

.....

The Glory of God in John's Gospel and Revelation

ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER

.....

The great Reformer Martin Luther distinguished between the “theology of glory” and the “theology of the cross.”¹ The “theology of glory,” for Luther, embodied the essence of religion focused on works-righteousness and a preoccupation with external trappings of piety. The “theology of the cross,” on the other hand, was the gospel message of salvation in Christ alone, by grace alone, and through faith alone. While not used in the same sense as Luther, John in his Gospel, strikingly and emphatically presents his own *theologia gloriae* (“theology of glory”) and *theologia crucis* (“theology of the cross”).

As I will attempt to develop in the remainder of this essay, the identification of the theology of glory with the theology of the cross is at the very heart of John's Gospel. What is more, while the Gospel reveals Jesus' *crucified* glory, the Apocalypse portrays the glory of the *risen* and *returning* Lord. While “glory” terminology is abundant in John's Gospel and Revelation, it is absent from John's letters. As will be seen, not only is Jesus' glory manifest

¹ See his 1518 Heidelberg Disputation and his sermon, “Two Kinds of Righteousness.”

both in his signs and at the cross, but also the Johannine “glory” theme has an important Trinitarian dimension and sustains a link with references to God’s presence, especially in the temple, in the Old Testament.

Fig. 4.1: “Glory” Terminology in the Johannine Writings

Johannine Writing	glory (<i>doxa</i>)	I glorify (<i>doxazō</i>)	Total
John’s Gospel	19	23	42
John’s Letters	0	0	0
The Apocalypse	17	2	19
Total	36	25	61

Glory in John’s Gospel

Conventionally, it is held that John’s Gospel is made up of two equal halves, the “Book of Signs” spanning chapters 1 through 12 and the “Book of Glory” ranging from chapters 13 through 21.² However, this terminology has some serious problems and in fact misrepresents John’s theology of glory. The reason for this is that *both* halves of John’s Gospel, not only the second one, feature glory terminology. Specifically, the noun *glory* (*doxa*) occurs sixteen times in John 1 through 12 and only three times in John 13 through 21. The verb *glorify*, for its part, occurs nine times in John 1 through 12 and fourteen times in John 13 through 21. A close study of glory terminology in John’s Gospel, therefore, reveals that both “books” are saturated with glory language and thus are “Books of Glory,” properly understood.³

Fig. 4.2: Distribution of “Glory” Terminology in John 1–12 and 13–21

John’s Gospel	References to <i>doxa</i>	References to <i>doxazō</i>	Total
1–12	16	9	25
13–21	3	14	17
Total	19	23	42

In John 1 through 12, Jesus’ glory is shown to be revealed in his messianic “signs” (2:11; 11:4; cf. 11:40, a possible inclusion). In John 13 through 21, Jesus’ glory is shown at the cross (anticipated in 7:39; 12:16, 23; see 13:31; 17:1, 4, 5). John’s message is that both in Jesus’ “signs” and at the

² See, e.g., Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel of John*, 2 vols., Anchor Bible 29–29A (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970); Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998). I, too, adopted this terminology in my commentary *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004).

³ I now prefer to call John 1–12 the “Book of Signs” and John 13–21 the “Book of Exaltation.” See my *The Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

cross Jesus' glory was revealed, and God's glory in and through him (cf. 1:14; see also 20:30–31). It is the mission of the obedient Son sent by the Father to manifest God's glory. What is more, for John there is emphatically no other glory than the Messiah's *crucified* glory, for it was God's good pleasure to redeem humanity by way of crucifixion, or, in Johannine parlance, by the "lifting up" of the "Son of Man" (3:14; 8:28; 12:32). It remains to survey the major aspects of John's "theology of glory" developed in his Gospel.⁴

Jesus' Glory as the One and Only Son

At the very outset, John makes clear that Jesus' glory is that "of the only Son [monogenēs] from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14). Building on this startling pronouncement, John asserts at the end of his introduction that "no one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known" (1:18). While Isaiah emphatically declared that God will not share his glory with another (Isa. 42:8; 48:11), John announces that God *did* in fact share his glory with another, that is, Jesus. The reason for this, as the striking terminology of 1:18 makes clear, is that Jesus is God.⁵ As Jesus says later in the Gospel, "I and the Father are one" (10:30); and "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9).

Thus John declares to readers of his Gospel from its inception that Jesus shared God's glory because he himself was God and that his glory was that of "the only Son from the Father." As the Gospel unfolds, John uses "only Son" terminology in one other pericope where he explains that that Son was "lifted up" in demonstration of God's love for sinful humanity so "that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (3:16; cf. 3:18). Thus "only Son" terminology ties Jesus' glory specifically and concretely to Jesus' crucifixion.⁶ It is likely, in turn, that John's theological source here is Isaiah, who uses "lifted up" language with regard to the suffering servant who "shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted" (Isa. 52:13).

⁴For helpful studies of the glory motif in John, see G. B. Caird, "The Glory of God in the Fourth Gospel: An Exercise in Biblical Semantics," *NTS* 15 (1968–69): 265–77; and W. Robert Cook, "The 'Glory' Motif in the Johannine Corpus," *JETS* 27 (1984): 291–97.

