July 23

Psalm 16:9

Transparently, I do believe that today's devotion is my favorite for the week because I believe it unlocks some truths about the definition of the term "glory" when applied to God. Today's verse renders the term sometimes translated as glory with two terms, "whole being". The context is clearly dedicated to the topic of worship, and the point is that the psalmist rejoices with everything that he's got. All his being is geared towards the praise of his God.

What is interesting is that this term can also refer to the Lord's glory... how? The answer is that God's glory is the summation of His entire being. One of the ways we can warp our understanding of God and skew our view of God's glory is by only fixating on a few of our favorite attributes of His. We may emphasize His love and mercy, or others might only want to talk about His righteousness and wrath towards sin. The issue in these instances is not with the discussion of these attributes (God is loving and merciful and righteous and wrathful towards rebellion). The problem with these pictures is that they are limited and, therefore, do not encapsulate the totality of our great God.

God's glory is not simply demonstrated in His righteousness. His glory is not only encapsulated by His omniscience or omnipotence or any other attribute we could name. His glory is that He is perfectly comprised of all those attributes (and many others) at the same time. God's love is not at war with His wrath, and His holiness is not at war with His mercy. Instead, God IS: merciful and holy and loving and so on. The glory of God, therefore, is seen when the whole being of God is brought to bear on a circumstance.

One of the implications of this kind of thinking is that God's glory is seen in His attaining and maintaining all the attributes at the same time. The weight of the glory of God is found in His perfection and in the totality of His characteristics being reflected and highlighted in His presence.

When we grow in our understanding of the Lord's attributes, we have more reason to praise Him and that more reason to praise Him is reflected in His glory which is a demonstration of His "whole being". He is both separate and close. He is both kind and vengeful. He is both gracious and just. These might seem like contradictions, or it may at least appear that God is in tension with Himself but the more we get to know Him, the more He makes Himself known to us, the more we see that all these attributes are just part and parcel of who God is. This, my friends, is the reason why the glory of God is so awe-inspiring and unique to Him alone.

July 24

Isaiah 3:8

I love the book of Isaiah. Particularly, I love chapter 6. In that famous account, the prophet tells us of the story that God appeared in his glory. Scripture tells us that Isaiah was worshiping the Lord when the glory of God shone around Him (remember, yesterday's devotion reminded us that this is the "whole being" of God).

One of my favorite parts of the account is Isaiah's description of his response telling us that he fell "as though he were dead" in the presence of the Lord. This kind of response is so different than how many evidently believe they would react if the Lord appeared in their midst! God's presence did not encourage Isaiah to talk to him like a contemporary or to respond with comfort and ease, instead the whole being of God prompted the prophet to respond in a totally different manner.

Today's passage occurs just a few chapters prior to Isaiah's encounter with the living God, but I do believe that it helps us understand why the prophet responded the way that he did a few verses later. In Isaiah 3, the term that is rendered "glory" in Exodus 40 is translated as "glorious presence". It was the very weight of the presence of God that caused Isaiah trepidation.

Have you ever been in the presence of someone you knew was important? If so, their presence may have made you feel uncomfortable. I recall a few opportunities over the years where I have been able to be in the midst of someone I looked up to and I have marveled at the way I responded in those moments. For instance, years ago, Chipper Jones came to my elementary school. That probably means very little to you, but Chipper Jones was my hero! He was the best player for my favorite team and an icon in the Atlanta area. He came to my school, and I was able to pass him in the hallway. Because I knew he was coming, I had planned what I might say if I encountered him but, when he walked by, all I could do was stare! The very weight of being in the presence of someone I esteemed so highly dictated all my actions!

In a far more important, and eternal, manner, the glory of God or the "glorious presence" of the Lord causes men to fall at His feet. When the glory of the Lord filled the temple, His very presence was tangibly felt, and this constitutes His glory. God's glory is the weight of His being and, once it is felt, it elicits a response! When we pray for the Lord to move among us in service, we are really praying for God's glorious presence to fall such that people sense His presence and operate accordingly. When the Lord is near, sin flees and praise multiplies for the precise reason that we cannot help but honor One who is so far above us once we sense His glory.

