

God's Flaming Glory – From Allah to Mohler to Calvin to Edwards – Overview

I want to take one post and write a recap of what we've covered so far, and give a taste of what is ahead. You can find the former Post [here](#), or find the series page [here](#).

Allah is a creator who rules, according to the Qur'an.

Mohler sees the true God as essentially creational: a Creator who redeems.

For all the seeming similarities, and for Mohler's frequent appeals to Calvin in support of his doctrine of glory, Calvin's theology and doctrine of God's glory are vastly different from Mohler's. For

“...Calvin had followed the Scriptures in portraying God as essentially relational: as a Triune Lover. With this Calvin held God to be all-powerful as creator; but a creator motivated by an overflowing love to share with the creation the eternal Triune life of Father, Son, and Spirit.”¹

Calvin sees God primarily as a lover who creates. Not a Creator who rules, or even as a Creator who redeems. “In the former he is seen as pragmatic and demanding and in the latter he is first a lover and then a creator – and the creation then provides a setting where his love is present.”²

Calvin, rather than defining God's glory in theatrical terms, defines God's glory in relational terms, from creation to redemption and beyond, as we have seen.

¹ Ron Frost. (2012). *God's Spreading Goodness*. Cor Deo Press. Vancouver, WA 98687. p. 37.

² Ron Frost. (2012). *God's Spreading Goodness*. Cor Deo Press. Vancouver, WA 98687. p. 72.

In many areas of doctrine, Jonathan Edwards followed in the footsteps of John Calvin. While there are many differences, still there are seemingly as many similarities (even for the centuries that separated them). As for their doctrine of the glory of God in creation, redemption, and life (which is the scope of this essay), they are almost identical in their fundamental understandings. Edwards, in his own day, was in large part a defender of a more faithful-to-Calvin Calvinism. And yet, of the Reformer himself, Edwards “mentions... only in passing as ‘one of the eminent of the reformers’ (Sermon 23, Works, 9: 422).”³ Furthermore, however high Edwards held Calvin to be, or of the reformation as the “resurrection from popery,”⁴ that respect seems to have been tainted by the mutilations of Calvin’s character which have been perpetuated since the death of the Reformer. This is apparent when Edwards wrote of the pitfalls of the Christian virtue of zeal:

...in that glorious revival of religion, at the reformation, zeal in many instances appeared in a very improper severity, and even a degree of persecution; yea, in some of the most eminent reformers; as in the great Calvin in particular.⁵

To speculate about why Edwards held such a view of Calvin is a vain task. Maybe Edwards would have changed his view in the light of the work of Basil Hall or James White. Maybe he would have changed his mind if he knew of the maddening pursuit that Servetus made of Calvin and the events and circumstances surrounding Servetus’ execution. Or maybe Edwards

³ George Marsden (2003). *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. Yale University Press. New Haven & London. P. 2461.

⁴ Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume Two*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 2461.

⁵ Jonathan Edwards (n.d.). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume Two*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 755.

would have been persuaded if he had known Calvin's inability to prevent such a terrible act. But this will never be known on this earth.⁶

Yet, there is this difference between them as to their doctrine of the glory of God. Edwards' theology, nearly two centuries down the line from Calvin, went further than Calvin as concerns this doctrine. Edwards theology was thoroughly permeated with his doctrine of the glory of God. It is likely that no work of God in any other one of His children since the Apostles has matched Edwards' work. Edwards made such a magnification of God's glory, gave such expression to God's brilliance, and delved so deeply into Scripture to treasure God and His brightness, producing works that are unrivaled in their communication of the glory of God.

I look forward to publishing the next posts on Edwards, and hearing from many of you about it. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or comments. You can comment below, or contact me through this page.

You can also download this article here.

⁶ For a refutation of the mutilations of Calvin's character, see James White's Church History series (first link below) and the episodes: *67 - Farel and Calvin in Geneva*; *68 - Calvin in Strasbourg and Geneva*; *69 - Servetus and Calvin's Late Life*. See also the first thirty minutes of a separate program by James White: *Calvin/Servetus Affair* (second link below). Or see Basil Hall's *The Calvin Legend* (third link below).

1: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?seriesOnly=true&currSection=sermonstopic&sourceid=phxrefbap&keyword=Church+History&keyworddesc=Church+History>

2: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=99519151736420>

3: https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_08.php