⁵See also 1:1 with which 1:18 likely forms an inclusion; and 20:28, another possible inclusion with 1:1. On Jesus' deity in John's Gospel, see esp. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 24 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), esp. chap. 1; and Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992).

⁶As shown below, this pattern continues in the book of Revelation.

Fig. 4.3: “Glory” Terminology

In the “Book of Signs”	In the “Book of Exaltation”
1:14	13:31, 32
2:11	14:13
5:41, 44	15:8
7:39	16:14
8:50, 54	17:1, 4, 5, 10, 22, 24
9:24	21:19
11:4, 40	
12:16, 23, 28, 41, 43	

Jesus’ Glory in His Signs

In 1:14, John wrote that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.” This opening reference is picked up in the next instance of glory terminology in the Gospel at 2:11 where John writes that “this, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.” Thus it is part of John’s portrait of Jesus to show that the Messiah, in keeping with Old Testament expectations, furnished many remarkable demonstrations of his identity (cf. 7:31). The turning of water into wine at the wedding at Cana was one such instance, evoking Old Testament images of the Messiah as bridegroom ushering in an age of messianic joy and celebration.⁷

The corresponding reference to glory being brought to Jesus, and God, is found at the outset of Jesus’ final and climactic sign narrated in John’s Gospel—the raising of Lazarus. There, upon hearing of Lazarus’s condition, Jesus said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (11:4).⁸ Thus, contrary to simplistic Jewish notions of the nature of suffering (cf. 9:2), Jesus affirmed that suffering may be a God-willed vehicle of, and path to, glory. While many would hold that glory consists in the *absence* of suffering, John’s message is that glory comes *through* suffering. This understanding is part and parcel of John’s theology of sin and redemption.

These two framing references to glory being brought to Jesus, and to God through Jesus by way of his messianic signs in 2:11 and 11:4, extending to his first and final signs, effectively envelop John’s presentation of all of Jesus’ signs in the first half of his Gospel, the “Book of Signs.” This is underscored

⁷ See Köstenberger, *John*, 99, who notes that “the messianic age commonly was thought to be the period when God would reveal his glory”; citing Pss. 97:6; 102:16; Isa. 60:1–2; Pss. Sol. 17:30–32; 1 En. 49:2.

⁸ Cf. 11:40; see also the similar terminology in 9:3–4.

especially when John quotes Isaiah twice at the end of the “Book of Signs” in order to draw a specific connection between the signs, their rejection by the Jewish people setting the stage for Jesus’ crucifixion (narrated in John 13–21), and Isaiah’s rendering his prophetic pronouncements because he saw Jesus’ “glory” (12:37–41, esp. v. 41).⁹ Importantly, this revelation of God’s glory during the period of Jesus’ earthly ministry to the Jewish people was provided by the same Jesus who would subsequently be crucified.

There is thus an identity of the Glorious and the Crucified. What is more, rather than presenting the crucifixion as an accident at the end of an otherwise glorious career, John makes clear that the cross represents the culmination of the mission of the glorious Messiah. In fact, it is at the cross that the glory accrued to the Son is the greatest, because it is here that Jesus revealed the full extent of God’s love for the world, including and in particular for his own (13:1; cf. 3:16), and it is here that the well-pleasing mission of the obedient, sent Son of the Father found its climax (see esp. 17:1, 4, 5; see also vv. 22, 24). Glory and suffering are thus two sides of the same coin, as Peter and many other followers of Jesus would learn in due course (21:19).

The Father as the Source of the Son's Glory

John’s account of Jesus’ ministry to the Jews in chapters 1 through 12 features several references to the Father as the source of the Son’s glory in polemical contrast to Jesus’ opponents having each other as the (illegitimate) source of their “glory.” At the end of the paternity dispute in chapter 5, Jesus explains, “I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?” (vv. 41–44). Thus the Pharisees’ refusal to recognize the revelation of God’s glory in Jesus, particularly in his signs, is shown to be at the heart of their rejection of Jesus’ messianic claims. Their orientation is shown to be on a human, horizontal plane, and they are insufficiently sensitive and receptive to the evidence of God’s power and glory furnished abundantly in the ministry of Jesus.

This, in turn, serves the purpose of theodicy, the demonstration of the righteousness and justice of God in condemning people for rejecting his revelation in Jesus and the redemption he provided. The series of ever more startling manifestations of Jesus’ glory through his signs in the “Book of Signs” puts the burden squarely on the Jews and renders their unbelief

⁹ See also the reference to the “arm of the Lord” in v. 38; and 20:30–31.

without excuse (see, e.g., 15:22). It is not that God has failed to provide sufficient proof of Jesus' true identity; culpability and guilt rest entirely on those who would reject Jesus despite ample evidence for those with spiritual eyes to see and spiritual ears to hear (12:37–41, citing Isa. 53:1; 6:10).

Consequently, Jesus declares, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood" (7:16–18). Thus it is not only Jesus' works (particularly his signs) but also his words (his teaching) that reveal God's glory, and rejection of Jesus' works *and* words reveals lack of a true desire to discern whether the source of Jesus' mission is God.

