

**Sunday July 11, 2021**

## **Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church**

### **Welcome & Prayer (Steve G)**

"Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. <sup>2</sup> For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD." (Psalm 117) Let's pray.

*Lord, we come to you this morning this morning to praise your name. We join with Christians throughout the world to praise your name. We sing songs in order to praise your name. We will listen to your word so that we might even more praise your name. With heart, soul, mind and voice we come this morning to praise your name. Please take away all distractions so that we can praise your name. Please blow away all our doubts so that we can praise your name. Please cleanse us from all our sins so that we can praise your name. Please join us together more & more so that together we can praise your name Amen.*

### **Song – Glories of Calvary**

[The Glories of Calvary \(feat. Norton Hall Band\) - Official Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

### **Bible Reading – Ezekiel 1:1-21 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. <sup>2</sup> On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin— <sup>3</sup> the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians.<sup>[a]</sup> There the hand of the LORD was on him.

<sup>4</sup> I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, <sup>5</sup> & in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, <sup>6</sup> but each of them had four faces and four wings. <sup>7</sup> Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. <sup>8</sup> Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, <sup>9</sup> and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. <sup>10</sup> Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. <sup>11</sup> Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body. <sup>12</sup> Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. <sup>13</sup> The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. <sup>14</sup> The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

<sup>15</sup> As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. <sup>16</sup> This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like topaz, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. <sup>17</sup> As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went. <sup>18</sup> Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around. <sup>19</sup> When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. <sup>20</sup> Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. <sup>21</sup> When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

## Announcements

**Focus for July – Commitment.** Once a person has committed themselves to Christ, the next commitment they need to make is to Christ's body the Church. The first Christians in the book of Acts 2, "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." And the writer to the Hebrews says "Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." How can you be committed to the rest of God's family that he has placed us in by attendance, service, encouragement and financial support?

**COVID changes.** The situation in regional NSW continues to be a fluid one but we are determined to keep one another safe during the current COVID spike. To this end we recommend that we all follow the NSW health advice. We will attempt to give you up to date current advice via email whenever it changes.

**QR Codes.** From this Wednesday QR Codes become mandatory for all people who enter any of the Church buildings. This means that you either need to log onto the Service NSW website with your own phone OR you need to be added to someone else's phone. We are hoping to have another option for you next week if neither of these options will work for you. This is to help with contract tracing.

**Church Buildings.** Please keep praying for this project that we will see this as a way to reach people for Christ rather than as a substitute to doing so. The first meeting of the Building Working Group will be this Thursday night.

**Family of Origin.** Anna Moss, the Women's Ministry Co-ordinator will be presenting for us on family systems therapy on August 1 via ZOOM from 3-4:30pm. This time together will be a great way to see how our family of origin affects our thinking and our decision making. More details to come.

**School Holidays.** The normal activities of the church will again start up this week. Why not join in one of these (Kids Church IMPACT, SPARKLERS and Home Groups)?

**Church Picnic - Sunday 25 July.** Please join us for a church picnic at Harold Wesley Knight Park, on Lonus Ave, Whitebridge, near Riawenna Park on Sunday 25 July from 12:30pm. The picnic provides a great opportunity for fellowship, while also getting to know those who are new to our church. Bring your own lunch and picnic blanket/chairs. Further information, contact Simon Mulready 0404 942 544.

**Church Directory.** Last chance to update your items on Elevanto for our Church directory. Our plan is to run off enough copies for anyone who doesn't have access to Elevanto plus a few more.

## Song – Is He worthy?

[Is He Worthy-Andrew Peterson-Lyrics-Revelations 5 - YouTube](#)

## Family Matters – Indigenous matters

Indigenous ministries are not something that I have had much to do with, to my shame.

Like most people my age I wasn't taught any indigenous history at school and I grew up in a missional Church but it was more concerned with overseas mission.

When I was at Tweed we had an indigenous and islander Church in the next suburb and I approached them about doing some stuff together and they weren't interested at all. Later on we got a young indigenous couple who we helped for a number of years and that opened my eyes to the massive issues that people like them faced.

Since I have moved to Charlestown, I have benefited from learning from the Webb's about their ministry to Broome People's Church. I have also read a couple of books that have opened my eyes to the history of the mission work both on the Hunter and across the nation with our first nations people. And so I am on the look out for a way we can partner with others in this space. My hope in some ways is that our partnership

with Wee Waa Presbyterian might open more doors as Stephen Bignall has a background in indigenous ministries.

