

"God Crowns Jesus with Glory and Honor because Jesus Exhibits and Effects God's Glory of Forgiving Sinners and Saving Men."

"... and hast crowned Him with glory and honour"
Psalm 8:5.

Introduction

Why does God crown Jesus with glory and honor? God crowns Jesus with glory and honor because Christ vindicates God's honor.

What is God's honor? God's honor is that He is found true to His Word and trustworthy.¹

And what Word was God found trustworthy in? God was found trustworthy in His Word and promise to redeem men from their sins. For this purpose He sent His Only-Begotten Son into the world.²

And God's forgiving sinners is His glory.³ And Christ effected God's glory by suffering the eternal damnation we deserved so we would be delivered from it and given eternal life.

For this Christ is crowned with honor and glory because He kept the Word He agreed to do and, vindicated God's honor, and evinced God's glory to the world.⁴ Because Christ saved men, He

¹"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." **II Timothy 3:16.**

²"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." **St. John 3:17.**

³"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." **St. John 12:27-28.** Luther writes: "[God's Glory] ... consists in this, that He wants to forgive sins and to save for the sake of His Son." *Luther's Works*, Vol. 4, p. 60.

⁴"The reason why this Child, this Son, is also called Counselor is that He, in counsel with [the other Person of] the Holy Trinity, helped reach the conclusion of how fallen mankind could be helped again. The unending righteousness of God was offended by the Fall of Adam. Now then, there was only an unending payment required, which neither angel nor man could provide. Therefore there was no counsel either in heaven or upon earth. Thus, the Son of God, the eternal

is crowned with honor and glory.

And this vindication of God's honor is published to His glory throughout the earth through the Gospel. And through this publishing of God's crowning Christ with glory and honor for effecting the salvation of men, men are drawn to God and gain eternal life in His Kingdom forever.

I. Adam did not Extol God's Glory but Besmirched God's Glory and thereby Perished.

A. Adam besmirched God with his ingratitude and rejection of God.

Contrary to Christ, Adam and his descendants have a very poor record of honoring God's glory and showing gratitude. God created man out of nothing in His own Image for intimate communion with the Almighty God, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. No other creature, save the angels, enjoyed membership in such an exclusive club.

Yet Adam in an incredible show of effrontery and ingratitude snubs the Holy Trinity and chose fellowship with the Devil. Jesus, therefore, says of fallen man:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.
He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not
in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When
he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a
liar, and the father of it.⁵

Luther writes:

Therefore the perfect natural endowments in man were the knowledge of God, faith, fear, etc. These Satan has corrupted through sin; just as leprosy poisons the flesh, so the will and reason have become depraved through sin, and man not only does not love God any longer but flees from Him, hates Him, and desires to be and live without Him.⁶

Again, Luther writes:

Therefore an unbeliever is a murderer of God and of man, whether he be called Abraham's seed or anything else. For if he could kill God, suppress the truth, and exterminate the divine Word, he would do so. Subsequently he also becomes a

Wisdom, came up with the counsel that He would volunteer Himself as Mediator and Redeemer, that He especially in the fullness of time wanted to take into Himself human nature and within it make payment for us men." The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, pp. 76, 77.

⁵**St. John 8:44**

⁶*Luther's Works*, Vol.1, p.165

murderer of man.⁷

And so, incredibly, Adam leaves the fellowship of God for the fellowship of a murderer, the devil.

B. Man perishes apart from God.

And what can one expect from fellowship with a murderer? One can expect death. And so Adam along with the entire human race died because of this fellowship with the devil. St. Paul writes:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ...⁸

Luther writes:

To our reason it appears very ludicrous for one fruit to be so injurious that the entire human race, in an almost infinite series, perished and died an eternal death. But the fruit did not have this power. Adam did indeed put his teeth into the fruit, but actually he put his teeth into a sting. This God had forbidden; this was disobedience to God. This is the true cause of the evil, namely, that Adam sins against God, disregards His order, and obeys Satan. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a good tree; it produced very fine fruit. But because the prohibition is added and man is disobedient, it becomes more injurious than any poison.⁹

Man's glory or rather his ignominy and infamy is that he rejects God's glory, i.e. God is gracious and giving, and accepts the fellowship of the devil. Subsequently, man perishes.