Jesus' emphatic claim that it is God who is the source of his glory provides a defense against the charge that his mission was self-appointed. In sharp conflict with his Jewish opponents, Jesus noted, "Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. . . . If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me . . ." (8:50, 54). This assertion is part of the larger "witness" theme in John's Gospel, which parades a series of witnesses to Jesus' truthfulness, ranging from John the Baptist (1:7–8, 15, 19, 32–34; 3:26; 5:33–36) all the way to the evangelist (19:35; 21:24), including also God the Father (5:32, 36–37; 8:18), Moses and the Scriptures (5:39, 46), the Spirit (chaps. 14–16, esp. 15:26), the disciples (e.g., 15:27), and Jesus' own works (3:11, 32; 5:36; 8:14, 18; 10:25, 32, 37–38; 15:24; 18:37).¹⁰ By contrast, Jesus' opponents "loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God" (12:43).¹¹

Jesus' Glory at the Cross

The references to Jesus' glory at the cross are for the most part conveyed by instances of the verb *doxazō* ("glorify") in the second half of John's Gospel, though there are two references in the "Book of Signs" that anticipate Jesus' glorification.¹² Thus John notes in 7:39 that "as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." A similar reference is 12:16, where John writes that Jesus' "disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him." Remarkably, in both

¹⁰ See Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, chap. 11; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000).

¹¹ See also the instance of Johannine irony in 9:24 where the Pharisees adjure the blind man healed by Jesus to give glory to God.

¹² See fig. 4.2 above.

instances, the word *glorified* is used as a simple and broad cipher referring to the cross, a euphemism deliberately choosing to focus, not on the pain, shame, and suffering endured by Jesus at the cross, but on the glory brought to him in and through his sacrifice and the salvation he provided.

Jesus' startling pronouncement at 12:23 that "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" follows a series of previous references to Jesus' hour having *not yet* come (2:4; 7:30; 8:20). Jesus' self-reference to the Son of Man invokes the mention of this figure in Daniel 7:13, which in turn has been the subject of multiple Johannine references involving descent and ascent earlier in the Gospel (cf. John 1:51; 3:13–14). The reference to the glorification of the Son of Man in 12:23 is followed by Jesus' prayer in 12:28, "Father, glorify your name," immediately drawing a response by a voice from heaven saying, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (cf. 17:1). This pronouncement, then, provides a sort of pivot in the glory theology of John's Gospel in that it makes reference to both a past and a future glorification of Jesus. In light of the narrative development of this motif, it is possible that this brackets and encompasses both the manifestation of Jesus' glory in his signs (John 1–12) and the glorification of Jesus at the cross (John 13–21).

Even more startling is Jesus' pronouncement at the outset of the Farewell Discourse at 13:31 that "now" that Judas the betrayer had left the upper room, "the Son of Man" was "glorified, and God . . . glorified in him," adding, "God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once" (13:32). This statement, in turn, is set within the context of a string of references affirming Jesus' foreknowledge of the events that would ensue throughout the Gospel, particularly in the second half of the Gospel (13:1–3; 18:4; cf. 6:70–71; 17:12). In this the reader is assured that the events surrounding the crucifixion do not take place by accident but are part of a divinely orchestrated plan in fulfillment of scriptural prediction and typology.

**Fig. 4.4: Agents of Glory
in John's Gospel**

The Father	8:54; 17:1, 5
The Son	17:4
The Spirit	16:14
Jesus' Followers	14:13; 15:8; 17:10; 21:19

Glory Brought to Jesus through His Followers

Anticipating the period subsequent to Jesus' glorification, the Farewell Discourse then turns to address the ways in which Jesus, once exalted, will receive glory through his followers. This is a striking turn of events indeed,

for until 14:13 all the references to Jesus receiving glory had God the Father as the source. In 14:13, however, it is said, “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” This relates to the dynamic of believing prayer addressed to the Father in and through Jesus once Jesus has died on the cross and been exalted with the Father. On the basis of his finished cross work, Jesus, from his exalted position with the Father, will be able to grant believing prayer offered in his name, with the result that the Father is glorified in the Son.

In the following chapter, Jesus addresses the vital question of how believers subsequent to his departure will be able to sustain a vital spiritual relationship with him. The answer is that they must remain in Jesus and in his word (15:1–7). On this basis, believers will bring glory to the Father by what they do: “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples” (15:8).¹³ Earlier, Jesus had said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (12:24). His followers must “hate” their lives in this world and follow and serve him, and the Father will honor them (12:25–26). As they follow in the path of the cross, which is a path of glory through suffering (15:18–16:4), they will bear much fruit as they, through faith, are identified with the “lifted-up” Son of Man.