This week is NAIDOC week and it has its origins in the actions of a Christian man William Cooper who in 1938 organised one of the first major civil rights gathering in the world, known as a Day of Mourning.

APWM has produced a short video for us to consider how we might be involved in Indigenous Ministry <https://vimeo.com/563544012>

## Prayer Points for 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**A Prayer of Repentance:** “Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise. They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the LORD.” (Ps 106:24-25) Lord, we confess that too often we behave like the Israelites. We forget your benefits. We grumble and we are disobedient. Enable us to truly repent and follow you with all our hearts. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Pray for Brazil:** Population 207,353,391. Of the 200 million people in the nation, 40 million Brazilians live below the poverty line. In Rio de Janeiro where “Christ the Redeemer” statue stands overlooking, 20-25% of the city’s population lives in slums called favelas. Within these slums hundreds of thousands of street children are trapped in drug addiction, prostitution and violence. Pray for spiritual maturity throughout the rapid growing evangelical church. Pray for the Spirit of God to transform lives within sprawling urban slums. Pray for missionaries to be sent to areas and roughly 130 tribes unreached by the gospel.

**Pray for APWM:** APWM asks that all churches set aside Sunday 11th July as ‘Indigenous Ministry Sunday’. We ask that on that day you pray for our Indigenous people that: 1. God would continue to raise up and develop leaders for the Indigenous Church and that they would be well trained for the challenges they face. 2. That the Word of God would remain central in the life of the Indigenous Church. 3. That God would send His Holy Spirit and that many young Indigenous people would come to a genuine relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. 4. That God would raise up workers for His harvest — Indigenous and Non-Indigenous. 5. That through the gospel there would be true reconciliation between Indigenous and Non Indigenous Australians. Our Church - Pray for those suffering. The sick, the lonely, the depressed and anxious. Help them in the hour of trial to lift up their eyes to the Lord of all.

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving:** Save us, LORD our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the LORD (Ps 106:47-48)

## Bible Reading – Ezekiel 1:22-28 (NIV)

<sup>22</sup> Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked something like a vault, sparkling like crystal & awesome. <sup>23</sup> Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other & each had two wings covering its body. <sup>24</sup> When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. <sup>25</sup> Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. <sup>26</sup> Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli & high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. <sup>27</sup> I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

**Sermon – The Glory of God (Stephen T)** [https://youtu.be/2huf9YZ\\_pto](https://youtu.be/2huf9YZ_pto)

Larry Walters is an American truck driver who had this crazy idea. He wanted to fly. So he attached some weather balloons to his outdoor chair. 45 balloons in fact. And boy did he fly. When he got rid of his anchor, he went quickly to 11,000 feet above the earth. So high was Larry that he drifted into the approach corridor of the Los Angeles International Airport where he was spotted by a Pan Am pilot who reported him to the air traffic controllers.

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Now can you imagine that conversation? How do you convince the airport tower that 3km up in the air is a man on a banana lounge? That sort of thing has never been there before, ever. It is a strange sight in a most unexpected place. And that is similar to what happened in the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel. This young man sees a vision of the glory of God in a most unexpected place, actually in the last place he expected to see God, in Babylon.

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**1. Let's take a look firstly at the context (verses 1-3).**

**1** *"In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God."*

It was the 31<sup>st</sup> July 593BC, that's how precise the dates are in this book, it can be tracked to the very day. Ezekiel and his fellow exiles were by the Kebar River, in the southern province of Babylonia just minding their own business. It's an ordinary day when something extraordinary happens. The heavens are opened. There was a vision of God. The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon him.

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Now this sort of thing does occasionally happen to God's people, God sends them a prophet or a vision or a word to lift up their eyes and encourage them to return to Him. But Ezekiel isn't in the temple or in the promised land, he is behind enemy lines. He is in the land of his enemies. You see five years ago God had turned Israel's life upside down. He had allowed the evil empire of Babylon to defeat them in battle. To deport the best and the brightest thousands of kilometres away to southern Babylon. The Babylonians then destroyed the Temple and deposed the King, the very descendent of King David. It was as bad as it gets.

