

# Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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## God's Glory and Dominion: Not in Doubt

*To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* (1 Peter 5:11, KJV 1900)

While Scripture teaches that redeemed people are commanded to worship and honor God with their words and their lives, it never teaches that His glory and dominion are in question. Whether we ascribe that glory and dominion to Him or not, He has it. While "...for ever and ever..." direct us to the future and eternity, the words in no way exclude either glory or dominion from God now. Consider that Peter wrote to suffering Christians. Their sufferings in no way diminished God's present glory or dominion. He didn't cause their sufferings, but He stood faithfully with them in their sufferings and empowered them to rise above those sufferings so that they could be happy in God, even as they suffered. Suffering saints are far better equipped to face their sufferings with grace if they keep their minds fixed on their God, especially His glory and dominion. He is no less God in glory and dominion because they suffer. While the wicked impose suffering onto the saints for a season, God's glory and dominion are fixed and undisputable. If we focus our minds on our momentary suffering, however intense it may be, we are in danger of being swamped by it. If we fix our minds on our God and His glory, even while we suffer, we overcome the suffering and rejoice in our victory with Him.

*If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* (1 Peter 4:14 KJVP)

When the faithful suffer, man's glory frowns upon them, but God's glory rests on them and gives them peace in the heat of the storm.

Passages such as the one we now study shed great light on our thoughts of future glory with God. Even some believers who claim to rest on God's grace occasionally emphasize their belief that they shall enjoy some degree of "Rewards" in heaven for their faithfulness here. I suggest that this idea builds on a bad interpretation of Scripture. Scripture indeed teaches that God "Rewards" His children for and in (Some folks split this hair, but I see no need from Scripture to do so) their faithful service. All such rewards come to us now; they do not await us in heaven.

*So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.* (Psalms 58:11 KJVP)

Scripture consistently defines our experience in eternity as an inheritance, not as a reward. And our response to God throughout eternity shall be undivided praise to Him, "...glory and dominion..." for His merciful grace to us. We shall in no way spend a moment in eternity with a divided focus, partly on our personal rewards and partly on Him for His glorious redemption.

Whether in our English language or in the language of the New Testament, these two words call out a distinct pattern of thoughts and ideas.

1. **Glory.** Whatever the setting, glory deals with a high honor. All the high honors of eternity—and now for that matter—belong to our God for His merciful grace in our lives. He took upon Himself a heavy task, and He completed it with honor, with "Glory." His uncompromised success attributes this glory to Him alone.
2. **Dominion.** The word depicts rule or power over. As we ponder the broken depravity of this world, Scripture—through this word and otherwise—reminds us that man's failures do not diminish God or His victory over man's failures. The idea of dominion in no way implies that God must micromanage, cause, or manipulate every event that occurs, a fatalistic error that occasionally appears in our thinking. God's sovereign dominion means that He answers to no one for what He does. He may freely and rightly intervene in the affairs of humanity without answering to humans for that intervention. Based on Scripture, His intervention consistently harmonizes with His righteous character. He is never dishonest or wicked in anything that He does. He is not in any way at any time causative in the practice of sin. His rule, His dominion, always reflects His righteous character. There is no need for twisted theologians to contrive a mystical "Secret will" of God by which to rationalize their belief that God sometimes operates in a way other than revealed in Scripture. While we can never fully grasp or understand

God, Scripture teaches that, in terms of His moral character, God is wholly transparent. He is always fully righteous, always acting according to His revealed righteous nature. And whether demons or high human powers think themselves to rule, God may at any time He chooses bring them down in utter defeat and disgrace. Hamaan thought himself to be in charge and prepared to take his wicked vengeance out on Mordecai, but God proved him wrong.

...for ever and ever. Apparently the first century Greek language did not have a word that uniquely described eternity, but New Testament writers found many ways to convey the idea to their readers. The Greek word usually translated "eternal" in the New Testament is described by various New Testament Greek scholars as being the nearest word imaginable to communicate the idea of eternity. In our study verse, this word appears twice, translated both times by "ever." Its definition could not be clearer.

...unlimited duration of time, with particular focus upon the future—'always, forever, forever and ever, eternally.'<sup>1</sup>

While the most frequent use of the word likely deals with God and with the duration of the life that He gives to His elect in the new birth, here Peter uses the same word to deal with God's glory and dominion. There has never been, is not now, and shall never be a time when God does not have glory and dominion for His gracious mercy to His fallen children and for His glorious victory over sin, death, and hell that might otherwise justly claim and imprison them.

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV 1900)*

God doesn't cause the temptation, but He faithfully buffers the trial and empowers you to endure it. If we collapse and fall under the pressures of the trial, we cannot blame God, directly or indirectly. We chose to fall; God didn't cause it. God's role in our trials is to ensure that we have His grace and power sufficient to endure or to escape it. He will intervene to prevent a trial from exceeding our ability—fully empowered by His grace—"...that ye may be able to bear it."

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<sup>1</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., 640 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996).

*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:11, KJV 1900)*

God's inherent glory and dominion are not in question. However, our ascribing glory and/or praise and dominion to Him are contingent on our speaking, ministering, or doing whatever we do according to 1) "...the oracles of God," and 2) "...as of the ability which God giveth." Jesus indicates a similar obligation on our part.

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16 KJVP)*

We may allow—let—our light shine in improper ways and hinder the God-view of those around us. Or we may **so** let it shine that the people who know and observe us will understand that the power that directs our life is God. If they see attitudes, words, and conduct that honors God—and not ourselves—they will thereby be inclined to glorify our God. Too many Christians live their life in the dark shadows of their sinful brokenness, far more concerned with getting what they think they deserve than striving to use their lives as an arrow that points others to see the glorious God and Savior whom we worship.

*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (Psa 29:2 KJV)*

The thought of this verse appears three times in the Old Testament. We think of the word "Due" in terms of bills that need to be paid. We owe the money. The time for our agreed payment has arrived. The only honorable thing to do is to pay it. It is "Due." The commandment in this verse requires that we pay God what is "Due" to Him. The verse also associates worship with giving this "Due" glory to Him. We may desire to honor Him, but that honor rises to Biblical worship only as we give to Him what He rightly deserves. The form of the action in this verse requires a conscious action on our part. It isn't an automatic response. It doesn't occur by divine, irresistible decree. We live under God's commandment to take this action, no less than we live under His commandment to live a moral life in harmony with His Ten Commandments.

Somewhere over the years I read a thought-provoking quip. "If your life is the only Bible that some people read, how hard do you work to ensure that they are reading a good, faithful translation?" How long has it been since you paused from life's hectic schedule and seriously contemplated what God is "Due" from you? Today would be a good time to give Him His "Due" glory.

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Bellflower, California

Worship service each Sunday  
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.  
Pastor