The next programmatic reference to Jesus’ being glorified in and through his followers is found in 17:10 where Jesus states, “I am glorified in them.” This is said of believers who are in but not of the world (17:6–16), whom Jesus prays would be sanctified in the truth of God’s Word (17:17), and who are sent into the world as Jesus was (17:18; 20:21). Jesus prays, then, in anticipation of his disciples’ mission, also “for those who will believe in me through their word” (17:20). The disciples’ proclamation and extension of forgiveness in Jesus’ name (20:22) will bring Jesus glory because it will reap a harvest for which the disciples have not labored (4:34–38), will bring “other sheep that are not of this fold” into Jesus’ flock (10:16), and will “gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad” (11:52). In keeping with Jesus’ promise—“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (12:32)—the mission of his followers, undergirded by the mission of the Spirit (15:26–27; 20:21–22), will result in “greater works” on the part of the disciples “because I am going to the Father” (14:12). Believers’ works will be “greater” in large part because

¹³ See the discussion in Köstenberger, *John*, 455.

they are “later,” that is, predicated salvation-historically on the finished cross work of Christ (17:4; 19:30).¹⁴

Finally, the risen Jesus predicts that Peter will give his life in martyrdom, explicated by the fourth evangelist as a reference to “by what kind of death he was to glorify God” (21:19). Peter, the one who had once denied Jesus three times (18:16–18, 25–27), but who had, subsequent to the crucifixion and resurrection, been recommissioned three times (21:15–19), would make the ultimate sacrifice for his faith by dying a martyr’s death, bringing glory to God.

**Fig. 4.5: The Father and the Son
as Recipients of Glory**

The Father	The Son
	1:14
	2:11
	7:39
	8:54
11:4, 40	11:4
	12:16
	12:23
12:28	12:41
13:31–32	13:31–32
14:13	14:13
	15:8
	16:14
17:1, 4	17:1, 5, 10, 22, 24

The Trinitarian Dimension of Glory in John's Gospel

The opening reference to the Word's glory already makes clear that his glory—the glory that John and the other apostles have perceived—is “glory as of the only Son from the Father” (1:14). This from the very outset establishes the Trinitarian framework of glory for the remainder of the gospel.¹⁵ In 7:39, the giving of the Spirit is said to be predicated upon the glorification of Jesus, which shows the salvation-historical underpinnings of the glory motif in John's Gospel. Later on, Jesus makes clear that he does not derive glory from himself but that it is the Father who glorifies him (8:54). In 11:4, “the glory of God” and the glorification of the Son of God are mentioned in parallel fashion.

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, 432–33.

¹⁵ See the discussion in *ibid.*, 42.

The glory motif comes to a major climax at the end of the first half of John's Gospel, revealing both a Christocentric and a cross-centered orientation (cf. 12:23, 28, 41). When John affirms that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory and spoke of him (12:41), his point most likely is that the prophet foresaw that God was pleased with a *suffering* servant who would be "high and lifted up, and . . . exalted" (Isa. 52:13) yet who was "wounded for our transgressions" and "bore the sin of many" (Isa. 53:5, 12).¹⁶ Thus Isaiah was aware that God's glory would be revealed through a suffering messiah, in contrast to the crowds (John 12:34). In the Father-Son (and Spirit) relationship, glory is centered on Jesus' redemptive suffering on the cross. Indeed:

Jesus' own mission to the Jews, as narrated in the first twelve chapters in John's Gospel, although appearing to end on a note of rejection and failure, in fact accomplishes God's purpose: God's glory has been revealed in and through Christ, in keeping with the Baptist's vision . . . both as a result of the Son's perfect submission and complete obedience to the Father . . . and through Jesus' messianic "signs" and fulfillment of the symbolism inherent in various Jewish festivals and institutions. Both Jesus and the evangelist perceive in the Jews' rejection the world's opposition and Satan's antagonism but look to God to glorify himself in and through, rather than apart from or in spite of, the cross.¹⁷

The reciprocity of Father glorifying Son and Son glorifying Father is restated at the outset of the Farewell Discourse (13:31–32) and reiterated in Jesus' reference to the Father being glorified in the Son in 14:13. Remarkably, in 15:8 the Father is said to be glorified through Jesus' followers.

The exalted Jesus will receive glory not only through the Father and his followers but also through the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (16:12–14)

¹⁶ See Craig A. Evans, "Obduracy and the Lord's Servant: Some Observations on the Use of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee*, ed. Craig A. Evans and William F. Stinespring, *Homage 10* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 221–36.

¹⁷ Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 482; see the entire discussion on pp. 476–83, including the treatment of the reference to Isaiah seeing "his glory" in John 12:41 on p. 483.

Just as Jesus brought glory to the Father through his teaching (7:18), the Spirit will bring glory to Jesus through his teaching ministry, which is vitally connected to Jesus' teaching while on earth. Spiritual illumination and a post-crucifixion vantage point are needed for Jesus' followers to understand the significance of his teaching, and it is the Spirit's role to continue Jesus' teaching ministry subsequent to his glorification and exaltation.

