

Some Thoughts on

The Glory of God

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord

”

....

Habakkuk 2:14

Table of Contents

Preface	3
“The Glory of God”	7
God’s Glory Issues from Himself through His Creation	11
“Spiritual Forms of Expression”	13
Touching God	14
Tears	16
Jacob’s Ladder	18

At Christ's Table ~ ACTpublications

“Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.”

1 Corinthians 2:13

© 2021

W.D. Furiioso, Writer ~ Frances Furiioso, Editor

At Christ's Table Ministries ~ ACTpublications ~ <https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

ACTpublications may be freely shared, reproduced, and distributed - unaltered, in digital or print formats. Any quotations or excerpts must also be unaltered and referenced with the above information.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotation is from the *New American Standard Bible*.

2

Some Thoughts on the Glory of God

WD Furiioso ~ ACTpublications (2021) ~ <https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

Preface

“I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6)

I don't think we have fully appreciated the significance of the claim Jesus made. Since the beginning of human history, Mankind has been seeking to know and understand Life - that which gives life, unites all life, and gives order to all of life – the nature of “Being”, “Ultimate Reality”. Western philosophers have pursued the knowledge of what they call “Truth”. Eastern philosophers have pursued understanding of what they call the “The Way” (the Tao)¹. Many of us are pursuing the knowledge and understanding of the One we call “God” through relationship with Jesus who claimed to be “the Way, the Truth and the Life”.

From Medieval Times to the Enlightenment, secular philosophers pursued what they called the *Transcendentals* – those things which transcend and govern the physical universe – that which is

¹ In *The Abolition of Man*, C. S. Lewis adopts the Chinese philosophical term “Tao” to encompass what he considers to be the broadly accepted, traditional moralities of both Eastern and Western cultures—including Platonic, Hindu, Taoist, Christian, and others. He argues that this *Tao*, or *Way*, is the basis for all objective principles and therefore of human virtue. In short, the *Tao* refers to the belief “that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are.”

One, True, Good and Beautiful.² Christian philosophers understood these to be the quintessential attributes of God.³

The ancient Greeks pursued the “*Logos*”⁴ – the source of *Reason* and *Perfection* governing the universe. They viewed the Logos as *the divine principle mediating between the seen and the unseen world*. The apostle John addressed his gospel to a Greek audience, bridging the gap between Hebrew thought and Greek thought. John told his Greek audience that God created and

² “For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their Original Author, by analogy, is seen”. (The Book of Wisdom 13:5)

³ The transcendentals – truth, goodness and beauty – are rooted in the objective properties of being, that is, all that exists, namely, all that the Creator has created. The ultimate desire of Humanity is to know the Creator; and to pursue the experiential knowledge of Him through perfection of the “Transcendentals”. “All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. the manifold perfections of creatures - their truth, their goodness, their beauty all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently we can name God by taking his creatures’ perfections as our starting point, for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator.” (Catholic Catechism, Part 1. Section 1, Chapter 1, IV:41) I am aware that many Protestant Christians may balk at references from Catholic source material. But, in lieu of more Protestant thinkers addressing such concepts (there are a few), I have come across some worthwhile offerings by some Catholic thinkers on these subjects - minus any unbiblical or extra-biblical doctrine they may attach. In fact, while I don’t identify with his conversion to Catholicism, nor his felt needs for liturgy, still I would recommend reading Thomas Howard’s “*Evangelical is Not Enough*”.

⁴ Strong’s # 3056. *Logos* means, “...something said (including the thought); by implication a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension a computation.” (*Strong’s Concordance*) “*Logos*, (Greek: “word,” “reason,” or “plan”) plural *logoi*, in ancient Greek philosophy and early Christian theology, the divine reason implicit in the cosmos, ordering it and giving it form and meaning... Christ, as the preexistent *logos*, (1) reveals the Father to humankind and is the subject of the Old Testament manifestations of God; (2) is the personified source of life, the divine reason, and illumination of humankind and (3) is the divine will and word by which the worlds were framed.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

sustains all things by His word, reason, plan and purpose. And right from the very beginning of his gospel, he specifically wanted the Greeks to know that this Logos they were pursuing was a Person – namely, Jesus Christ – and that “the Logos was God” – a God-Man. He also clearly stated that it was through this One “all things came into being”; and that “in Him was (the source) of Life and Light”:

¹ “In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind. ⁵ And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.... ⁹ This was the true Light that, coming into the world, enlightens every person. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and yet the world did not know Him.... ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-5, 9-10, 14)

The ancient Hebrews sought “*Dabar*”⁵ – “the Word of the Lord” – which spoke everything into creation, as well as spoke the Mind of the Lord – that is, His ways, His truth, His plans and purposes - to and through His prophets. The writer of the *Letter to the Hebrews*

⁵ Strong’s # 1697

wanted his audience to know, right from the very beginning of his letter, that **God has ultimately spoken to us through His Son, Jesus Christ**, *“through whom also He made the world”*⁶. It is essentially the same message John spoke to the Greeks in his gospel.

¹ “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.” (Hebrews 1:1-3)

Both John and the writer to the Hebrews were bearing witness to the claim that Jesus had made – *“I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life”* (John 14:6)

In this essay, as I speak of *“the radiance of His glory”* at times manifest in and through Humanity, God’s creation and Man’s recreations, it is always in the context that **Jesus Christ is the only “exact representation” of The Glory of God.**

“... the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:6)

⁶ i.e. Through whom the world was spoken into existence. Cf. Genesis 1-2.

“The Glory of God”

We use the phrase often. But what is “the glory of God”? The Scriptures also refer it often, but the phrase means different things in different contexts. There is the “glory” which WE GIVE to God, namely our *praise* to Him for what He has done.⁷ Then there is the Shekinah “glory” which is associated with *God’s manifest presence*.⁸ And there is the “glory” which represents WHO GOD IS – namely, HIS ATTRIBUTES.

The latter is the “glory” which the writer to the Hebrews is referring to in the opening of his letter. He tells us that Jesus is “... *the sole expression of the glory of God [the Light-being, the out-raying or radiance of the divine], and He is the perfect imprint and very image of [God’s] nature.*” (Hebrew 1:3 AMP) And in this case, it is referring to WHO GOD IS – HIS ATTRIBUTES. Jesus is the “sole expression”, the “perfect imprint”, the “very image”, the “out-raying” of God and His attributes. Being “one” with God, and

⁷ e.g. Psalm 29:1-2; Proverbs 25:10; Joshua 7:29; 1 Samuel 6:5; Jeremiah 13:16; Luke 2:14, 17:18; John 11:4; Romans 16:27; 2 Corinthians 1:20, 4:15; Philippians 2:11, 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Peter 4:11; Jude 1:25; Revelation 1:6, 7:12, 19:1

⁸ e.g. Exodus 19:18; Leviticus 9:23-24; 1 Kings 8:10, 54; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14, 7:1-2; Ezekiel 9:3; John 17:5; Colossians 1:27; 1 Peter 5:10. A discussion of Jesus’ repeated use of the word “glory” in John 17 would require an essay in itself.

being God Himself, Jesus is the PERFECT (total, complete) representation of God and His attributes.

In this essay, I will endeavor to discuss, shall we say, “less than perfect” representations of the glory of God – namely *images, imprints, expressions, out-rayings* of God and *His attributes* as seen in that which He created. Jesus glorified the Father here on the earth.⁹ Similarly, we will be considering that which glorify God here on the earth, but in ways which are less than the perfection of Christ - in nature, in human beings created in His image, in godly love relationships - and also in some of the artistic recreations of those human beings.

