

Praise To Our Glorious God

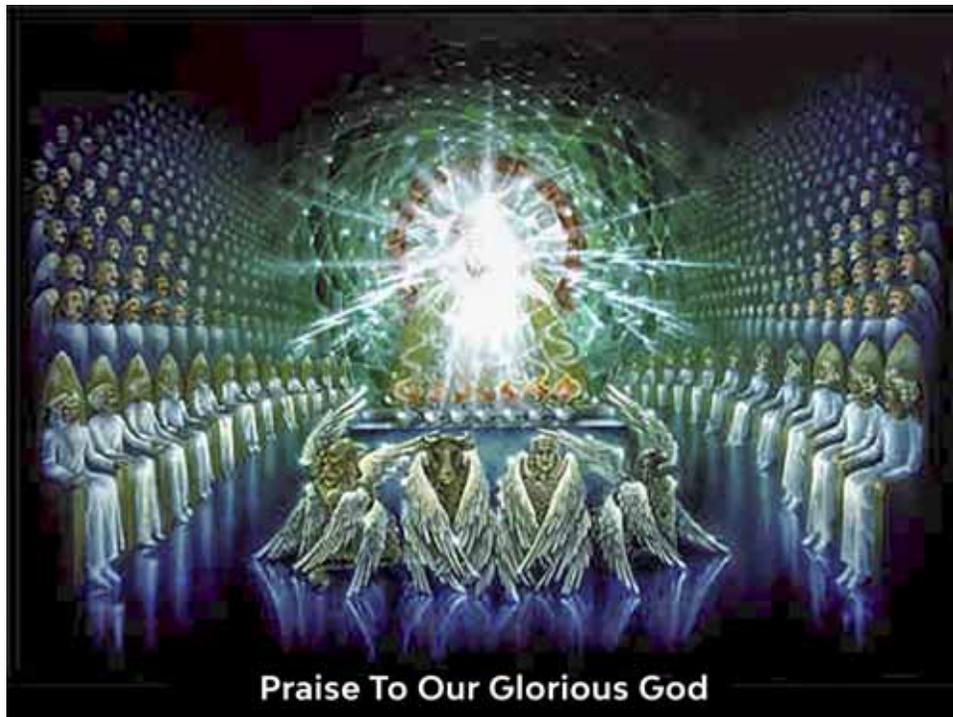
In the early years of my life, I remember wishing for God to show Himself to me. I know that other people have had the same wish because a man once wrote to NeverThirsty.org asking why does God not just show Himself to the world and remove all doubt that He exists? I replied that God has shown Himself to us and the great majority of people did not believe He was God. Today people still reject and ridicule Him. His name is Jesus Christ. He came performing signs, wonders, and miracles, and His teaching was incredible. God did show Himself when Jesus walked this earth and most people rejected Him!!

NO ONE CAN SEE GOD. Now, I have a question. Have you ever thought about the angels in heaven and wondered what the angels see when they look at God? Do you wonder what would happen if God did show Himself to us as He actually appears in heaven to remove all doubt that He exists? The answer is given to us in Exodus 33:18-20. In these verses Moses asked to see God's glory. This occurred on Mount Sinai. Listen to their conversation.

Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show compassion on whom I

will show compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" Exodus 33:18-20 (NASB)

What was God's reply to Moses' request to see His glory? God said that no one can see His face. That is, Moses could not see His glory. The Hebrew word that is translated as "face" is *pana*. This word can be translated as "before," "face," "presence" and "front." Therefore, God said that Moses could not be in front of Him so as to see His face or presence. If we look at verses 21-24, it is clear that God said Moses could not see the front of Him in order to see His full glory. Listen to what God said.



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Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but

My face shall not be seen." Exodus 33:21-24 (NASB)

This is a truly amazing conversation! God told Moses that He would place His hand so as to protect him so that he would not die. There is much we could discuss about these verses, but the important part of this passage is that it reveals a mystery we do not understand. That is, had Moses seen God's full

glory, he would have died. Now why would Moses have died?

