



BSFL: 1 Peter 1:13-25

BY BENNIE R. CROCKETT, JR

GOD GAVE JESUS
Glory

ET TRANSFIGURATUS EST ANTE EOS

COREL PHOTO

A THEOLOGICAL
UNDERSTANDING

PETER ENCOURAGED scattered Christians in Asia Minor to live holy lives grounded in Christ, who had redeemed them from futility (1 Pet. 1:13-25). Peter wrote that in Christ's redemptive work, God "raised him from the dead and gave him glory"¹ (v. 21). To what does this unique use of "glory" refer?

"Glory" in Scripture

While usually translated "glory," both the Hebrew word *kabod* and the Greek word *doxa* present a wide range of meanings. A graphic text describes Moses experiencing the glory of God on Mount Sinai so powerfully that afterward his face shined (Ex. 33:12-23; 34:29-35).

"Glory" often refers to "heavenness," "splendor," or "majesty." Paul wrote, "For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Although *doxa* occurs in a Greek word group that refers to opinion or judgment, New Testament *doxa* includes the ideas of good opinion or judgment that result in glory, honor, or praise. In Luke 14:10 (CSB, ESV) and 2 Corinthians 6:8 (ESV, KJV, NRSV, RSV), "honor" appears for *doxa* (KJV, "worship" in Luke 14:10). In Luke 18:43 (NIV, NLT) and John 12:43 (CSB, KJV, NIV, RSV), "praise" is the meaning for *doxa* (NASB, "approval" in John 12:43).

Romans 6:4 uses "glorious power" (NLT) for *doxa*. In 1 Corinthians 11:7, *doxa* appears as "reflection" (NRSV). First Timothy 3:16 presents an interesting use of *doxa* as "heaven" in the GNT, and *doxa* in 2 Peter 2:10 and Jude 8 appears as "dignities" (ASV, KJV), "dignitaries" (NKJV), "angelic

Left: Mosaic above the altar at the Church of the Transfiguration atop Mount Tabor in Israel. The mosa-

ic depicts Peter, James, and John watching as Jesus is transfigured and appears with Moses and Elijah.

Right: Reconstructed judgment seat in the entrance gate of Dan; the left front base stone is original.

Below: Terra-cotta oil lamp from Jerusalem, dated to the Hellenistic era (332–31 BC); the lamp with its seven wick spouts, is reminiscent of a menorah.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ JAMES MCLEMORE (13/33/17)

shining, or light³ analogous to God's majestic and powerful radiant presence portrayed in the Old Testament (Ex. 3:2; 13:21-22; 24:16-18; 1 Kings 8:10-13). At Jesus' birth, the light of heaven shined forth the glory of Jesus' eternal origin (Luke 2:9). Parallel to God's glory settling on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:16), the glory of the Lord settled around the shepherds. Then, the announcement of Jesus' birth came as the "Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11, KJV)—the singular eternal glory of the baby in swaddling clothes.

Revealing His eternal glory, Jesus came as the Son of God and heir of all things, creator of all things, the reflection of God's glory as the exact expression of God's nature, and sustainer of the world (Heb. 1:2-3). Further, after effecting the cleansing of sin through His life, death, and resurrection in history, Jesus "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" *in glory* (Heb. 1:3; cf. Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22).

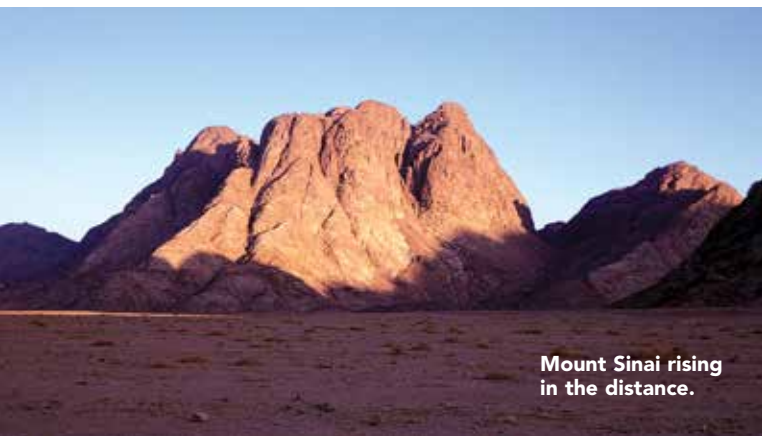
In a final scene in the Bible, Jesus—the Lamb slain—is the lamp of heaven who gives *glorious* light to all who dwell there (Rev. 21:22-23). The *eternal light of*

majesties" (NASB), "glorious ones" (CSB, ESV, NRSV, RSV), or "celestial beings" (NIV).²