Let’s look a little further into the meaning of this “glory”. This is what Greek scholar, M.R. Vincent, offers in his *Word Studies* regarding Hebrews 1:3:

“The brightness of his glory (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ) of God’s glory. For brightness render ‘effulgence’. Ἀπαύγασμα.... Effulgence or ‘outraying’ accords better with the thought of the passage; for the writer is treating of the preincarnate Son; and, as Alford justly remarks, ‘the Son of God is, in this his essential majesty,

⁹ John 17:4

*the expression and the sole expression of the divine light; not, as in his incarnation, its reflection.’ ... The meaning then is, that the Son is **the ‘outraying’ of the divine glory**, exhibiting in himself the glory and majesty of the divine Being. **‘God lets his glory issue from himself**, so that there arises thereby a light-being like himself.’ (Weiss). **Δόξα glory is the expression of the divine attributes collectively**. It is **the unfolded fullness of the divine perfections**.... We come nearer to the sense of the word in this passage in the story of Moses’s vision of the divine glory, Exo 33:18-23; Exo 34:5, Exo 34:7.*

The express image of his person (χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ). Rend the very image (or impress) of his substance.... Here the essential being of God is conceived as setting its distinctive stamp upon Christ, coming into definite and characteristic expression in his person, so that the Son bears the exact impress of the divine nature and character.”

While affirming that ONLY JESUS bears the exact impress of the divine nature, the Scripture also tells us, as Weiss has said¹⁰, **“God lets His glory issue from Himself” in aspects of His Creation as well**. Examples:

“ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made.” (Romans 1:20)

“The heavens tell of the glory of God; and their expanse declares the

¹⁰ Bernhard Weiss (1827-1918), *Commentary on the New Testament*.

work of His hands.” (Psalm 19:1)

“The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory.” (Psalm 97:6, also: Psalms 8:1, 29:3-9, 50:6, 89:5.)

God allows His glory – His attributes, who He is - to be seen, at times, in His creation, in nature, in human beings, in godly love relationships, and sometimes, in art, music, and other ways, when *in a "Jacob's Ladder" moment, the heavens are opened up and we "touch" God - or He "touches" us!* That's the *glory* which was on Moses' face, and the *glory* which rested on the Mercy Seat between the two cherubim - but ultimately and completely in Jesus Christ.

So, as I continue in this essay, I'd like to discuss those times when we are blessed with the experience of touching or being touched by this “out-raying” of “the glory of God”.

God's Glory Issues from Himself through His Creation

Do you ever well up in tears upon receiving truth while reading or hearing the word of God? Are you ever moved to tears while hearing a beautiful piece of music or looking at a beautiful work of art, or even some beautiful scenery in nature? Do you sometimes feel so much love for someone that it brings you to tears? All of the above has happened to me.¹¹ I would like to offer that in these *extraordinary experiences of that which is true, good and beautiful, "God lets His glory issue from Himself", we experience an out-ricing of His attributes, and the response of the human spirit to this manifestation of "the glory of God" is tears.* I'll have more to say about these "tears" shortly, but I believe the idea of God letting His glory issue from Himself in an out-ricing of His attributes through things He has created - as well as through some things we recreate – is well-supported in Scripture:

¹¹ Through inquiry, I have found that Christians, somewhat universally, experience the same. I cannot really speak of those who are non-believers. However, I think they may experience the same, but would tend to attribute the glory to "Mother Nature" or human beings, rather than "ascribe glory to God". (Psalm 29:1-2)

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made.” (Romans 1:20)

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness.’” (Genesis 1:26)

“But just ask the animals, and have them teach you; and the birds of the sky, and have them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and have it teach you; and have the fish of the sea tell you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind? (Job 12:7-10)

“The heavens tell of the glory of God; and their expanse declares the work of His hands.” (Psalm 19:1)

“The heavens proclaim His righteousness.” (Psalm 50:6 & 97:6)

“The heavens praise Your wonders.” (Psalm 89:5)

“Spiritual Forms of Expression”

We exist within this realm of the material creation. We experience life within the realms of the body and soul – namely, the mental, emotional and physical realms.

But we can receive inspiration from the spiritual realm. This is particularly true of those who have experienced spiritual rebirth by the Spirit of Christ. Thus, we can sometimes touch or be touched by *things* spiritual. The apostle Paul spoke of “combining¹² spiritual *things* with spiritual *forms of expression*”.¹³ We’ve discussed touching or being touched by God and *being moved to tears* at times when we contemplate, feel, see or hear truth, goodness, love, or beauty. I am suggesting that these times are examples of “*spiritual things being combined with spiritual forms of expression*”. These “spiritual forms of expression” act as a bridge between the physical and spiritual realms.