July 25

Nahum 2:9

Today will be the final entry in our word study of the term “glory”. My goal in doing this is to try to demonstrate how rich, weighty terms in the Bible can be understood more fully by studying the various ways they are used (and translated) in the Scriptures. Word studies are very helpful! They are so helpful that we train all our teachers to do them as I have found that the results of such an endeavor are truly enriching and, often, very illuminating.

Today’s verse translates the term “wealth”. The point here is straightforward as we come to understand that the glory of God is the wealth of His Person as demonstrated in the weight of His presence. Have you ever been in the presence of someone who is highly esteemed because of their wealth? There is a certain gravitas that follows men and women who are known to be in possession of so much! While some bemoan this reality, the fact remains that wealthy people have a special standing in society precisely because of what they own.

In a much more profound way, the glory of God is the tangible declaration of His unparalleled wealth. When I use the term “wealth” to describe God I do not simply mean material wealth. While it’s true that God created all things and, therefore, owns all things, it is just as true to say that God is wealthy in that He perfectly contains every good thing.

God is “wealthy” in holiness, righteousness, kindness, love, mercy and the like. He is the source of all the world’s justice and logic and insight. He holds the entire world in the palm of His hand, and He upholds it by His very Word. To encounter such a Being is glorious and life changing.

When the people of God in Exodus 40 saw the Lord’s presence visibly move into the tabernacle, they knew they were witnessing the motions of the most significant Being in the entire universe. This was One whose presence would change everything and that is still the case today.

His wealth also meant that He was free to give them what they needed out of the abundance of His possession. In the future, they would continue to need grace and insight and protection. His glorious presence was a reminder that He possessed all that was needed to help them in their journey, and this is still true today. In this respect, the glory of God is comforting because the glory reminds us that God is able!

July 26

Hebrews 12:28

As we close this week's devotions, I can't help but consider how the study of the multi-faceted glory of God should compel us to faithfulness on this Lord's Day. We have the distinct joy of gathering together to lift up the name of the One who remains glorious today! I would suspect that the people of God regularly reminded each other of the sight of the initial indwelling of the tabernacle as they gathered to worship. My assumption is that this sight would have compelled them to sing and offer sacrifices because they would have intuitively known that God was glorious and worthy.

In the same way, we gather on this day to worship the One who remains glorious. While I have not seen Him move into the tabernacle, I have experienced Him move into my own heart and life! His glory has changed me and, I pray, His glorious presence has changed you as well. If this is the case, doesn't it seem fitting to honor and heed the admonition that is given to us in Hebrews 12?

We should be grateful to God that He concerns Himself with us! We don't deserve His presence as we have done nothing to earn His favor. We should marvel that we belong to a Kingdom that cannot be shaken and this should lead us to offer God worship.

Notice here that the author describes the kind of worship that we should offer as "acceptable". What does this mean? Scripture would teach us that acceptable worship is worship that is grounded in faith. Specifically in faith that God is who He says He is and has done all that He has promised us regarding our salvation. Second, Scripture would teach us that acceptable worship is worship that is in accordance with His stated revelation. God has told us how He is to be lifted (in obedience to His law, through prayer and preaching and singing) and it is our duty to render to Him what He commands.

Finally, we are to do this with "reverence and awe". Why? Because our God is glorious! Reverence and awe naturally flow from the sight of the glory of God! The people of Israel could not help but be reverent when they saw the glory of God and we cannot help it either when we get a clear look at His glorious presence today. Would you prepare your hearts in this moment to lift Him up? He deserves far more than we can ascribe to Him, but this does not mean that we should not be prepared to exalt Him with every fiber of our being as we know that God in all His glory is worthy of every praise we can muster.