In His Eternal Nature

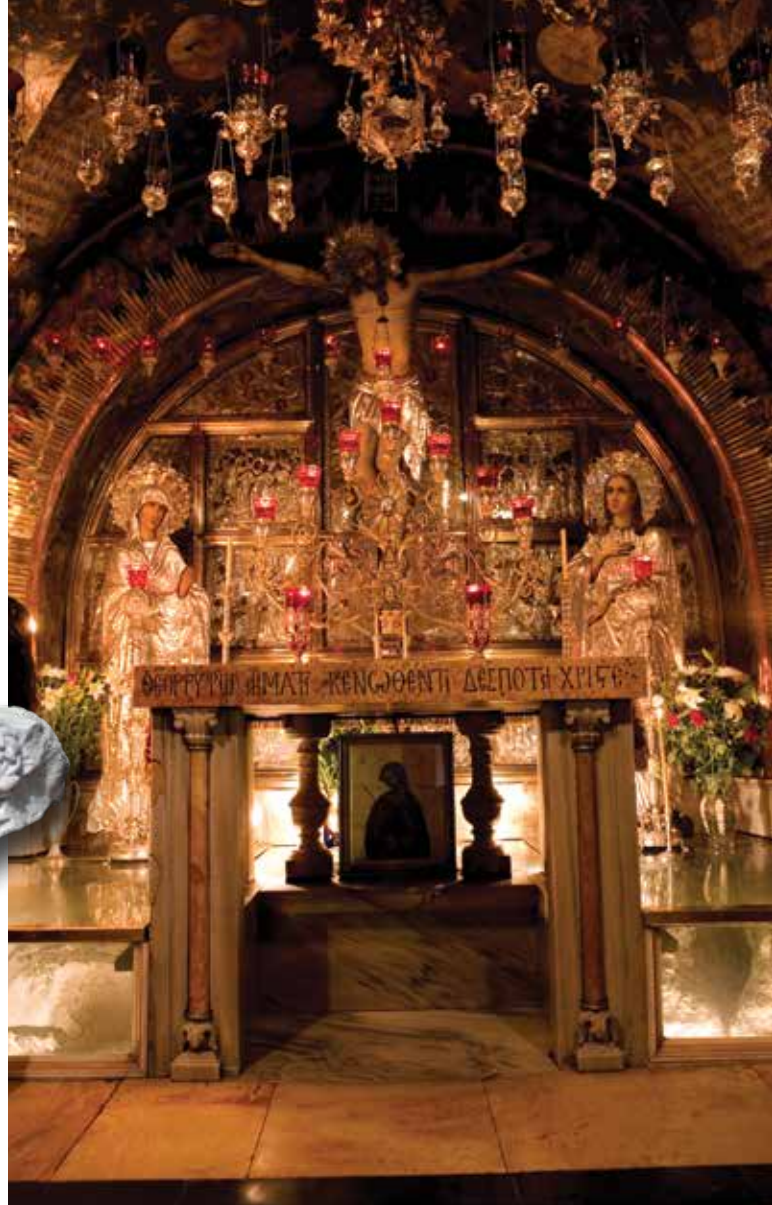
As the eternal Son of God, Jesus ever remains the same (Heb. 13:8). He exists in continual glory, honor, and praise as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 5:8-10,12; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8). Before His arrest Jesus prayed and acknowledged the glory He had with the Father "before the world existed" (John 17:5); further, He prayed that His disciples would see the glory and love the Father gave Him "before the world's foundation" (v. 24).

In some contexts Jesus' glory is associated with splendor, radiance,



Mount Sinai rising in the distance.