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But now in this place of despair, in this time when life had been turned upside down, *"On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin—<sup>3</sup> the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the LORD was on him."*

God sent Ezekiel, the priest a word. Ezekiel the priest. On his thirtieth birthday, around the time his priestly training would come to an end and his priestly service would begin, God leant heavily on Ezekiel. You see there was no longer any Temple for a priest to perform in. No longer any sacrifices they could make. Ezekiel was a priest from a family of priests but here in Babylon he couldn't do the work of a priest. So instead, God makes him a prophet.

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Which would be an incredibly hard transition. A priest is part of the establishment. A class above many of the rest. Important. A teacher. Respected. But a prophet, they are outsiders. They have to say the hard things to the people. They need to be God's mouthpiece. A few weeks ago, I preached on divorce and that was hard. Harder still when you have to have conversations with people afterwards who have been divorced. But Ezekiel is not just preaching from the word of God. He is saying exactly what God wants to say to his people.

So in this time of great despair. At this time when life has been turned upside down. At this time when people had questions about what on earth God was doing, God takes the initiative. Ezekiel doesn't go searching for God. God goes searching for him.

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As preacher Mark Dever puts it, "*God takes the initiative... Like Moses and the burning bush. Like Isaiah in the temple. Like Paul on the road to Damascus. So with Ezekiel. None of these men were looking for God or trying to initiate contact with Him. This God takes the initiative. He comes to us.*" The Lord always is the one who makes the first move. Think of Jesus coming to this world. It was through him that God seeks out and finds the lost sheep.

Even today. Life for many of us is in a state of flux. Our future is uncertain. Our current situation is messy. And today God is coming to us through the prophet Ezekiel. Maybe he has different plans for us? Maybe he wants to call us to Himself or call us for service? But today God is going to reveal himself through his word. He is going to show us his glory. He wants to describe to us something extraordinary as today we live out our ordinary lives.

Isn't that a challenge & a comfort to us that God would appear in the midst of the ordinary? God would appear in the midst of our troubles. God would appear even in Babylon, a place of evil and pain. He does not leave his children alone. He comes to them. And in Ezekiel 1:4, he comes to them in the midst of a storm with a weird vision about a number of creatures.

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## 2. The Creatures (verses 4-14)

<sup>4</sup>"I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light." It begins with a natural occurrence. A storm. Lightning. Fire. From the north. So, this is a sign of danger. Ezekiel continues, "*The centre of the fire looked like glowing metal, <sup>5</sup> & in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, <sup>6</sup> but each of them had four faces and four wings.*"

Alright this is getting a bit weird. Ezekiel's pulse starts to race and his words and grammar starts to get a bit strange. And throughout this vision we will hear again that something looks like this or something has the appearance of that. Ezekiel is trying to describe the indescribable. He is trying to put into words things that he has never ever seen before. And he really struggles to put his finger on what he is actually seeing.

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Four living creatures. Human in form but with four faces and four wings. But it gets weirder still. <sup>7</sup>"*Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. <sup>8</sup> Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, <sup>9</sup> and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.*"

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So Ezekiel was seeing four creatures forming a square. A flying square as these creatures are able to fly in every direction. And see in every direction because whichever side of the square you approach from you can see four different faces. <sup>10</sup>"*Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.*"

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So what does that sort of symbolism mean? These creatures, represent humans, the ones who run the earth, lions, who are the kings of the animal kingdom, oxen, the strongest of the domestic animals & eagles, the most powerful birds of the air. Together they represent all living creatures on earth & they symbolize strength, service, intelligence & God Himself.

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And powering these creatures is the Spirit of God Himself. <sup>12</sup>“Each one went straight ahead. Wherever **the spirit** would go, they would go, without turning as they went. The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, & lightning flashed out of it. <sup>14</sup>The creatures sped back & forth like flashes of lightning.” Like volts of energy moving this way and that, these strange and wonderful creatures can go anywhere, see anything and do it all at lightning speed.

So who are these creatures? In Ezekiel 10:15 we hear “then the cherubim rose upward. These were the living creatures I had seen by the Kebar river.” Cherubim, God’s attendants, guarding God’s throne, doing God’s will. In most ancient art cherubs are fat baby like creatures. Here they are awesome, powerful, intelligent creatures. Cherubim were woven into the fabric of the Tabernacle. They appeared in the holy of holies in the Temple. They are now in this vision preparing Ezekiel for the appearance of God Himself. Alongside these

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### 3. Creatures are **the chariots. (Verses 15-21)**

<sup>15</sup>“As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. <sup>16</sup>This was the appearance & structure of the wheels: They sparkled like topaz and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. <sup>17</sup>As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went. <sup>18</sup>Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around. <sup>19</sup>When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose.”