The gospel of John teaches us that Moses was not the only man who cannot see God. We cannot see God either. No one can see God and live!! Here is John 1:18.

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. John 1:18 (NASB)

In 1 Timothy 6:16, the apostle Paul writes this about Christ,

... who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. 1 Timothy 6:16 (NASB)

This is an amazing verse because it says Christ dwells in unapproachable light. That is, Christ cannot be approached because of His glory. We cannot approach Him. That is also the message of 1 John 4:12 when it says,

No one has seen God at any time . . . 1 John 4:12 (NASB)

These verses give us the answer to the man's question, "Why does God not show Himself?" The answer is that if God did show Himself in the sky, everyone who did see His full glory would instantly die! Everyone who was seeking proof that God exists and saw Him would instantly die. Any unbeliever who saw Him would instantly go to hell. There is something about God's glory that would cause us to die. Scripture never tells us why. It is simply part of the awesomeness of God.

THE GLORY OF GOD. Now the verses we have studied so far have taught us that no one can see God in His full glory. Yet, Scripture teaches that some of the Old and New Testament saints saw glimpses of God and what they saw was incredible. I want you to see what some individuals saw and answer the question: why did they live?

Moses Saw God. The first passage that we will look at is Exodus 24:9-10. Here we are told that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders saw God and there was a pavement beneath Him as clear as glass. This occurred on Mount Sinai.

Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. Exodus 24:9-10 (NASB)

Now since Moses will ask to see God later in Exodus 33, we know that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu did not see God on this occasion, as Moses did. So, whatever they saw, they saw only something of God. They did not see God in His full glory or they would have died.

Beneath Him was a pavement of sapphire or lapis lazuli. Sapphire is a blue gem. Most likely this gem was lapis lazuli—a crystal clear gem with a hint of blue. So these men did not see God as He exists and in His full glory.

Ezekiel Saw God. Another man who saw God in some form was Ezekiel. What he saw is described in Ezekiel 1:22-28.

Now over the heads of the living beings there was something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads. Under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward the other; each one also had two wings covering its body on the one side and on the other. I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. And there came a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.

Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. Ezekiel 1:22-28 (NASB)

This is a more detailed description of God than the description given to us before. The obvious question for us is why was Ezekiel still alive after he saw God? The answer is found in Ezekiel 1:1. There we are told that Ezekiel saw visions.

... the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. Ezekiel 1:1 (NASB)

Remember that Moses saw God in real-life. He did not have a vision, but Ezekiel did. We just read a part of Ezekiel's vision. This explains why Ezekiel saw God and did not die.

And what did he see? Once again just as in Exodus 24:9-10, God is on a throne and this time we are told that the throne is like lapis lazuli. It was transparent with a hint of blue. God appears as a man and His lions or hips and upward portion are like glowing metal. Below His hips there was something like fire and a radiance all around. He appeared in various shades of light. We are also told He was surrounded by a rainbow of different colors. This is an awesome description of the glory of God. I would have loved to have had this dream. If you have noticed, you and I do not glow, but God does!

So, what did Ezekiel see? He had a vision of God! This means that Ezekiel saw Jesus Christ in His future immortal body. Why did I say that? If we look at 1 Timothy 2:5 we have the answer.

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (NASB)

Notice that Jesus is described as a man. After He returned to heaven, He is still in human form. Remember that He said He would eat and drink with the disciples in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29). 1 John 3:2 says we will be like Him, and we must remember that Paul wrote 1 Timothy after Jesus had already died, been resurrected and had ascended back to heaven. Paul is telling us that in Christ's glorified immortal body, He looks like a man.

Dr. J. Vernon McGee makes this statement about what Ezekiel saw.

... He will be in human form because that is the form He took here on earth. Today He is in a glorified body, and someday we shall be like Him we are told in 1 John 3:2 which says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." This is the anticipation and hope of believers who are walking by faith.¹

Daniel Saw God. Our fourth example of a man seeing God is Daniel. He had a vision too! His vision is described in Daniel 7:9-10. Here is his vision.