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ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ JUSTIN VENEMAN (63/1147)



Left: At Ephesus, an angel relief.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ MARK DUNN (225/0978)

Right: The altar inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stands over the place where, according to tradition, Jesus was crucified.

glory perpetually is the Lamb who “redeemed us to God by [His] blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (5:9, KJV).

In these uses of eternal glory for Jesus, the apostles and early Christians affirmed Jesus as the earthly embodiment of the glory of God.⁴ Only God Himself holds such glory with the ability to redeem people from their sins. “But now with the Savior’s appearance among men, those pagan gods have been exposed as mortal men; but Christ alone was revealed among men as God, the true God, the Word of God.”⁵

In His Humiliation and Death

Stepping into history, Jesus became flesh, lived, performed His ministry, suffered, and died with “glory as the

one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14) because the Father “is the one who glorifies” (8:54). According to John, *Jesus’ suffering and death are His glory* (12:23-24,28; 13:31-32; 17:1,4). The Son’s glory in eternity with the Father (12:28; 17:5) became visible flesh in Jesus who entered time and space (1:14,18).

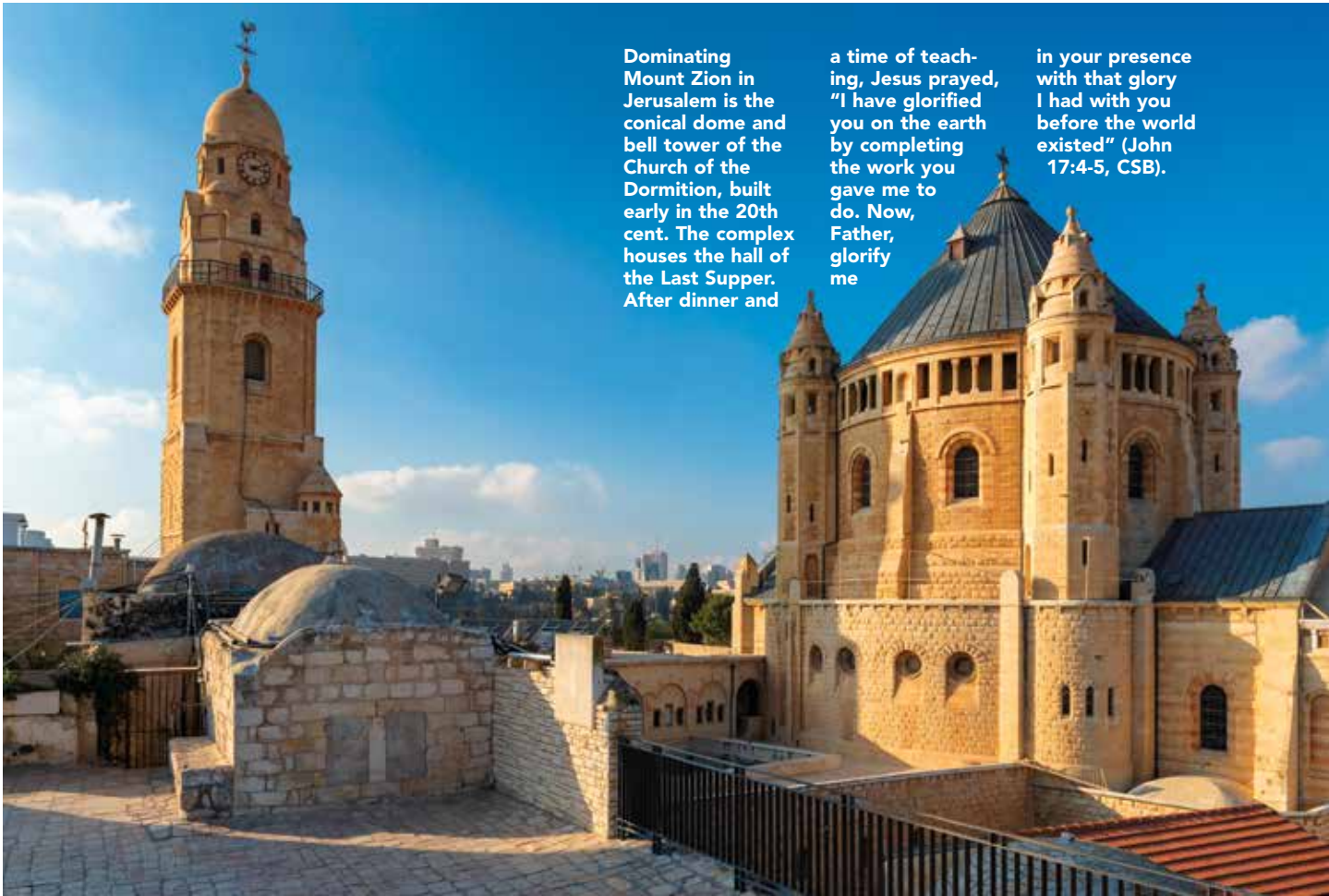
For early Christians, Jesus’ divine glory was eternal, though clearly on display within history especially in His suffering and crucifixion, which revealed God’s glory (12:28,32; 13:31-32). The glory of God’s eternal salvation “will draw all people” to Jesus (12:32) as He was lifted up on a cross and said, “It is finished” (19:30). “It is as if there were a cross unseen, standing on its undiscovered hill, far back in the ages, out of which were sounding always,

