

God's Flaming Glory – Post 10 – God's Glory in Life, According to Albert Mohler

Mohler's doctrine of God's glory as a theatrical glory not only shapes Mohler's understanding of creation and the cross (as we have seen), but also his understanding of the Christian life.

Mohler talks a lot in his sermons, particularly his sermons on John, about the Trinity and of being united to Christ. Yet, even there it is framed within the parameters of a theatrical understanding of God's glory. He sees being united to Christ as being the demonstration of who God is to us who will get to see His glory, but not partake in it. Preaching on John 17 he said that

This text takes us further into the depth of the trinitarian mystery than any other text of Scripture ... [we are looking at] the depths of the Trinity. This is the greatest access we have *and will ever have* into the inter-trinitarian relationship between the Father and the Son.¹

It might be asserted, contrary to these articles, that Mohler actually does make a point of how we are included into the unity of the Trinity. Afterall, what he says on John 17 does sound a lot like Calvin: "The unity – the trinitarian unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is extended to include us as we are united to Christ."² This is undeniably Calvin like, as are many things he says, two maxims apply here: context is key, and the proof is in the pudding. For Mohler, the unity of which he references consists in *seeing* the glory of the trinity:

¹ Albert Mohler. (2021, March 7). 47. *John 17:1-5*. Albertmohler.com. <https://albertmohler.com/sermon-series/john,3:18-3:44>. Emphasis Mine.

² Albert Mohler. (2021, April 18). 51. *John 17:20-26*. Albertmohler.com. <https://albertmohler.com/sermon-series/john,24:26-24:35>.

“What [Jesus] is praying for is for the day when we, in Him, with Him, will *see* the glory that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world.”³

...we [will] *behold* the glory of the Son of God, the glory that He had with the Father before the creation of the world.⁴

In other words, Christians have a union in Christ, but that unity consists in seeing His glory and responding to the sight of it. Union in Christ is a means to an end, not the end itself. It's a means to the glory of God, not a participation in the glory of God. The end (the purpose) is that Christians get to see God's glory displayed as the Triune God. Being united to Christ is the way that that takes place. In fact, it would seem, being united with Christ is primarily about beholding the glory of the Trinity, and not about partaking in the glorious fellowship of the Divine Persons.

Again, while Christians truly do have a personal relationship with God (as Mohler makes clear), the purpose of that relationship is primarily about a “demonstration of the love of God,”⁵ not a communication of that love.

This purpose carries over into evangelism, and comprises the whole motive behind mission: “...we understand evangelism as... desiring to see God's glory demonstrated in them.”⁶ Why is this the motive for wanting people to be saved and come to know Christ? Because it is the purpose of the redeemed. Preaching on John 17:1-5, Mohler said that

³ Albert Mohler. (2021, April 18). *51. John 17:20-26*. Albertmohler.com. <https://albertmohler.com/sermon-series/john,38:51-39:04>.

⁴ Albert Mohler. (2021, April 18). *51. John 17:20-26*. Albertmohler.com. <https://albertmohler.com/sermon-series/john,40:14-40:26>.

⁵ Albert Mohler. (2021, April 18). *51. John 17:20-26*. Albertmohler.com. <https://albertmohler.com/sermon-series/john,46:45-47:08>.

⁶ Albert Mohler. (2015, April 8). *Albert Mohler: In the Beginning: The Glory of God from Eternity*. Albertmohler.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6Fy2vX2sRY,49:23-49:43>.

“Those who are the redeemed... our purpose is to *display* the glory that was *shown* us in the Son, and through the Son *to have a glimpse* of the glory that the Son shared with the Father before the world was.”⁷

This is a central thread in Mohler’s whole theology (and across decades of his ministry). To him, this has always been God’s intended purpose for humanity. Speaking of the arrival of human beings into God’s creation, Mohler stated that

“His conscious creatures were made in order to apprehend His glory and to reflect His glory. The Imago Dei must mean most essentially this, that we were given that capacity whereby we could consciously... glorify God. Recognize His glory, love and adore His glory, seek to reflect His glory.”⁸

This was the whole purpose for the world. Creation provided the place where this demonstration of theatrical glory could take place:

“...what we have here [in the creation of the world] is a temple being made. A temple that includes everything from the surface of the earth to the heavens. And this temple is being readied for the arrival of the creature who alone will consciously worship the Creator.”⁹

Though Mohler can be commended for many things in his theology, he cannot be commended for this: defining God’s glory as a theatrical reality, and as identifying God as primarily the Creator. To him, in the Creator, human beings find the purpose of their entire existence from creation to redemption and beyond, to glorify the Creator in His creational and

⁷ Albert Mohler. (2015, April 8). *Albert Mohler: In the Beginning: The Glory of God from Eternity*. Albertmohler.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6Fy2vX2sRY>, 40:56-41:16. Emphasis mine.

⁸ Albert Mohler. (2015, April 8). *Albert Mohler: In the Beginning: The Glory of God from Eternity*. Albertmohler.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6Fy2vX2sRY>, 19:35-19:58.

⁹ Albert Mohler. (2013, April 14). 3. *Genesis 1:3-19*. Albertmohler.com. <https://albertmohler.com/sermon-series/genesis, 33:19-33:37>.

theatrical glory. They are to see forevermore the display of God's glory. That is the chief end for Christians: "Our redemption... is preparation for our eternal vocation, our great end of glorifying God throughout eternity."¹⁰

Mohler's hope of eternity is a theatrical one. We will see God demonstrating who He is, and that will be the glory we see. John Calvin, on the other hand (as shown in Post 6), said that when Christ returns, He will communicate His own glory to us. Jesus will

irradiate His saints with His glory, and that they may be partakers of it. "Christ will not have this glory for himself individually; but it will be common to all the saints." This is the crowning and choice consolation of the pious, that when the Son of God will be manifested in the glory of His kingdom, He will gather them into the same fellowship with Himself ... *then* they will be precious, and full of dignity, when Christ will pour forth His glory upon them.¹¹

And again, on the purpose of the world and the Christian life here and now, Calvin said that

The Apostle Paul calls us back to the chief end of our whole life – that we may promote the Lord's glory. ...that those who have advanced the glory of Christ will also in their turn be glorified in Him.¹²

¹⁰ Albert Mohler. (2015, April 8). *Albert Mohler: In the Beginning: The Glory of God from Eternity*. Albertmohler.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6Fy2vX2sRY>, 22:05-22:14.

¹¹ John Calvin (n.d.). *Commentary on Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 289.

¹² John Calvin (n.d.). *Commentary on Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids, MI. p. 291.