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Now when an important figure comes out and interacts with the people, the way they are transported tells you a lot about the image they want to present to you. So the queen on special occasions travels in a royal carriage, showing off her wealth and power. The Pope goes in the Popemobile showing of his care and accessibility. And the President of the US has the Beast or Cadillac 1, giving the impression of power and security.

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But here God’s carriage can go in any direction. It has wheels within wheels that mean that it can go anywhere without pivoting. It can go left and right. Up and down. It has total and unrestricting freedom of movement. Because God is not tied to one place. God is not bogged down by any terrain. He is not earth bound. He can go anywhere & see anything.

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And it too is powered by the same spirit that makes the living creatures a bit like Energizer bunnies. <sup>20</sup>“Wherever **the spirit** would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because **the spirit** of the living creatures was in the wheels. <sup>21</sup>When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because **the spirit** of the living creatures was in the wheels.”

So we have this picture, a fantastic and fearful picture of God’s giant, fiery chariot touching down in an obscure town in Babylon before Ezekiel’s very eyes. Surrounded by God’s attendants, mystical human forms with faces of lions and eagles and oxen and covered with wings and eyes everywhere. And in the words of commentator Douglas Stuart

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“The purpose was not to dazzle Ezekiel but to point to a message. God is on the move. He is allowing Himself to be seen, He is appearing in what people thought was a godforsaken place. What an enduring message of hope! How important it is for us to remember that God is never confined, never limited, never distracted, never disinterested in people.”

Is that a message you and I need to hear today? Is that a picture that God wants to paint for you and me today? Friends lift up your heads. Look up. Now. Yes, right now. Our God is not just locked away in heaven! He sees everything even what is going on in your heart and mind right now. He knows everything, even what you are feeling right now. And he is a God who takes the initiative. Who comes to us. And no heart is too hard. And no prodigal is too far. And no person is too stuck in their sin to be outside of God's range. To be too far from the presence of God. To be too low not to experience His grace. Which means we are taken

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#### 4. Beyond the creatures and the chariot to **the very climax itself. (Verses 22-28)**

<sup>22</sup> "Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked something like a vault, sparkling like crystal & awesome. <sup>23</sup> Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other & each had two wings covering its body. <sup>24</sup> When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. <sup>25</sup> Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings."

The surround sound now gets turned up for this very last part of Ezekiel's vision. The multi media experience gets cranked up! Not just sights but sounds assault Ezekiel. It is like the heavenly orchestra is reaching its crescendo. And so what does Ezekiel see next? <sup>26</sup> "Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli & high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man."

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A throne. Yes. There is someone in control of this world. Yes! The world has not gone off the rails and is doing its own thing, hurtling toward destruction. But who is in control? The god of Babylon, Marduk? The gods of today, Money? Power? Sex? Sport? No on the throne was a figure like a man. I wasn't expecting that. God is Spirit isn't He? Indescribable? Unapproachable? But here he is like a man & Ezekiel struggles trying to put it all into words.

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<sup>27</sup> "I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD."

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Ezekiel's dominant impression was the radiant brilliance of the Being on the throne. The LORD is glorious – you cannot see even the appearance of the likeness of His glory without being overwhelmed. The LORD is sovereign. He is seated on His throne. He rules in mighty power. The four living creatures, embodying in their faces all created majesty and power, serve Him. The LORD is holy, separate from all creation, transcendent. He rides above all creation. He is above the expanse, and that is a boundary mere creatures do not cross. The LORD is free – HE goes wherever He wills, without interruption, and it is He, His Spirit, who sustains the movement, not the living creatures or the wheels but everything. The LORD is King everywhere, even by the Chebar canal. His has a mobile throne, not a static one bolted down in Jerusalem. Everywhere HE comes the Lord comes as King.

Friends is that what you need right now to get a sense of the glory of God? Is that what we all need to get a taste of God's glory and power and might. COVID is not in control. The government is not in control. That person who is hurting you is not in control. Your sickness or depression is not in control. Our Lord is in control. The Lord of glory is reigning over heaven and earth.

