

the glory of christ john owen

the glory of christ john owen stands as a profound theological theme extensively explored by the 17th-century Puritan theologian John Owen. His writings emphasize the centrality of Christ's glory in Christian faith, highlighting how the manifestation of Christ's majesty and divine nature is pivotal for salvation, sanctification, and Christian hope. This article delves into the key aspects of John Owen's theology concerning the glory of Christ, examining his views on Christ's person and work, the believer's union with Christ, and the practical implications of living for Christ's glory. By unpacking Owen's rich theological insights, this discussion offers a comprehensive understanding of why the glory of Christ is foundational for Reformed theology and Christian spirituality. The article is organized to systematically explore Owen's doctrine, starting with his theological framework, followed by the significance of Christ's glory in redemption, and concluding with its application in the Christian life.

- John Owen's Theological Framework on the Glory of Christ
- The Person and Work of Christ in Owen's Theology
- The Believer's Union with Christ and Participation in His Glory
- The Practical Implications of Christ's Glory for Christian Living
- The Glory of Christ in Reformed Worship and Eschatology

John Owen's Theological Framework on the Glory of Christ

John Owen's theological framework places the glory of Christ at the center of all divine actions and redemptive history. For Owen, the glory of Christ is not merely an abstract concept but the manifestation of God's infinite perfections as revealed in Jesus Christ. This glory encompasses Christ's divine nature, honor, majesty, and the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose. In Owen's view, understanding the glory of Christ is essential for grasping the full scope of salvation and God's eternal plan.

The Definition and Nature of Christ's Glory

Owen defines the glory of Christ as the radiant manifestation of God's excellence and majesty displayed in the person and work of Jesus. This glory is both intrinsic, relating to Christ's divine essence, and extrinsic, expressed through His redemptive work on behalf of humanity. It is a glory that commands worship, reverence, and obedience.

The Centrality of Glory in Owen's Theology

In Owen's theological system, God's ultimate purpose is the manifestation of His glory through Christ. He argues that every aspect of salvation—from election to sanctification—is designed to glorify Christ. This principle shapes Owen's understanding of the gospel and the Christian life, highlighting that believers exist to magnify and reflect the glory of Christ.

The Person and Work of Christ in Owen's Theology

The glory of Christ according to John Owen is inseparable from both His person and His redemptive work. Owen emphasizes that Christ's divine and human natures united in one person provide the foundation for His glorious role as Savior and King. The work of Christ—His obedience, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension—reveals and secures His glory in the salvation of sinners.

The Divine and Human Natures of Christ

Owen carefully articulates the hypostatic union, affirming that Christ's glory is rooted in His being fully God and fully man. This union is essential for the efficacy of His atoning work and the revelation of divine glory. Christ's humanity participates in the divine glory, making Him the perfect mediator between God and humanity.

The Redemptive Work as a Manifestation of Glory

The atoning sacrifice of Christ is the ultimate display of God's glory. Owen highlights that through Christ's obedience and suffering, God's justice, mercy, and love are perfectly harmonized and revealed. The resurrection and ascension further confirm Christ's exaltation and glorification, demonstrating His sovereign authority and triumph over sin and death.

The Believer's Union with Christ and Participation in His Glory

Central to Owen's doctrine is the believer's mystical union with Christ, which enables participation in His glory. This union is the spiritual bond that unites believers to Christ's person and benefits, making the glory of Christ accessible and transformative for the Christian life.

The Nature of Union with Christ

Owen describes the union with Christ as a vital, spiritual connection whereby believers are engrafted into Christ's body. This union is foundational for receiving justification, sanctification, and eventual glorification. It is through this union that believers share in Christ's righteousness and glory.

Consequences of Union: Sharing in Christ's Glory

Participation in the glory of Christ involves both present and future realities. Presently, believers experience the glory through sanctification, growing in holiness and reflecting Christ's image. Ultimately, this union culminates in glorification, where believers are fully conformed to Christ's likeness and share eternally in His glory.

The Practical Implications of Christ's Glory for Christian Living

John Owen's emphasis on the glory of Christ extends beyond doctrinal formulations to practical Christian living. He teaches that believers are called to live in a manner that honors and magnifies Christ's glory in every aspect of life.

Living for the Glory of Christ

Owen exhorts Christians to orient their desires, thoughts, and actions toward displaying the glory of Christ. This includes pursuing holiness, resisting sin, and serving others as a reflection of Christ's character. The glory of Christ becomes the believer's ultimate motivation and goal.

Christian Worship and the Glory of Christ

Worship is a primary context in which Christ's glory is acknowledged and celebrated. Owen insists that true worship must be Christ-centered, focusing on His glory revealed in Scripture and experienced through the Spirit. Worship is both a duty and a delight rooted in the recognition of Christ's majesty.

Practical Steps to Reflect Christ's Glory

- Prayer centered on glorifying Christ and seeking His presence
- Studying Scripture to understand and proclaim Christ's glory
- Engaging in righteous living as an expression of Christ-like character

- Participating in Christian fellowship that encourages mutual glorification of Christ
- Evangelism and missions aimed at spreading the fame of Christ's name

The Glory of Christ in Reformed Worship and Eschatology

In addition to personal sanctification, John Owen's doctrine of the glory of Christ has significant implications for corporate worship and eschatological hope within Reformed theology. The final realization of Christ's glory is both a present experience and a future expectation.

