



## Aim of lesson

To look at what the glory of the Lord is, what it means and why it is important for us

## Bible background

Numbers 14:21, Psalm 72:19

## Preparation required

There are a lot of references in this lesson so you should be clear in your mind where the lesson is going and how much you are going to expect the class to look up.

## Outline of Lesson

Talk to the students about whether they have got on better with prayers since last week. They probably won't have, so don't make it an inquest but rather use the occasion to say that some people find it easier than others and everyone finds it difficult at times. The praise part of our prayers is probably the bit we do worst. Talk about how we can improve this. If we praise a human being it is because we think they are very good at something. This lesson is to help us appreciate God's greatness so that we want to praise him.

### God's glory

Ask the class if they can think of times in the Bible when God's glory appeared. They may think of God's glory on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:15-17), filling the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35), or filling the temple after Solomon dedicated it (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

What did it look like? It usually appeared as cloud but sometimes fire was present too. It was awesome – the angels had to tell the shepherds to 'Fear not' (Luke 2:9-10); the disciples were terrified at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:6) and 'indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." (Hebrews 12:21). Even the sight of the reflection of God's glory in Moses' face was so frightening that he had to have his face covered (Exodus 34:29-35). Notice the reaction of the priests at the dedication of the temple in the Chronicles reference.

Moses had seen all this, but he was aware that there was still something missing, and so he asked to see God's glory. Get the class to read Exodus 33:18-23 and Exodus 34:5-7 and then get them to try to explain what God's glory is. As they discover things they could either write the ideas down on a large sheet of paper, white board or in their books.

They might suggest that God's glory is something to do with his name, which is then explained in the characteristics he revealed in chapter 34. So God's glory is to do with his character.

### The ark

When God's glory filled the tabernacle and the temple it was a sign that God wanted to dwell with his people. Tell, or remind the class about 1 Samuel 4. It is about the time the Philistines captured the ark, Eli died and his daughter-in-law gave birth to a son, calling him Ichabod which means 'the glory of God has departed'. Here God's glory was represented by the ark, which was a symbol of God's presence and fellowship with his people Israel. When the ark came to rest in the temple, the glory of God filled it (1 Kings 8:3-11).

### The kingdom

Isaiah 35 is a prophecy about the kingdom. Read a few verses which indicate this - desert blossoming (v1), healing (5-6). Read v10 then the end of v2 'They (the ransomed) shall see the glory of the Lord'. So the glory of God is also about the salvation of God. This could be added to the student's list.

### Jesus

We know that Jesus was the means by which God achieved man's salvation. Get the students to look at John 1.14 (it's printed in the students' books) to pick out an aspect of Jesus' glory ie 'grace and truth'. This also is to do with his character. We can be 'ransomed' by the work of Jesus, by our belief and we can reflect this glory.

## Us

In Exodus 34 we noted some of the characteristics of God. Get the students to look through 1 Corinthians 13 to find a characteristic of followers of Jesus to match each of the 6 characteristics of God in Exodus 34 and write them next to those from Exodus.

for example

- Merciful = bears all things
- Gracious = kind
- Slow to anger = patient, doesn't insist on its own way.
- Steadfast love = love never ends
- faithfulness = believes all things
- Forgiving iniquity = not rejoice at wrongdoing

## Praise

There are things that God can't make us give him: our faith or belief in him and our thanks or praise.

However, if we think of the reaction of the priests when they saw the glory of God in the temple, - they bowed down and worshipped and gave thanks saying, 'For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever' - maybe we could begin to appreciate the wonderful characteristics of God and feel compelled to worship him in the same way.

Remind the class what they have discovered. God's glory isn't so much his power and majesty which frightened the Israelites on Mount Sinai. It's his love, kindness and goodness; wanting our best and wanting to forgive us.

Ask the students to think of times of great praise in the Bible. They may think of

- angels praising God at creation (Job 38:4-7).
- and at Jesus birth (Luke 2:13).
- King David wrote many psalms praising God and made the arrangements for praise in the temple (1 Chronicles 25). Musicians were permanently employed to praise God.
- There will be praising of God when Jesus returns and the kingdom is established (Revelation 19). You could read verses 1-8 reading instead of 'Hallelujah,' 'Praise the Lord' (which is what 'hallelujah' means).
- Saying 'thank you'

In Luke 17:15 the Samaritan leper praised God with a loud voice. Only one out of the returned to thank Jesus. Jesus told him in verse 18 that his faith had made him well. The man's praise was a result of real faith. We often use this parable to say that we should remember to thank God for what he has done and this is probably right because thanking would have been part of what the leper did. But you could talk a bit about the difference between praise and thanks as we need to do both in our prayers.

## Relevance to our lives

If we take the trouble to understand God better we can praise him for his glory and try to encourage others to do the same (Matthew 5:16) But we can also try to be ready and looking forward to the coming of Jesus.

Jesus will come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). Moses had to plead with God to show him his glory. When Jesus returns it will be there for everyone to see.

God's purpose with the earth is that the earth has always been that it should be filled with his glory (Numbers 14:21).

## Extension activities

- If the students look up 'praise' in the concordance they will see quite a few original words. One is *halal*<sup>1</sup> which is where *hallelujah* comes from, another *doxa* which is where we get *doxology* from. There is also *eulogeo* where we get *eulogy* and *hymneuo* where we get *hymn*. Now, if they look at 'glory' in the concordance they will see some of the same original words for praise and glory - *doxa* and *halal* (they may also notice one of the words is *kabod* - the root of *Ichabod*)
- You could spend some time looking at the Psalms. Many of the Psalmists meditated on the glory of God and on his kingdom - for instance, Psalm 8:1, 19:1, 24:7-10, 29:2-3,9, 102:15-16, 115:1. Psalm 24 was probably written to celebrate David bringing the ark back to Jerusalem. What else is it also talking about? Ultimately what is the Psalm referring to? What does Psalm 85:9 have to say about glory and salvation?
- You might like to talk about what it means in John 11:4 when Lazarus' death was explained in terms of it 'not leading to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the son of God may be glorified through it'

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word 'halal' has nothing to do with the Arabic word, which means 'permissible'.