just the same deep voice of suffering love...that was heard by mortal ears from the sacred hill of Calvary.”⁶ With His completed work in ministry and the cross, now and forever we “see Jesus...crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death” (Heb. 2:9).

In His Resurrection and Exaltation

Although Jesus holds eternal glory, 1 Peter 1:21 emphasizes that God raised Jesus from the dead *and* gave glory to Him. Rather than glory as a separate gift, the Greek text is clear that “*raising and giving*” in 1 Peter 1:21 functions as one idea; the resurrection of Jesus *is* His glory.

At least thirty years prior to his writing to Gentiles in Asia Minor, Peter had a similar message for Jews in



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Dominating Mount Zion in Jerusalem is the conical dome and bell tower of the Church of the Dormition, built early in the 20th cent. The complex houses the hall of the Last Supper. After dinner and

a time of teaching, Jesus prayed, "I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do. Now, Father, glorify me

in your presence with that glory I had with you before the world existed" (John 17:4-5, CSB).

Jerusalem. After healing a lame man (Acts 3:1-10), Peter—in his Solomon’s Porch sermon on the east side of the Temple—preached that God glorified Jesus by raising Him from the dead (vv. 13,15; cf. Acts 2:32-36; Phil. 2:8-9). Regarding the glory of Jesus’ resurrection, the consistency of Peter’s testimony is striking. That divine glory was also the basis for persecuted believers in Asia Minor resting in the living hope of resurrection glory (1 Pet. 1:3,7,21) and sharing in Christ’s eternal glory (5:10). Peter’s preaching and letters also reveal his witnessing the weight and splendor of Jesus’ transfigured eternal glory. Peter remembered that Jesus “received honor and glory from God the Father” (2 Pet. 1:17) during His transfiguration.⁷ For Peter and early Christians, that brilliant experience

confirmed Jesus’ divine origin, work for sinners, coming at the end of the age,⁸ and eternal glory. Peter’s understanding of Jesus’ glory agrees with Jesus’ own testimony about entering glory after His suffering and death (Luke 24:26). Paul, likewise, affirmed that Jesus “was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16). Although God glorified Jesus with the resurrection, the Son of God *eternally* displays glory; and because of His life, death, and resurrection, believers participate in “the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27; cf. 2 Tim. 2:10). ❖

1. Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).
2. See Euan Fry, “Translating ‘Glory’ in the New

Testament,” *The Bible Translator* 27, vol. 4 (October 1976): 422-27.
3. Some texts that refer to God’s glory, splendor, or majesty: Ex. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chron. 5:14; 7:1-2; Ezek. 10:4; 43:5; 44:4.
4. See Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
5. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word* 8.47 (my translation). See Archibald Robinson, ed., *St. Athanasius On the Incarnation, The Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (London: David Nutt, 1893), 72.
6. Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice, Grounded in Principles of Universal Obligation* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1866), 69.
7. Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Pet. 1:16-18. Note Luke 9:32, “Peter and those with him were in a deep sleep, and when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men who were standing with him.”
8. Matt. 16:27; 24:30-31; Mark 8:38; 13:26; Luke 9:26; 21:27; see 1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1.

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