

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

SOTERIOLOGY

The Doctrine of Salvation

By Grace Alone, Through Faith Alone, In Christ Alone, To the Glory of God Alone

UNIT 11: GLORIFICATION — THE COMPLETION OF SALVATION

The Completion of What God Began

Lesson 32

Glorification

The Final Link in the Golden Chain

The Destination Toward Which Every Aspect of Salvation Has Been Moving

“Whom He justified, these He also glorified”

*Key Texts: Romans 8:18–25, 29–30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–57; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2; 2 Corinthians 5:1–5;
Revelation 21:3–4*

“And those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.”

Romans 8:30, NASB 1995

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Introduction

The soteriology series reaches its penultimate unit, and one of the most magnificent destinations in all of systematic theology, with the doctrine of glorification. Unit 11 addresses the completion of salvation: the final, eschatological act of God by which everything that He began in the eternal election, accomplished in the redemption, applied in the regeneration, declared in the justification, established in the adoption, is progressively working in the sanctification, and is sustaining through the perseverance, is brought to its appointed, certain, and glorious completion. Glorification is not an addendum to the doctrine of salvation; it is its destination. Every other aspect of the saving work has been moving toward this point from the beginning, and the whole of the *ordo salutis*, from the eternal election to the present progressive sanctification, finds its eschatological fulfillment in the glorification that the day of Christ will bring.

The governing text of Unit 11 is the final clause of Romans 8:30: “and those whom He justified, these He also glorified” (NASB 1995). The theological force of this clause was noted in the course of the perseverance doctrine (Lesson 27’s treatment of the golden chain), but its full development belongs here, at the end of the series, where the eschatological destination of the entire saving work can be seen for what it is: not merely the final chapter but the chapter that gives the preceding chapters their meaning, their trajectory, and their hope. The past tense of “glorified” is the first and most striking feature of the verse: Paul does not say “will be glorified” (though that is temporally accurate from the human perspective) but “glorified”, using the aorist to describe what is still in the future from the believer’s perspective as if it were already past from the divine perspective. The eschatological certainty of the glorification is so absolute, the divine purpose so undeviating, and the faithfulness of the God who glorifies so unwavering, that Paul can describe the glorification in the same tense as the foreknowledge, the predestination, the calling, and the justification that have already been accomplished.

This lesson will proceed through seven major sections: glorification defined in its full theological scope; the past-tense certainty of Romans 8:30; 1 John 3:2 and the beatific vision as the mechanism of the final transformation; Romans 8:29 and the eternal purpose that glorification fulfills; the redemption of the body (1 Corinthians 15:42–49); the removal of sin and the *non posse peccare* of the final state; and the continuity and discontinuity of the glorified person with the present-age person. Throughout, the governing pastoral conviction is the one the lesson’s outline names: glorification is the destination toward which every aspect of salvation has been moving, and it is certain because the God who began the work will complete it.

I. Glorification Defined

The Final, Eschatological, Complete Conformity to Christ

A. What Glorification Is

Glorification is the final, eschatological act of God by which the genuinely elect and regenerate believer is completely and permanently conformed to the image of Christ, body and soul, freed from every trace of sin's corruption and presence, and brought into the fullness of the eternal life that the new birth initiated, the justification secured, the adoption established, and the progressive sanctification was progressively approaching but could never fully reach in the present age. The definition contains several elements that together capture the specific character and the comprehensive scope of the glorifying act.

"Final": glorification is the last act of the divine saving work in the individual believer's experience, not another stage of the progressive sanctification but the completion of it, the eschatological termination of the process that has been operating across the whole of the Christian life. The progressive sanctification is genuinely progressive: it advances by increments, with setbacks and advances, toward the goal of complete conformity to Christ. Glorification is the event that ends the progression and replaces the approximate with the absolute: the God who has been progressively conforming the believer to Christ's image now completes the conformity perfectly, permanently, and without remainder. "Eschatological": glorification is tied to the specific, publicly-disclosed, historically-occurring event of the return of Christ at the end of the age, it is not a private spiritual transformation occurring at death (though the interim state between death and resurrection is significantly better than the present age) but the specific, cosmic, embodied, publicly-revealed transformation of the whole person at the day of Christ's appearing. "Complete and permanent": the glorification accomplishes what the progressive sanctification was always aimed at but never achieved in the present age, the entire, unreserved, perfect conformity to Christ that 1 Thessalonians 5:23's prayer for entire sanctification was requesting and that the divine faithfulness of verse 24 guarantees.

"Conformed to the image of Christ, body and soul": glorification is a whole-person transformation, not merely the spiritual dimension's perfection. The sanctifying work of the present age has been primarily an inner transformation, the renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2), the transformation of the affections (Galatians 5:22–23), the mortification of the sinful deeds of the body (Romans 8:13). Glorification encompasses the body as well: the adoption of Romans 8:23 is waiting for "the redemption of our body," and the resurrection of 1 Corinthians 15 is the redemption of the body that the adoption has been waiting for. The glorified person is the whole person, spirit, soul, and body, conformed to the image of the glorified Christ whose resurrection body is both the pattern and the guarantee of the believer's own glorified embodiment.