I kept looking
Until thrones were set up,
And the Ancient of Days took His seat;
His vesture was like white snow
And the hair of His head like pure wool.
His throne was ablaze with flames,
Its wheels were a burning fire.
A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;
Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,
And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him ...
Daniel 7:9-10 (NASB)

This is a vision into the future at the time of the tribulation. The color white symbolizes God's holiness and fire symbolizes judgment and glory. Here we are told that thousands upon thousands and myriads upon myriads of angels are before the throne. It is one incredible, unbelievable, and awesome description of Christ as judge.

John Saw God. Our fifth and last example of a man seeing God is found in Revelation 4:2-3.

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.
Revelation 4:2-3 (NASB)

1. J. Vernon McGee. Exodus. Thru the Bible. Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1981. p.306.

Here John tells us that he is in the Spirit. He is having a vision. He did not experience God as Moses did. No one has experienced God as Moses did. This is another vision. What did John see? He saw God in His glory—His magnificent radiance. He was shining like the sun. We must remember that 1 John 1:5 says He is light. We are told that John saw a throne. God is sitting on the throne and His appearance is like jasper and sardius stones. We believe that a jasper stone is like a diamond and a sardius stone is ruby red. Once again, there is a rainbow around God and it has the color of green. In verse 6, we are told that below the throne is a floor that looks like a sea of glass. That is just like the description in Exodus 24: 9-10 and Ezekiel 1:22-28. But this time the description is of God the Father and not of Christ. Why is this a vision of God the Father? Because if we keep reading into chapter 5, we are told that Christ is a Lamb and He comes to the throne and takes a book out of the hand of the One sitting on the throne. So, Revelation 4:2-3 describes God the Father and the descriptions are similar but different from those of Christ. In this passage the One sitting on the throne is not described as having feet, legs and hips. This is God the Father! If you are interested, Revelation 1:12-16 is a symbolic description of Christ.

The Apostles Wanted To See God. I must tell you that I am eager to see God face-to-face. I hope you want to see God too! Philippians 1:23 reveals that the apostle Paul wanted to be with Christ. In 1 Peter 1:8, the apostle Peter said that we do not see Him now. He then says believers have great joy as we anticipate being with Him. The apostle John says that when we die, we will see Him as He appears and be like Him. Now in this study in Jude 24-25, we are told that someday we will see God's glory.

GLORY TO GOD WHO KEEPS US FROM STUMBLING. The last two verses of the book of Jude is a doxology. Here is verse 24.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy . . .
Jude 24 (NASB)

Now there are two important Greek words that we need to define before we can properly understand what Jude is telling

us in this verse.

The first word we want to understand is the Greek word translated as “to keep.” The Greek word is *phyllasso*. It means more than “to keep.” This word has the meaning of “to keep watch,” “to guard,” and “to protect.” It has the idea of protection from dangers, both known and secret. For example, in Acts 28:16, *phyllasso* is used to refer to a soldier guarding Paul. In 2 Thessalonians it refers to God protecting believers from the evil one. The emphasis of this word is on watching for the purpose of protecting. Here Jude said that God will protect or guard believers from stumbling. He is watching over and guarding us from stumbling.

Our second important Greek word is translated as “stumbling.” This word is *aptaistos*. This Greek word is used only here in the New Testament and it has the sense of “stand firm” or “exempt from falling.” That is, a believer cannot stumble.

This helps us understand the opening of this verse. Jude is telling believers that God is guarding them from stumbling. He will never let believers stumble. He is referring to the fact that God will not let His saints lose their salvation. They will never, ever lose their salvation! So, even though these apostate teachers are dangerous, God is guarding believers. Our salvation is secure.