On the whole, one is struck by the mutuality and reciprocity entailed by many of the references to glory in John's Gospel. As mentioned, both the Father and Jesus are frequently said to be the recipients of glory. Most commonly, it is the Father receiving glory *through* Jesus and acting, in turn, to bring glory *to* Jesus. This dynamic finds its culminating expression in Jesus' final prayer: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you. . . . I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed" (17:1, 4–5). As with the opening reference to Jesus' glory at 1:14, Jesus' glory is here rooted in his preexistent glory with the Father before the world came into being. This marks out Jesus' glory to be a pre-creation, supernatural glory that entirely transcends the realm of this world, in keeping with Johannine cosmology and John's overall worldview.¹⁸

The Manifestation and Withdrawal of God's Presence in Jesus

Another dimension of John's "theology of glory" relates to the manifestation and withdrawal of God's presence in Jesus. In 1:14, John's readers are told that "the Word became flesh and *dwelt* [literally, "pitched his tent," *skenoō*] among us, and we have seen his glory." This invokes previous manifestations of God's presence among his people in the tabernacle and later in the temple where, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, God's glory was revealed to Israel (Ex. 40:34–35; 1 Kings 8:10–11; 2 Chron. 5:13–14; 7:1–2; Ezek. 10:4; 43:5; 44:4; Hag. 2:7).¹⁹ Now, the fourth evangelist tells his readers, this glory has come to dwell in Jesus, and while "no one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known" (1:18). In light of this programmatic statement, placed strategically at the end of the

¹⁸ See especially the references to the world "above" and the realm "below." See also Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, chap. 6; Edward W. Klink III, "Light of the World: Cosmology and the Johannine Literature," in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough, Library of New Testament Studies (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 74–89.

¹⁹ See the discussion in Andreas J. Köstenberger, "What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit? A Biblical Investigation," *JETS* 40 (1997): 230, who notes that "all the earth is, or one day will be, full of his glory"; citing Num. 14:21; Ps. 72:19; Isa. 6:3; 11:9; and Hab. 2:14.

introduction, John's message is that God's glory was revealed through Jesus' entire ministry, and that *all* his words and deeds revealed God's glory. This glory, in turn, was "glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14b); that is, it revealed God's loving-kindness and covenant faithfulness at this climactic juncture in salvation history.²⁰

In the body of John's Gospel, the temple theme receives further development. At the inception of his ministry, Jesus clears the Jerusalem sanctuary and predicts its destruction, which, in customary Johannine double entendre, refers both to its literal destruction (which most likely had already taken place at the time of writing of John's Gospel) and Jesus' crucifixion (i.e., the "destruction" of his body, 2:21). By adding the narrative aside, "But he was speaking about the temple of his body" (2:21), the fourth evangelist makes clear that Jesus' body, which would be crucified and raised up in three days (2:19), was the fulfillment and replacement of the literal, physical temple, which would be destroyed and not be rebuilt. This constituted an invitation to Jews, proselytes, and God-fearers living in John's day to worship *Jesus* and recognize *him* as the replacement of the temple in the life of the community.²¹

A similar point is made by Jesus in his conversation with the Samaritan woman: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . But the hour is coming, *and is now here*, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (4:21–24). Again, one notes the Trinitarian dimension of such worship, which is offered to the Father through the Son in the Spirit (though in the just-quoted passage, the reference to "spirit" is most likely generic—"spiritual" worship as opposed to worship focused on particular physical locations).²²

Chapters 5 through 10 further intensify the portrayal of Jesus as the fulfillment of the symbolism inherent in various Jewish festivals, most notably symbolism related to Passover and Tabernacles.²³ Also pregnant with meaning are references to Jesus' withdrawals from the Jews, especially with reference to the temple. Thus, at the culmination of a major contro-

²⁰ See Köstenberger, *John*, 44–45.

²¹ See my essay "The Destruction of the Second Temple and the Composition of the Fourth Gospel," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman, WUNT 2:219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 69–108.

²² See Köstenberger, *John*, 156–57.

²³ See Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, chap. 10.

versy with the Jews, Jesus asserts his preexistence: "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am" (8:58). At this, the Jews pick up stones to throw at him, while John informs his readers that "Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple" (8:59). This withdrawal of Jesus' presence from the temple grounds ominously signifies divine judgment.

Subsequent to the raising of Lazarus, John observes that "from that day on they [the Jewish leaders] made plans to put him to death" and that "Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness" (11:53–54). Finally, at the conclusion of chapter 12, the fourth evangelist writes, "When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them" (12:36). This is followed by a reference to God's judicial hardening of the Jews, with explicit mention of Isaiah 53 and 6, and the concluding explanation that "Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him" (12:41). This draws a stark contrast between Isaiah's glorious throne room vision and the hiding of Jesus' presence from the Jews.

Summary

John's theology of glory is at the same time a theology of the cross. Jesus' glory is rooted in his preexistence with God. As the Word made flesh, Jesus manifested God's glory through his messianic signs. Yet the ultimate manifestation of God's glory took place at the cross, where the Son gave his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Space does not permit a full presentation of John's *theologia crucis*.²⁴ It must suffice to conclude that the cross is at the heart of John's glory theology and that the cross, in turn, is the most notable instance where the persons of the divine Godhead collaborate in bringing glory to one another. The entire Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—is glorious, and it is the manifestation of this glory in and through Jesus that forms the focus of John's Gospel.