II. Christ Vindicates God's Honor and Glory and God thereby Crowns Him with Honor and Glory.

A. God's glory is manifested by the Cross of Christ.

⁷*Luther's Works*, Vol. 23, p. 418

⁸**Romans 5:12**

⁹*Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, p. 96

But why didn't Adam perish immediately when He departed from God's Word and thereby departed from God? Adam didn't perish immediately because of God's glory, the forgiveness of sins. Luther writes:

In the first place, God is long-suffering; therefore He does not punish sin immediately. Otherwise it would happen that we would immediately perish in our sins.¹⁰

St. Paul writes:

Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.¹¹

Through God's forbearance He passed over all our sins and let the judgment fall upon Christ. Jesus says:

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.¹²

Jesus and the Father here have called His bearing the judgment of sin by God to save men from sin God's glory. Luther writes:

[God's Glory] ... consists in this, that He wants to forgive sins and to save for the sake of His Son.¹³

Glory means renown, what one is famous for. So, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God in Three Persons, is famous for forgiving the sins of men and saving them.

B. Christ vindicates God's honor by His saving men from their sins.

Christ, therefore, vindicated God's honor by suffering for the sins of men and saving them

¹⁰*Luther's Works*, Vol.1, p. 159

¹¹**Romans 3:25**

¹²**St. John 12:27-28**

¹³*Luther's Works*, Vol. 4, p. 60

from their sins. God is nothing but gracious and giving. Man had sullied God's glory and tarnished His honor by rejecting Him in the Garden of Eden and now accusing God of being the cause of man's sin and problems. For example, when God queried Adam about what he had done, Adam blamed God. Adam said:

The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.¹⁴

Luther writes:

See how superbly the vicious nature of sin is pictured here. Adam can in no wise be forced into a confession of his sin, but he denies his sin or excuses it as long as he sees that he has any hope or any kind of an excuse left. It is not amazing that in the beginning he hoped to be able to cover his sin and that he accuses God rather than acknowledge that he has sinned. But this is amazing, that he still persists in his excuse after his conscience has convicted him and he himself has also heard his sin from God. He does not say: "Lord, I have sinned; forgive me my debt; be merciful"; but he passes on the guilt to the woman. It is the nature of sin not to permit the soul to flee back to God but rather to force it into a flight away from God.

There is a well-known teaching in the schools of the rhetoricians that if one has been charged with a crime, he should either deny it or defend it as having been committed legally. Adam does both. In the first place, he denies his offense and says that he is frightened by the voice of the Lord, not by his sin. But when he is convicted, so that he cannot deny the deed, he tries to defend himself with the claim that his action is lawful. "If," he says, "Thou hadst not joined this woman to me, I would not have eaten." Thus he again traces the sin he himself had committed back to God and accuses God of his own sin. There just is no end to sinning once one has turned away from the Word. He had sinned through disobedience and unbelief; now he doubles his great disgrace and blasphemy when he says: "I did not listen to the serpent; I felt no pleasure in looking at that tree; I did not stretch out my hand to pluck the forbidden fruit. All this the woman did whom Thou didst give to me." In short, Adam does not want to acknowledge his sin; he wants to be regarded as pure and innocent.¹⁵

But Christ did not behave that way. Rather, Christ glorified God and vindicated His honor even though Christ had a much tougher row to hoe than Adam did in paradise. Christ had to endure the wrath of God alone. Yet Christ did not accuse God of anything. But He continued to praise God throughout even His rejection by God. In Psalm 22 Jesus says:

¹⁴**Genesis 3:12**

¹⁵*Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, p. 171

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou* so far from helping me, *and from* the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou *art* holy, *O thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.¹⁶

But wait a minute. Isn't Christ blaming God when He asks why He has forsaken Him? Certainly not. Christ's human nature is sinless and so has a perfect right to ask why He is bearing the punishment meant for sinners. Also, Christ is God and therefore knows perfectly well why He is suffering. But here Christ is graciously going through every agonizing step of experiencing and learning human suffering so that He can present us to God pure and without spot or blemish. Certainly Christ because He is God knows why He is suffering. And were He to don our fallen human nature's attitudes He might say something like, "I know why this is happening. I am God. Why do I have to ask such questions and endure such a process and go through each and every knitted part of being human?" But here Christ, though He is God's Son, suffered for our sakes to become a student and learn every step of the way what it is to be human. St. Paul writes:

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him ...¹⁷

St. Luke writes of Christ's growing in knowledge and wisdom:

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.¹⁸

And indeed this human experience Jesus passed through is very human. It is difficult for us to understand and appreciate the purity of the frank conversation Jesus had with God. For when we are frank with people, it is always tinged with sin and vengeance and the desire to use frankness to harm. We as Christians constantly have to purge our motives through absolution and faith. But here Christ asks out of genuine human desire to know. This is genuine human suffering. This is forthright human questioning of God. This is not accusing God but seeking answers for actions that seem so contrary to God.