Remember, in John 6:37 Jesus promised that those who believe in Him will never lose their salvation.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. John 6:37 (NASB)

Here Jesus said, “I will certainly not cast out.” A true believer may sin and be severely disciplined, but a true believer will never lose their salvation. Then in John 6:39 Jesus added this,

This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing but raise it up on the last day. John 6:39 (NASB)

Here He said that all the Father gives to Him, He will raise on the last day. Then in John 6:40 Jesus said again that He Himself will raise up those who believe in Him on the last

day. Notice that Jesus emphasized what He will do. This is a promise.

For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. John 6:40 (NASB)

Then again Jesus repeated the same promise in John 6:44, 47, and 54. Six times Jesus promised that those who believe in Him will be raised up on the last day. That means that at the very moment—in the fraction of the second—a man or woman who truly believes in Christ is going to heaven. It is Christ's promise.

In John 10:27-29 Jesus said this,

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. John 10:27-29 (NASB)

Some would have us believe that we can jump out of Christ's hand. They miss the point that Christ is claiming total control and that "no one" includes you and me. Jesus is making a promise that He is the one protecting believers. Then Jesus said that no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand either. That is, a believer's eternal security is extremely certain. Both Christ and the Father are protecting us.

Also, 1 Peter 1:4 and Ephesians 2:6 says the reservation in heaven is already booked. There are many other verses we could look at such as 1 Corinthians 1:7-9; Ephesians 4:30; Philippians 1:6; and 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. Philippians 1:6 is a very strong promise that God who began to transform us will continue transforming us until the day of Christ. But maybe my favorite passage is Romans 8:38-39. Paul writes,

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39 (NASB)

The message is that God will never, ever allow believers to be separated from the love of God. We will not be allowed to stumble. He chose us for salvation before the foundation of the world. He is transforming us by the Holy Spirit in us to make us more like Christ, and these verses teach that God will continue transforming us until we die and He brings us to heaven. This does not mean that a believer is free to sin and not obey. In fact, a constantly disobedient believer is not consistent with Romans 8:13-14 which says that one of the signs a person is a believer is that they will sin less and less. Sinning believers will be disciplined.

Therefore, what did Jude do in verse 24? First, He praises God for not allowing us to stumble or lose our salvation. Then Jude praises God because He will cause us to stand in the presence of His glory. Jude is saying that we will see His face! We will see His glory! We will see what Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, the seventy elders, Ezekiel, Daniel and the apostle John and many other believers could not see!

We will stand before Him blameless—that is sinless and with great joy. Revelation 21:27 tells us that nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination will be in heaven. Only holy people will be in heaven. Have you ever wondered what it will be like to be in God's presence? This verse says that you will enjoy it with great joy! You will not be embarrassed about your past sins or behavior. Since the apostles were eagerly looking forward to going to heaven, we should look forward to heaven with great joy too!

TO THE ONLY GOD OUR SAVIOR. Now let's look at verse 25.

... to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 25 (NASB)

Now I want you to look closely at this verse. We usually think of Christ as our Savior. But in this verse Jude refers to God the Father as our Savior. Do you remember our study on the eternal decree of God the Father relative to our salvation? It was God the Father who created the plan for our salvation. God the Father is our Savior too, and all of our blessings flow from the Father through Christ who died as a sacrifice for the

forgiveness of our sins. Then Jude comforts us by adding that God the Father is our Savior through Jesus Christ. Because of Christ, our sins are forgiven. It is by God the Father through Jesus Christ we are protected from stumbling and made to stand before our God blameless with great joy!

Next, Jude closes with great excitement and praise for God the Father when he reminds us of God's divine characteristics.

... glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever.

Jude exalts the majesty of God, His rule over the earth, and His ultimate authority. He is the Authority of authorities. Someday when we escape this world, we can finally see God's glory as we stand in front of our loving and sovereign God and see His face. Revelation 21:3-4 says that God wants to live with us. We will see His glory and experience His majesty, dominion, and authority. This will be true into all of the ages to come! When Jude said "forever," he used four Greek words that literally mean "into all the ages." No matter how many ages there are, God will always be with us!

Amen and Amen!!