Corporate Worship as a Foretaste of Christ's Glory

Owen views the gathered church's worship as a means by which believers collectively behold and proclaim the glory of Christ. This corporate dimension reinforces the unity of the body of Christ and anticipates the eternal worship that will fully reveal Christ's glory.

The Eschatological Fulfillment of Christ's Glory

The ultimate glorification of Christ occurs at His second coming, when He will be fully revealed in glory and all creation will acknowledge His lordship. Owen affirms that believers will share in this consummate glory, living eternally in the presence of the glorified Christ, free from sin and suffering.

Key Elements of Owen's Eschatology Related to Christ's Glory

- The bodily resurrection of believers to share Christ's glorified state
- The final judgment that vindicates Christ's glory and justice
- The new heavens and new earth as the eternal dwelling place of Christ's glory and His people
- The eternal worship and praise of Christ by the redeemed in glory

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was John Owen and what is 'The Glory of Christ' about?

John Owen was a 17th-century English theologian and Puritan minister. 'The Glory of Christ' is one of his seminal works that explores the person and work of Jesus Christ, emphasizing His divine glory and the believer's union with Him.

What are the central themes discussed in John Owen's 'The Glory of Christ'?

The central themes include the majesty and beauty of Christ, His role as the mediator between God and humanity, the believer's identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and the spiritual blessings that flow from this union.

How does John Owen describe the believer's union with Christ in 'The Glory of Christ'?

Owen describes the believer's union with Christ as a vital and mystical connection that brings about spiritual transformation, justification, sanctification, and assurance of salvation. This union is the foundation for all the benefits believers receive from Christ.

Why is 'The Glory of Christ' still relevant for Christians today?

The book remains relevant because it deeply explores the person of Christ and the believer's relationship to Him, offering rich theological insights that encourage faith, worship, and spiritual growth in contemporary Christian life.

What theological perspective does John Owen employ in 'The Glory of Christ'?

John Owen writes from a Reformed theological perspective, emphasizing the sovereignty of God, the atoning work of Christ, and the application of salvation through the Holy Spirit to believers.

Can 'The Glory of Christ' be used for personal devotional reading?

Yes, 'The Glory of Christ' is suitable for personal devotional reading as it invites readers to meditate on the beauty and majesty of Christ, fostering a deeper love and reverence for Him in daily life.

Where can one find or purchase a copy of John Owen's 'The Glory of Christ'?

Copies of 'The Glory of Christ' can be found on major online bookstores like Amazon, Christian bookshops, or accessed for free on websites offering classic Puritan works in digital formats.

Additional Resources

1. *The Glory of Christ: Contemplating the Beauty of the God-Man*

This book explores the multifaceted glory of Jesus Christ, emphasizing His divine and human natures. It delves into the biblical portrayal of Christ's majesty and the transformative impact of beholding His glory on the believer's life. The author encourages readers to cultivate a deeper appreciation for Christ's person and work.

2. *Christ's Excellency: Meditations on the Glory of Jesus*

A collection of thoughtful meditations that highlight the supreme worth and beauty of Christ. Each chapter focuses on a different attribute of Jesus, from His holiness to His love, aiming to inspire worship and devotion. The book is suitable for personal reflection or group study.

3. *The Glory of Christ in the Old Testament*

This work traces the foreshadowing of Christ's glory throughout the Old Testament scriptures. It reveals how the promises and types point forward to the coming Messiah, enriching the reader's understanding of God's redemptive plan. The author provides insightful commentary that bridges the Old and New Testaments.

4. *John Owen on the Glory of Christ*

A compilation of John Owen's writings focused specifically on the glory of Christ. Owen's profound theological insights offer a rich exploration of Christ's person and redemptive work, emphasizing his central role in salvation. This book is ideal for those interested in Reformed theology and historical Christian thought.

5. *The Radiance of Christ: Reflecting His Glory in Daily Life*

This practical guide encourages believers to embody the glory of Christ through their actions and character. It discusses how the believer's union with Christ results in a life that reflects His beauty and grace to the world. The book includes both theological foundations and practical applications.

6. *The Glory of Christ in Salvation*

Focusing on the redemptive work of Christ, this book examines how His glory is revealed in the acts of salvation. It covers key themes such as justification, sanctification, and glorification, showing how each aspect displays Christ's excellence. The author aims to bolster faith and hope in the believer's heart.

7. *The Majesty of Christ: A Biblical Theology*

An in-depth biblical theology tracing the majesty and glory of Christ from Genesis to Revelation. This comprehensive study highlights how Scripture consistently points to Christ as the ultimate display of God's glory. The book is scholarly yet accessible, suitable for pastors, students, and serious readers.

8. *Christ Glorified: The Triumph of Jesus in Scripture*

This book celebrates the triumph and exaltation of Christ as revealed in the Bible. It explores themes of victory, resurrection, and ascension, emphasizing Christ's sovereign reign and eternal glory. The author encourages readers to live in the light of Christ's conquering glory.

9. *The Glory of the Redeemer: Christ's Work and Worth*

A theological reflection on the worthiness and glory of Christ as Redeemer. The book examines the significance of Christ's atoning work and its implications for worship and Christian living. It invites readers to marvel at the greatness of Christ and to respond with gratitude and praise.

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