¹² Greek: *sugkrino*, Strong’s # 4793, “combining spiritual ideas with appropriate expressions”.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 2:13 The words, “*things*” and “*forms*” are not in the Greek text, but Greek translators have completed Paul’s thought in ways similar to this. Cf. the commentaries of Greek scholars M.R. Vincent in his *Word Studies* and R.T. Robinson in his *Word Pictures*.

Touching God

What do I mean by the phrase *"touching God"* – or possibly better, *"God touching us"*? Have you ever been speaking about the Lord, sharing something He has shared with you, and your eyes well up with tears, and you find it difficult to continue talking? Or while you are listening to someone else share in this way, you also begin to well up with tears? As I said, I believe that tears, in this case, are an expression of our spirit - not necessarily tears of sorrow or joy - just our spirit expressing itself in a physical way.

We also find it difficult to speak. This too may be our spirit expressing itself in a physical way. This kind of expression is too deep for words. This may be related to the *"sighs too deep for words"* which Paul mentions in Romans 8:26. The Greek word is *stenagmos*¹⁴ meaning "sighs", the root of which is *stenadzo*¹⁵ meaning "to be in straits" – other words, being unable to express oneself in words. This phenomenon may be described by the following phrases found in Scripture:

- *"Deep calls to deep"* (Psalm 42:7)

¹⁴ Strong's # 4726

¹⁵ Strong's # 4727

- *"The Spirit bears witness to our spirit"* (Romans 8:16)

We "touch" God - or *God touches us*. We are "in the Spirit". Like Moses in his tabernacle, we enter in "beyond the veil" to the Holy of Holies - to the "propitiation" ("Mercy Seat") where the glory dwells and God MEETS WITH US (Exodus 25:22) – except that now in the New Covenant, our reality is IN CHRIST. (Colossians 2:17)

When we experience "the glory of God" in this way, our spirits may express themselves through TEARS.

Tears

*“Jesus wept.”*¹⁶ Jesus of Nazareth – Son of God, Son of Man – expressed His heart with tears, as do all the “sons of men”.

³³ “Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, ³⁴ and He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews were saying, “See how He loved him!” (John 11:33-36)

³⁷ “And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, ³⁸ and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, and began kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.... ⁴⁴ And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.” (Luke 7:37-38 & 44)

As I said, sometimes when we have *extraordinary experiences of that which is true, good and beautiful*, “God is letting His glory issue from Himself” through an out-raying of His attributes, and

¹⁶ John 11:35

the response of the human spirit to this manifestation of “the glory of God” is tears. I’ve pondered whether these tears are the result of emotions; but have noted that I am, in fact, not feeling the familiar emotions of “happy” or “sad”. I’ve concluded that these tears are of a different nature. I’ve settled on the possibility that it is *my spirit expressing itself through the physical means of tears.*

An added thought: This expression of the human spirit with tears can also be understood to be an expressive manifestation of the Holy Spirit residing in believers who are born of the Spirit:

38 The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 But this He said in reference to the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive.” John 7:38-39

Jacob's Ladder

Just as things in God's material creation can act as "spiritual forms of expression" and **communicate the attributes of God**, so too, can the RE-CREATIONS of Christian artists - namely, works of art, inspired by a biblical worldview. Works of art which are truly God-centered can act as a type of "**Jacob's Ladder**" *stretching between the physical and spiritual realms*. A passage of scripture which communicates what I am referring to is found in Genesis 28:12:

"He (Jacob) had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

Biblical angels function as "messengers". In this picture, they are *bringing divine messages to human beings*. This implies some sort of "translation process" taking place between the **spiritual realm and the physical realm**. I believe this mysterious function can take place in God-centered art. In turn, I believe the Christian artist can provide works of art, which have been fashioned with elements from this material creation, in which the Spirit of God

can *speak through* – “combining spiritual things with spiritual forms”¹⁷.