Glory in the Apocalypse

Most likely, the Apocalypse consists of four visions, marked by the phrase "in the Spirit" (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), depicting, respectively, Jesus' message to the seven churches (chaps. 1–3); God's judgment on the unbelieving world (chaps. 4–16); the events surrounding Jesus' return (chaps. 17–20); and the eternal state (chaps. 21–22). Throughout the book, God is the recipient of glory.²⁵ In two instances, the recipient of glory is Jesus Christ, the Lamb

²⁴ Though see *ibid.*, chap. 14.

²⁵ For a survey of "glory" references in the Apocalypse, with special attention on 21:11, see Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 557–58.

who was slain and who has freed believers from their sins by his blood (1:6; 5:12–13). Once it is said of an angel that “the earth was made bright with his glory” (18:1). It will be helpful to survey the references to glory in the Apocalypse in chronological order of occurrence within each vision.

Fig. 4.6: Referents and References to “Glory” in the Apocalypse

Vision 1		Vision 2		Vision 3		Vision 4
Jesus	God	Jesus	God	Angel	God	God
1:6	4:9, 11	5:12–13	7:12; 11:13; 14:7; 15:4, 8; 16:9	18:1	19:1, 7	21:11

The First Vision (chapters 1–3): The Glory of the One Who Was Pierced

The sole reference to glory in John’s first vision has Jesus Christ as its referent. At the outset of the vision, John refers to Jesus Christ as “the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth” (1:5), and he writes, “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1:5–6). He continues, “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him” (1:7). The image of Jesus “coming with the clouds” invokes the imagery of Daniel 7:13; the reference to “those who pierced him” represents a quotation of Zechariah 12:10, which is also cited in John 19:37.

In John 19:37, Zechariah 12:10 is quoted alongside Psalm 34:20, concluding a series of Old Testament references said to have been fulfilled at Jesus’ crucifixion. In the original context in Zechariah, the one on whom people look is none other than Yahweh himself. “Aided by the spirit of grace poured out on them, the people responsible for piercing the individual mentioned in 12:10 mourn and presumably ask God for forgiveness for what they have done.”²⁶ The notion of the “piercing of Yahweh” is then fulfilled in the piercing of Jesus, the messianic shepherd, at the cross. At the second coming, John says in the Apocalypse, *every eye* will see Jesus, *even those who pierced him*, and Jesus’ coming will be accompanied with wailing by all tribes of the earth (1:7).²⁷

²⁶ Köstenberger, “John,” in *Commentary*, 504.

²⁷ See G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 197, who notes that the Zechariah text has been altered in two significant ways: “every eye” and “of the earth” have been added “to universalize its original meaning”: “The rejection of God’s messenger and the consequent repentant mourning are not limited to Israelites but affirmed of all nations.”

The notion of the Pierced One's glory is then given eloquent expression in the vision of "one like a son of man" in a long robe with a golden sash around his chest, his hairs white like wool, as white as snow, his eyes like a flame of fire, his feet like burnished bronze, his voice like the roar of many waters, his right hand holding seven stars, his mouth emanating a sharp two-edged sword, and his face like the sun shining in full strength (1:12–16). It is this glorious "Son of Man" who then reassures John the seer that he is the first and the last, the living one, who died and is alive forevermore, who has the keys of death (1:17–18), and who delivers his message to the seven churches.

Importantly, the adoration of Jesus with regard to his glory and power is profoundly countercultural, reminding the reader that only Jesus, not the Roman Emperor or any other earthly potentate, is worthy of worship, because Jesus alone is the Lamb who was slain for the sins of humanity and who effected redemption.²⁸ Both terms, *power* and *glory*, stand in "decided contrast to the imperial cult—only God and Christ, not Caesar, has dominion and is worthy of 'glory.'"²⁹ What is more, Jesus' glory and power are eternal, unlike the temporary glory and power of the emperor. In their present afflictions, the readers are assured that there is a sovereign Ruler who transcends their current circumstances and whose glory and power are unfading.

The Second Vision (chapters 4–16): The Glory of God on His Throne and of the Lamb

John's second vision, depicting God's judgment of the unbelieving world, is by far the longest in the entire book. The first scene translates the seer "in the Spirit" in God's throne room in heaven where the twenty-four elders (most likely believers of all ages) and four living creatures (most likely angels) are shown to unite in worship of the Lord God Almighty, ascribing to him glory and honor and thanks and power (4:9, 11). God is shown to be sovereign and seated on his throne at the outset of the terrible judgments sent on the unbelieving world (chaps. 6–16). As the Eternal One (the one "who was and is and is to come," 4:8), God is said to be perfectly holy ("holy, holy, holy," 4:8) and "worthy . . . to receive glory and honor and power," for he is the Creator, and by his will all things were created (4:11).

²⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 67, observes that glory "celebrates the superior work and worth of God and Christ in defeating the powers of evil and effecting salvation," connoting the splendor or glory of "the King of kings, the sovereign Lord of the universe."