The purity of this frank discussion Jesus has with God is revealed when Christ says after putting this questions to God, "But thou *art* holy ..."¹⁹ Christ does not accuse God of injustice. He just wants to know why. And of course God answers. Jesus says in Psalm 22:

¹⁶**Psalm 22:1-3**

¹⁷**Hebrews 5:8-9**

¹⁸**St. Luke 2:52**

¹⁹**Psalm 22:3**

For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.²⁰

Here Jesus tells us that God answered His questions and His prayers and delivered Him. God, even when He forsook Christ, nevertheless was active in working with Christ to overcome God's wrath over sin and thereby save men. And when this work was completed, God delivered Christ.

Christ, therefore, even in the midst of His Passion vindicates God's honor, namely He proves through His uniquely human experience that God is gracious and good always to men and is trustworthy to keep His word to forgive sins and to save.

C. God adorns Christ with glory and honor for vindicating His honor and publishes this recognition through the Gospel to save men.

And so, just as Christ was forsaken for the salvation of men, so He will be honored for the salvation of men. Thus we read in Psalm 8:

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.²¹

Being made a little lower than the angels was Christ's being forsaken of God for our sakes. His glory and honor is His resurrection from the dead and God praising His work because it glorifies God, vindicates God's honor, and thereby saves men. For through the preaching of this glory and honor of Christ, men are brought back to God.

When men see God's glory in Christ's vindication of God's honor, they now rush to God and cling to Him, knowing through Christ's work God's glory is to forgive and to save and thereby to grant men eternal life in God's Kingdom. Isaiah says of the Gospel in our day:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.²²

²⁰**Psalm 22:24**

²¹**Psalm 8:5**

²²**Isaiah 2:2-3**

What is it that causes people to rush to the Lord's House, i.e. the Church? It is the word,²³ the Gospel which reveals God's glory to forgive sinners. Hence, Isaiah writes elsewhere that it is God's glory and fame of the Gospel that brings in people from all nations:

And I will set a sign [i.e. the Gospel which reveals the Cross] among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."²⁴

Jesus says:

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it again*. *The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it*, said that it thundered; others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.²⁵

The publication of God crowning Jesus with glory and honor is plainly not done for God's sake but for our sake. For Jesus says that the glorification of His Father is published not for God's sake, God has no need of it, but rather for ours, in order that now knowing God's glory, we are drawn back to Him. Luther writes of God's glory:

[God's Glory] ... consists in this, that He wants to forgive sins and to save for the sake of His Son.²⁶

Apart from this knowledge, men remain trapped in their sins and flee God. Luther writes:

And so this little section, too, deals with the description or the nature of sin. When there is no promise of forgiveness of sins and no faith, the sinner cannot act otherwise. If God had said: "Adam, you have sinned; but I shall forgive you your sin," then with the utmost loathing Adam would have humbly and frankly acknowledged his sin. But because the hope for the forgiveness of his sins is not yet

²³**Isaiah 2:3**

²⁴**Isaiah 66:19**, amplification added.

²⁵**St. John 12:27-32**

²⁶*Luther's Works*, Vol. 4, p. 60

available, he feels and sees nothing except death itself because of his transgression of the command. However, because nature is unable to avoid death, Adam cannot be brought to a confession of his sin. He tries every possible device to clear himself of his guilt. In the same way every sinner hates his punishment. Moreover, because he hates his punishment, at the same time he hates God's justice and God Himself; and he tries with all his might to persuade God and everybody else that he is suffering innocently.²⁷

For the sake of all men, that they might know God's glory and honor of faithfully forgiving sins, God publishes the crowning of Christ with glory and honor that we might come to Him and gain eternal life. Luther writes:

Had Christ been crucified a hundred thousand times and had nothing been said about it, what profit would the act of His being brought to the cross have brought? But when I come to this, I must draw this act into history and publish it for all the world. Also, if anyone had seen this, he would not have thought that the work of redemption was taking place there. The work is fulfilled on the cross, but no one knows of the redemption except the Father and the Son. Therefore to the act also the use of the act must be added, that it may be declared through the Word and that one may hold it by faith and, thus believing, may be saved.²⁸

And through this publishing of God's glory, men are endeared to God and His name becomes again excellent among men in all the earth. Hence, David says:

O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!²⁹

Conclusion

God, then, crowns Christ with glory and honor because Christ vindicates God's honor.

And God vindicated His honor in this way not for His sake, for God could have vindicated His honor by thumping Adam in the Garden of Eden for his disrespect of God. But rather, God vindicated His honor by showing mercy to fallen man and sending His Only-Begotten Son to save men from their sins.

And through the publication of God vindicating His honor in this way, men see God's glory of forgiving sinners and thereby are drawn back into Him to live forever with Him in His Kingdom.

²⁷*Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 177, 178

²⁸*Luther's Works*, Vol. 28, p. 268

²⁹**Psalm 8:9**

Amen