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So friends would you like to see God in all his glory? Would you like to witness something like what Ezekiel witnessed in 593 BC? Well listen to the start of the gospel of John. <sup>1</sup> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was

*the light of all mankind.* <sup>5</sup> *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...* (And here is the clincher) <sup>14</sup> *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. **We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***"

Do you get it? If you want to see God in all his glory, you need to look to Jesus. Jesus came from the Father and Jesus is the glory of the one and only. Maybe that is what Ezekiel saw when he saw this vision of God. On the throne of God was one like that of a man. Is it Jesus prior to coming to earth as a man? For a few years later Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego are joined in the fiery furnace of Babylon by one who looked like the Son of God.

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You see God is not distant. God takes the initiative and he comes to us in the appearance of the man. But it gets even more weird and wonderful. You think the glory of God can appear in Babylon? Well the New Testament says the glory of God also appeared at the cross of Christ! 2 Corinthians 4:6 says *"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."*

It was at the cross of Christ that God shows us his glory. He loved us so much that he sent his one and only son into this world. He found a way to be just and to justify the ungodly. It is at the cross we see God in all his glory. It is at the cross we see the glory of the one and only giving of himself to bring us to himself. So you and I may not ever see the heaven's ripped open and see before our eyes the glory of God. But everyone of us can see God's glory in the face of Jesus as he hangs on the cross.

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And how does Ezekiel respond to the glory of God? To this God of power who tempers his justice with the rainbow, with the mercy that saved Noah from the flood? *"When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking."* Ezekiel saw only the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord but it was enough for him to fall down prostrate on the ground. Likewise, Moses hid his face, because he was too afraid to look upon God. Isaiah was saw overwhelmed when he saw the glory of God in the temple, he declared *"Woe is me. I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips and yet I have seen the King, the Lord god Almighty!"*

So how will we respond? Shouldn't we tremble at God's word when it is read to us? Shouldn't we humble ourselves in prayer and confess our sinfulness? Shouldn't we worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit in spirit and in truth? For doesn't the Bible say that when two or more are gather in my name, God is here.

God is here, even in Australia. God is here even in a sick bed in hospital. God is here even when everyone else has deserted you. God is here because Jesus says I do not leave you as orphans but I will come to you. And nothing will keep him from coming to you.

So when the Russian communist government decides to burn all the bibles they can find, God can still come to the rescue of his people. When the Chinese government expels all foreign missionaries, God can still come and grow his church. And if the tide turns against the Christian Church here in Australia, if it becomes more difficult to practise our faith into the future, God is still sovereign, God is still in control. He rides on the storm and he is king over the storm.

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But I wonder do we have a too small view of God? Do we have a belief in the God of the gaps, so it is only what we can't explain anywhere else does God come into our thinking? You know when there is no hope from the doctors then we turn to God in prayer? Or do we put our hope in God to work through the doctors or independently of the doctors always trusting our health to God when we are in good health or poor?



Do we only think about God on a Sunday when we go to Church or when we pray at the end of each day? Or do we want to include God every hour of every day and do we talk to him 24/7 throughout the day asking him to open doors and extend his kingdom? Do we only see God in the good times and fail to see in the tough times? Do we only see his power in the supernatural or also in the natural that he brought into play from the very beginning?

I read this quote during the week, “when God is our treasure, submission will be our pleasure.” And today we have seen more of the power and might and glory of our Lord. And this is a God whom we should treasure. Hold in the highest esteem and worship. And when we do that we will submit to him. We will be pleased to give our lives to him. We will want to run to him & if we do that we don’t have far to run because God took the initiative has already run to us. And today, even today we can see the glory of God all around us, If we would just open our eyes & look up to the Lord of heaven and earth. If we just look to Jesus.

## **Song – Glory be to God the Father**

[Glory Be To God The Father - YouTube](#)

## **Song – Reformation Hymn**

[07 - \(legendado\) Bob Kauflin - Reformation Hymn - YouTube](#)

## **Benediction**

<sup>14</sup>*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. **We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

## **Morning Tea**

Our morning tea is a vital way that we give and receive fellowship during a time like this. We don’t want to be just consumers of Church, we want to be a part of the family of God. So why not give one or two people a call. Who might your ring now?