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Next in the sequence of the throne room vision is a depiction of the Lamb who receives a scroll from the one seated on the throne. In a virtual repeat of the previous scene, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fall down, now not in worship of God but of the Lamb who was slain, singing, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth” (5:9–10; cf. 1:6). Again, countless angels sing, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing” (5:12). Their worship is echoed by every creature in heaven and on earth (5:13).

It is noteworthy that in both instances where glory is ascribed to the Lamb who was slain, specific reference is made to the crucifixion and to the blood of the Lamb. This draws attention to the fact that the cross is the center of John’s glory theology, not only in the Gospel, but also in the Apocalypse. It is the salvific mission of the Lamb of God as the one who took away the sin of the world (John 1:29, 36) that is the source of glory and honor and blessing, in a direct reversal of the world’s judgment. What the world rejected, God highly esteemed and exalted: the atoning sacrifice of the obedient Son, in fulfillment of Passover symbolism and other Old Testament prediction and typology. As John’s Gospel makes clear, Jesus was the “lifted up” Son of Man, the “Good Shepherd,” and the suffering Servant who gave his life for the world.

Another scene of worship occurs at the occasion of the sealing of a great multitude from every nation who stand before God’s throne and before the Lamb and acknowledge that salvation belongs to God and to the Lamb. Together with the elders and the four living creatures, they fall on their faces and worship God, saying, “Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever” (7:12). In what follows it is made clear that these are believers “coming out of the great tribulation” who “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14). Glory is ascribed to God because he has provided salvation and deliverance through the blood of the Lamb and because he has preserved believers in and through the great tribulation.

The next reference to glory is found in 11:13, where seven thousand people are killed in an earthquake while the survivors are terrified and give glory to “the God of heaven.” The 144,000 who had been sealed previously (in chapter 7) are shown in chapter 14 to sing a new song before God’s

throne and the elders and the living creatures. An angel is shown flying overhead, proclaiming an eternal gospel to those on the earth, crying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth" (14:7). The fact that this remarkable invitation is issued at this juncture makes clear that God's purpose is salvation and that judgment is executed only on those who refuse to respond in the face of repeated exhortations to believe in God's saving message.³⁰

Toward the end of the second vision, those who had conquered the Beast are depicted as standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, extolling the Lord God Almighty for his great and amazing deeds and his just and true ways, asking, "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed" (15:4). Invoking exodus imagery, the scene extols God as glorious on account of his greatness, justice, and holiness. Clearly, it is God's glory, not the world's sin, that is at the center of the vision. In a memorable, moving image, the seer describes a scene where "the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power" (15:8).³¹

The final reference to God's glory in this portion of the Apocalypse is negative, underscoring the tragic nature of the world's rejection of its Creator and his salvation. As the seven bowls of God's wrath are poured out on the unbelieving world, those who resist God are shown to be scorched by the fierce heat, yet they continue to curse the name of God and fail to "repent and give him glory" (16:9; cf. v. 11).³² Nothing, it appears, will bring unbelievers who are hardened in their sin to their knees, and rather than worship, they emit curses and adopt a defiant posture to the bitter end. Yet in a strange way their defiance further magnifies the justice and greatness

³⁰ See Richard Bauckham, "The Conversion of the Nations," in *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 238–337; and Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Contribution of the General Epistles and Revelation to a Biblical Theology of Religions," in *Christianity and the Religions: A Biblical Theology of World Religions*, Evangelical Missiological Society Series 2 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995), 128–36, esp. 134–35.

³¹ Osborne, *Revelation*, 571, draws attention to the following OT antecedent passages: (1) Ex. 40:34–35, referring to the tabernacle during the time of the exodus; (2) 1 Kings 8:10–12, where a "dark cloud" fills the temple with God's glory; (3) Isa. 6:1–4, with its reference to the temple being "filled with smoke" and the earth being "full of his [God's] glory"; and (4) Ezek. 10:2–4, where the judgment of Israel is signified by the departure of God's glory from the temple.

³² Osborne, *Revelation*, 569, notes the contrast with 11:13 where some among the nations "gave glory to the God of heaven."

of God, who is shown as sovereign, glorious, and holy while executing his judgment on those who refuse to acknowledge his majesty.

The Third Vision (chapters 17–20): The Angel's Brilliance and Glory to God in Heaven

The first two of four references to glory in the third vision are not to God but to an angel and Babylon, respectively. At the depiction of the fall of Babylon, symbolizing the unbelieving world, an angel is portrayed as coming down from heaven, “having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory” (18:1). In this instance, “glory” denotes the brilliance and luminescence that is characteristic of heaven, the place where the glorious God dwells, a brilliance reflected by the angelic creatures.³³ By contrast, Babylon is shown as one who “glorified herself and lived in luxury” (18:7) and who is now subject to divine judgment. This, in turn, evokes rejoicing by a great multitude in heaven who along with the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures worship and praise God for his just judgment at the outset of Christ’s return (19:1, 7).

