

Let me start by laying my rhetorical cards on the table. I'm trying to excite in you a love, an adoration, a longing for Jesus Christ. I'm not going to give a practical application. I'm not going to try to persuade you to give time or money to something. I'm not even going to try very hard to persuade you that certain doctrinal points are things you ought to believe. I simply want to hold up before the eyes of your heart a vivid picture of Jesus—an aspect of him that has captivated and engrossed my heart and that I hope will captivate and engross yours too.

I – As Waters Cover the Sea

Throughout scripture we find the promise that God will fill the whole earth with his Glory. He confirms the promise with the strong assurance, “as surely as I live,” in Numbers 14:21. In Isaiah’s famous vision of the Lord seated upon the throne he watches as the mysterious seraphim praise God. Each seraph has six wings: with two he flies, with two he covers his feet, and with two he covers his eyes, shielding his face in awestruck fear, wonder, terror, longing, and reverence at the shining glory that radiates off the Presence of God. These seraphim never cease to prophetically declare: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” In Habakkuk 2, we hear the prophet denounce the vanity of every nation’s projects in light of this one fact: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” This image is worth dwelling upon. The glory of God will fill the whole earth like the waters cover the sea. Can you think of anything that covers something more completely than water covers the sea? There is no fissure in the ocean floor where the water does not go. There is no cranny in even the tiniest crustacean’s shell where the water does not go. If the water were a blanket and the ocean a body, we would not find any point where the ocean’s feet poke out because the blanket is too short. Have you ever been on a boat in the middle of the

ocean? Whichever way you look all you see is water. The water stretches from end to end and forms the very horizon wherever you turn your head. The water constitutes the limits of all experience when you are out to sea. Even so our Father has sworn a purpose in the earth: to fill it with his glory.

Habakkuk also changes the language slightly from the earlier prophets. He does not actually say, as Moses said, that the whole earth would be full of the glory. Instead, he says that the whole earth would be full of the *knowledge* of the glory. We see the same idea in Isaiah 11 without reference to glory: “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” This reveals something important about the nature of glory. Glory has two sides. On the one hand, glory can refer to the beautiful light that shines forth from something. In this way we might speak about the glory of a sunset over our bluegrass hills. On the other hand, glory can refer to the *recognition* of this splendor and the proper *response* to it. In this way we might speak about the glory due to a victorious hero returning from war.

Now in all the earthly cosmos, God has created only one animal with the capacity for giving glory in this second sense. Man alone can recognize and respond to the radiant beauty of all creation, and even more importantly the invisible light of God’s Face. Why is this? Because God creates man in his own image. We have been focusing for the last several weeks an understanding of what it means to be human based on the idea of being made in the image of God. Billy has taught us that a big part of this is having a mind and a will. Our mind gives us a capacity to see, apprehend, and ponder the glory of God. Our will gives us the capacity to respond with our whole being to this vision as we throw ourselves face first to the ground in adoration, terror, longing, and worship.

We have also talked about the ways that men and women come together in the purposes of God to create life. In fact, our Father *commands* that we “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the

birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Are we starting to see the Father's purpose stretching from the beginning to the end? This command is not some arbitrary command to make many babies. No, the Father's earnest desire is to see the whole earth filled with *glory*. Man accomplishes this purpose in two ways. First, because man is created in the very image of God, wherever he goes in the earth he brings with him a refraction of God's glory. As he enters into face-to-face intimacy with his Creator, man comes by grace to shine with the very radiance that God gives off by nature. Second, because man is created is the very image of God, endowed with mind and will, he is able to look around at the sunsets and the trees, the mountains and the lakes, the lion and the bear and cry out back to God on their behalf with a comprehending shout of praise that these mute creatures could never give—And God has all along desired to fill the whole earth with this from top to bottom, east to west as waters cover the sea.

But Adam and Eve rejected this purpose. As their teeth sank into that fruit, they twisted the image. In effect, they took the beautiful painting which God had made to display his glory and covered it with mud, filth, and urine. They took the mind that God had given them to recognize His glory and they refused to acknowledge God as God. Instead, they chose to worship created birds and lizards and little rocks carved like fat women. Because they chose to exchange the glory of the true immortal, invisible God for man-made images of corruptible beasts God exchanged their ability to understand for ignorance, delusion, and vanity. So what happened to the promise? Where did the glory go?

II – Christ the Last Adam

To this day, a veil lies over the hearts of those who do not trust in God. Although the beauty of God blazes like the sun from every blade of grass they do not have eyes to see

it. They walk around all day passing word after word of the shouting God, but they do not have ears to hear it. Instead, they only see that boy that did not text them back. They only hear that catchy song on the radio.

In the midst of this, however, a Single Man came to put things right. In the humble womb of a virgin, God himself took on the human form that Adam ruined. At the time he had no great majesty, born in a poor stable, riding into his city upon a donkey. Nevertheless, the psalmist calls him the most beautiful of the sons of men.

In Romans 5, Paul describes a contrast between Adam and Christ. Now “Adam” is the Hebrew word for “human being.” In this chapter Paul calls Christ the “Second Adam.” That is to say, in Jesus we find a new kind of humanity, a recreation of what it means to be human, a restoration of the image of God that the first Adam spat upon. Where the First Adam brought death by sin, the Second Adam brings life by self-sacrifice. Where the First Adam made many sinners by passing on to them his old human nature, the Second Adam makes many righteous by passing on to them his new human nature. Paul repeats this same contrast with more detail in 1 Corinthians 15:

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive....Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit....The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Just listen to the pairs of contrasting words that I have pulled from this chapter:

Old	New
Perishable	Imperishable
Weakness	Power
Natural Body	Spiritual Body
Living Being	Life-Giving Spirit
From the Earth	From Heaven
Man of Dust	Man of Heaven
Perishable Body	Imperishable Body
Mortality	Immortality
Sin and Death	Victory
Dishonor	Glory

Remember that the promise of God stands from all the way back in Numbers 14. He said there, “as surely as I live,” and he does not mean now to go back on that promise. He *will* fill the earth with his Glory. He *will* fill the earth with the knowledge of that glory as the waters cover the sea. He wanted to do it through Adam and his children, and he still wants to do it through Adam and his children. Only now it becomes clear that he wants to do it through the Second Adam, the Real Adam, the Last Adam.

In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul says that as his team of missionaries travels around from city to city what they preach is not themselves but Jesus Christ as Lord. The reason he gives for this proclamation is interesting:

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.

God has made light to shine in our hearts in just the same way that he made all the light

of the whole universe burst forth from utter darkness on the first day of creation. What exactly is this light? It is the light of knowledge. Knowledge of what exactly? Knowledge of the Glory of God—that very knowledge with which he promised to cover the whole earth like the waters cover the sea. Where do we find the knowledge of this Glory? In the Face of Jesus Christ.

Finally, at the end of it all, in the Last Day, the Eighth Day, the Last Adam will be the light of New Creation. We find this description of that Day and that Adam in the final chapters of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to St. John:

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed. but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.