An essential form of worship is to reflect on God and His attributes. We see this demonstrated in scripture when Moses asked to see *the glory of God*. God put His glory on display by rehearsing His attributes, and thereby demonstrated how we can give God glory and worship Him.¹⁸

Therefore, I think it an accurate assertion to say that, in the biblical worldview, *a Christian artist may worship God by reflecting on His attributes through a work of art*. In this case, the artist imitates the Creator through artistic re-creations which reflect the attributes of the Creator.¹⁹

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:13

¹⁸ Exodus 33:18-34:8

¹⁹ ¹⁹ For a more extended discussion of these concepts, see: “*Aesthetics & Worldview: A Call to God-Centered Art*” and “*Art & Spirituality: An Essential Form of Worship*” –

Listen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3J-vqYP-bwk&list=PLWSJGEG9yRH4hsr5M_xJ1jlnCNLrQyyTM

Read & Download: <https://usr.helps7.com/AtChristsTable/>

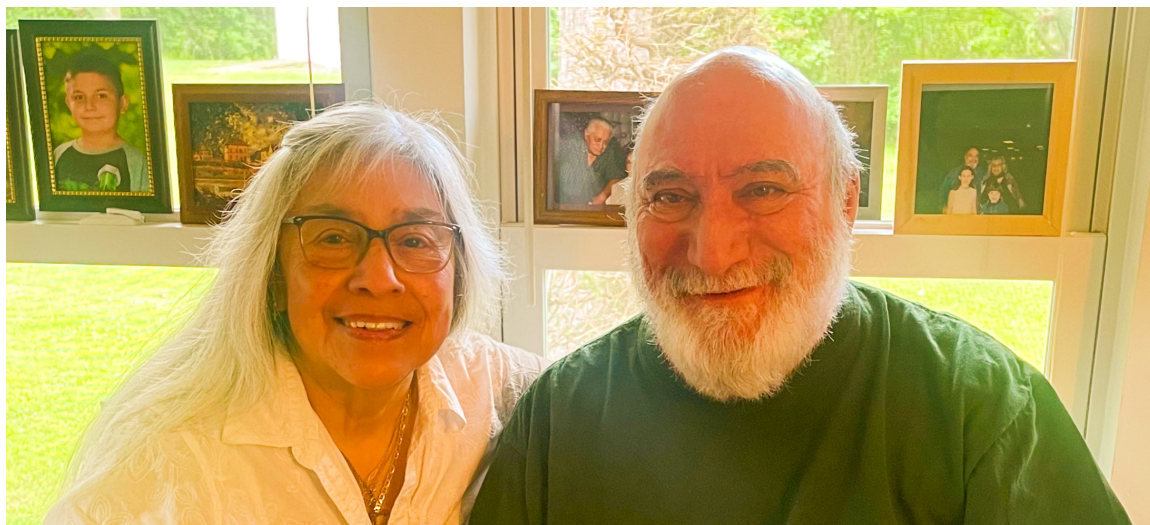
I'll close with William Temple's wonderful definition of worship:

“Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose—all this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable.”²⁰

²⁰ William Temple, quoted by David Watson, *I Believe in Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1976), 157.

Bill & Frances Furioso

~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, disciplined many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

ACTpublications

“Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.” 1 Corinthians 2:13

A teaching ministry from Bill and Frances Furioso

At Christ’s Table

Disciples of the King and His Kingdom eating and drinking of Jesus

THE HEAD

THE CENTER

THE FOUNDATION

of Biblical Christianity

with a view to

REVELATION of Christ

RELATIONSHIP with Christ

REFLECTION of Christ

FREE ONLINE MINISTRY RESOURCES

OUR WEBSITE: <https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

WRITTEN MESSAGES

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

RECORDED MESSAGES

YouTube: www.YouTube.com/user/BillFurioso

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-648428572>

Spreaker: <https://www.spreaker.com/user/14502151>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/atchriststable

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/at-christ-s-table-ministries-254b5320/>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/atchriststable1>