The Fourth Vision (chapters 21–22): The Glory of God and the New Jerusalem

Once more the seer is transported to heaven “in the Spirit” (21:10). He is shown the New Jerusalem “coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal” (21:10–11; cf. 4:3). Throughout the entire book, it is made clear that heaven is a place of resplendent glory, in contrast to the earth, which is the scene of terrifying judgments visited upon the unbelieving world. Intermittent scenes of worship oscillate with depictions of unbelievers’ refusal to acknowledge the glorious God, ensuing in an escalating series of divine retributions. The radiance of the New Jerusalem provides a fitting conclusion to a book that is full of depictions of God’s glory in the midst of his vindication of believers and judgment of unbelievers.

Unlike the temporary manifestation of God’s presence in the temple, in the new creation God’s presence is not confined to a limited structure.³⁴

³³ As Osborne, *Revelation*, 634, observes, “The members of the false trinity do not possess ‘glory’ in the Apocalypse. In fact, no celestial being possesses ‘glory’ in the book except here. Therefore, it is likely that the angel reflects the glory of God, implying he has come directly from the divine presence.”

³⁴ Beale, *Book of Revelation*, 1066, notes multiple allusions to Isa. 40–66 in 21:1–22:5, with the reference to “the glory of God” most likely harking back to Isa. 58:8 and 60:1–2, 19. Beale also detects an allusion to Ezekiel 43, esp. vv. 2 and 4–5. See also Dan. 12:3 LXX and Phil. 2:15, which depicts God’s children as shining “as lights in the world” “in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.”

Most importantly, in this final vision it is made clear that God shares his glory with his people in fulfillment of Jesus' vision and desire that his followers be allowed to see his preexistent glory (John 17:24; cf. 17:5). Thus, at long last, believers' suffering and afflictions have come to an end, and they are granted eternal rest and bliss in the presence of the Almighty and the Lamb. As they engage in eternal, grateful worship, they bask in God's glory in and through Christ, and the covenant formula will have come true: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God" (21:3).

Summary

The primary glory in the Apocalypse is God's, the one who is seated on the throne. God shares his glory with the Lamb who was slain. His glory is also radiated by the angels, the inhabitants of heaven, and extended to believers who are welcomed into the heavenly Jerusalem. This, in turn, is part of John's Trinitarian theology. What is more, God's resplendent glory makes illumination from any heavenly bodies unnecessary. Also, there is no more need for a temple. Remarkably, glory is attached in Revelation to God's judgment of those who fail to give him glory, judgment that is delegated to the glorious "Son of Man," the Lord Jesus Christ. Ironically and tragically, while unbelievers worship the Beast (i.e., the Antichrist), they refuse to give glory to God, the one who alone is worthy to receive all glory, honor, and praise.

Conclusion

John's theology of glory is first and foremost a theology of the cross. In both the Gospel and the Apocalypse, glory accrues to Jesus on account of his atoning sacrifice for sinful humanity. At the same time, Jesus' glory is not acquired; it was his from eternity past as the preexistent Word. During his earthly ministry, Jesus revealed God's glory through his messianic signs. These signs, in turn, were rejected by their primary recipients, the Jewish people. For this reason John's theology of glory is shown to be by divine necessity a theology of the cross. It is through the suffering of the divinely appointed Lamb that God's glory is revealed. In John's Gospel, Jesus is the Lamb who gives his life for the sin of the world; in the Apocalypse, he is the risen Lamb who was slain, the one to whom all judgment is entrusted and who returns as the conquering warrior at the end of time. Thus John's theology of glory is for the most part Christocentric in orientation, especially in the Gospel.

At the same time, John's theology of glory has as its grand backdrop the glory of the eternal God. As the sender of Jesus, it is God, whom no one has ever seen, who is revealed by the Word made flesh. Jesus makes clear that his mission is not self-appointed or self-aggrandizing but has as its ultimate purpose the glorification of God. The God-oriented nature of John's theology of glory is even more palpable in the Apocalypse, where the vast majority of references to "glory" have God as their referent. In most such cases, God is depicted as seated on his throne and as the object of worship of a great multitude of believers and angels. Particularly in the Gospel but also in the Apocalypse, glory is part of the evangelist's Trinitarian theology as the Father and the Son are shown to bring glory to each other, first and foremost at the moment of Jesus' ultimate glorification, the cross.

In presenting his theology of glory as a theology of suffering, John is significantly indebted to the theology of Isaiah. In the prophet's call vision, he catches a glimpse of "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," worshiped by angels who cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:1, 3). The same prophet depicts the suffering servant as one who is supremely exalted ("lifted up") while dying for the sins of transgressors (Isa. 52:13–53:12). Remarkably, John cites both passages at the end of part 1 of his Gospel (12:38–41). John's theology of glory also draws on the portrayal of people looking on the one "they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10)—Yahweh in the first instance and Jesus as a fulfillment of the Isaianic vision (John 19:37; Rev. 1:7). Emphatically, Jesus is glorious as the one who was pierced, according to the predetermined eternal plan of God.

In the end, however, all suffering is swallowed up in glory. Satan is doomed, sin is judged, and all unbelief vanquished. God's kingly rule is complete and his authority unchallenged. In the new creation, God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (21:4). As the one seated on the throne declares, "Behold, I am making all things new" (21:5). "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. . . . The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son" (21:6–7). "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (22:17).