

Psalm 57: Finding the Glory of God and His Chosen Ones in Lament

As I was working through Psalm 40 last week, these words on p. 84 of *The Songs of Jesus* leaped off the page into my mind and heart:

Lord, praying for your *glory* is indeed the way of liberation. If I pray, “*Glorify* yourself in my needs,” that frees me to receive whatever you send as your wise will. For I know that your *glory* includes your love. In my life, Lord, be *glorified*. Amen.

(Tim and Kathy Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*, p. 84, *italics mine*)

Similar reflections and prayers related to God’s *glory* are found in the readings on **Psalm 57**, pp. 121 and 122 in *The Songs of Jesus*:

Deeper than disaster, danger and distress is the desire for God to be *glorified*.

Help me pray not “You’ve *got* to do this, God!” but “Be *glorified* in my life.” That is hard at first; then it is freedom itself. Amen.

Lord, help me gain perspective. Someday your *glory* will rise as the ultimate dawn to end all nighttimes and darkness.

1. Review Isaiah’s vision of the LORD in Isaiah 6, focusing on Isaiah 6:3b, “The whole earth is full of his *glory*.” Read the following summary:

In the Bible the “glory of the LORD” is the most dramatic manifestation of the presence of the LORD. We use the word “holy” to talk about his essential nature and the word “glory” to declare his importance or the display to that importance in history and creation. The noun translated “glory” (*kavod*) is related to a verb “to be heavy” (*kaved*). It can be used to describe the real life, the essential life of a human person. (Psalm 57:8 in the ESV, Psalm 30:12, Psalm 8:5) Everyone has this *kavod*, this inner glory or importance, but the LORD has a quality of it superior to everyone else.

Glory referred to all the trappings that reflect the importance or greatness of someone, like Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 45:13). So the *glory of the LORD* refers to all the manifestation of his powerful presence, such as the stars of the heavens (Psalm 19:1) or the luminous cloud Moses and the Hebrews saw at the sea and in the wilderness (Exodus 14:19-20, 24). Moses wanted to see past the bright cloud and the fire to the real person, “Show me your glory.” (Exodus 33:18 - “Show me *yourself*.) When the Bible uses the word “glory” or “glorious” to refer to the LORD, it is basically saying that *he is the most important or preeminent person* in this or

any other universe. (Summarized from Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, pp. 46-48)

What stands out to you now as you reflect on the *glory of God*?

Notice how a deeper, more accurate understanding of *the glory of God* impacts your reading of **Psalm 57**.

2. Psalm 57 is an individual lament by a person who is being attacked by vicious enemies. It moves from a cry for help and support and complaint (vv. 1-6) to confidence and praise (vv. 7-11; see also vv. 2b-3).

Notice that it has all 3 of the elements that psalm *superscriptions* typically include. These were not part of the original text, but often give hints about how ancient Israel interpreted these texts.

What *liturgical collection* is Psalm 57 from? What *technical terms* relate to its use in worship? What is the *historical note* and how does it help you understand this psalm's function in life?

What do you learn in Psalm 57 about “trouble” and about how to pray in “trouble”?

What do you learn about yourself, about God, and about your relationship with Him?

Jesus the Son reveals God's *glory* exactly (Hebrew 1:3, John 1:14).

3. Look back at scripture from the past week's lectionary that speak of “glory.”

Psalm 57:5,11 and 8; Psalm 62:7, 63:2, 72:19, 73:24

Zechariah 2:5 — “I will the *glory* in her midst.” (Ex. 40:34, 2 Chron. 7:1, Ezekiel 10 and 43) These verses show the *glory of God* inhabiting the tabernacle and temple, then abandoning it as described in Ezekiel 10, and finally predicting its return to inhabit the entire city in Ezekiel 43. John's *Revelation* culminates in chapters 21-22 with the new heaven and new earth and the new Jerusalem filled and lit up with the glory of God.

4. Finally, having read **Psalm 57** from David's troubles with Saul and prayed it from real troubles of your own, read it “in Christ,” as the words of Jesus, reflecting his suffering at the hands of those who wanted to destroy him. Think of Gethsemane and the cross. The victory was not ultimately to his enemies. His resurrection led to God's exaltation “above the heaven” and the spread of his *glory* “over all the earth.” (57:5 and 11)

And we share in that ***glory*** now (John 17:22) and forever. (2 Cor. 4:16-18).