B. Glorification and the Ordo Salutis

Glorification's place at the end of the ordo salutis is the eschatological fulfillment of the whole sequence that the preceding lessons have traced. The election chose the specific persons who would receive the salvation; the redemption accomplished the atonement that purchased their freedom from sin's guilt and power; the regeneration imparted the new life that opened the eyes of faith; the justification declared the legal verdict of

righteousness; the adoption established the filial relationship; the sanctification is progressively conforming the whole person to Christ's image; and the glorification will complete what the sanctification has been progressively accomplishing, doing in an eschatological instant what the progressive work has been doing incrementally across the entire Christian life. The glorification is the logical and eschatological terminus of the *ordo salutis*, the point at which the divine saving purpose, initiated in eternity and operative across the believer's entire life, reaches its completed, irreversible, eternally-magnificent destination.

II. The Past Tense of Romans 8:30

So Certain That It Is Already Done

A. The Golden Chain and Its Final Link

Romans 8:29–30 is one of the most theologically compressed and the most eschatologically breathtaking passages in the entire Pauline corpus: “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified” (NASB 1995). The golden chain of foreknew → predestined → called → justified → glorified was introduced in the perseverance discussion (Lesson 27) as the unbreakable sequence of the divine saving purpose. Here, in the context of the glorification doctrine, the chain's final link receives its full development: “these He also glorified.”

The past tense of “glorified” (edoxasen, aorist indicative active) is the theological heart of the verse for the glorification doctrine. Paul uses the same tense for the glorification as for the foreknowing, predestining, calling, and justifying that have already been accomplished. From the temporal perspective of the Roman Christians to whom the letter was addressed, and from the temporal perspective of every believer reading the verse since, the glorification is still future: the resurrection body has not yet been received, the perfect conformity to Christ has not yet been accomplished, the face-to-face vision of the divine glory has not yet been experienced. Yet Paul describes the glorification in the past tense.

The theological explanation is the divine perspective on the certainty of the eschatological event: from God's perspective, the glorification of every foreknown person is as accomplished as the foreknowing from which the chain began. The divine purpose does not waver between the foreknowing and the glorifying; the chain does not break at any link; and the God whose purposes are as permanent as His own character has, in the divine reckoning, already accomplished the glorification of every one whom He has foreknown, predestined, called, and justified. The past tense is not a grammatical error or a rhetorical device; it is the inspired declaration of the eschatological certainty from the perspective of the God for whom “there is no distinction between past and future” in the absolute, omniscient sense that the divine perspective inhabits.

The pastoral significance of the past-tense glorification is the specific, eschatological confidence it provides for the believer in the present age. The believer who is struggling in the progressive sanctification, whose specific failures are most visible, whose conformity to Christ feels most distant, and whose holiness most falls short of the divine standard, this believer is, in the divine reckoning, already glorified. Not subjectively (the glorification has not yet been experienced), not temporally (the day of Christ has not yet come), but in the divine purpose and the divine certainty: the God who foreknew and justified has already glorified, in the same sense that the eternal plan

has already accomplished what time is in the process of expressing. The already-glorified status of the not-yet-glorified believer is the specific, Pauline, Romans-8:30 ground of the most forward-looking, most confident, most eschatologically-grounded dimension of the believer's hope.

B. Romans 8:18 and the Proportionality

Romans 8:18's declaration establishes the proportionality between the present suffering and the future glory that contextualizes the past-tense glorification of verse 30: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (NASB 1995). The "not worthy to be compared" establishes a disproportion so vast that the comparison is linguistically inadequate: the sufferings of the present age, however severe and however prolonged, are not in the same category as the glory that is to be revealed. The glory exceeds the suffering not merely in magnitude but in kind, it is the glory of the complete, permanent, eschatological, whole-person conformity to the image of the Son of God, and the suffering of the present age, whatever its specific character, is the finite, temporary, present-age experience of creatures who are on the way to an infinite, eternal, eschatological transformation. The proportionality does not minimize the present suffering; it contextualizes it within an eschatological horizon that transforms its character from the final word to the penultimate one.

III. 1 John 3:2 and the Beatific Vision

We Will Be Like Him, Because We Will See Him

A. The Mechanism of the Final Transformation

First John 3:2 provides the most concentrated and the most theologically profound account of both the content and the mechanism of the glorification in the entire New Testament: "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is" (NASB 1995). The verse holds in remarkably compact form the eschatological tension of the adopted life (now – not yet), the specific content of the eschatological destination (we will be like Him), and the specific mechanism by which the final transformation will be accomplished (because we will see Him just as He is).

The "now we are children of God" is the present-tense certainty of the adoption that Lesson 21 established: the adoption has already been received, the Spirit's present testimony attests it, and the filial standing is real and current rather than merely future. The "it has not appeared as yet what we will be" is the not-yet dimension: the full expression of the adopted child's eschatological identity, what she will look like, what she will be capable of, what the glorified life will consist of in its complete, Spirit-expressed, body-and-soul reality, has not yet appeared. The hiddenness of the present life (Colossians 3:3's "your life is hidden with Christ in God") means that the full revelation of what the adoption has made the believer awaits the eschatological disclosure that the day of Christ's appearing will provide.

"We will be like Him": the content of the glorification is the likeness to Christ, not the ontological identity with Christ (the creature remains creature, the Son of God remains who He is) but the moral, spiritual, and in some sense even physical likeness that the glorification produces. The glorified believer will reflect the character of the

glorified Christ as the moon reflects the light of the sun, genuinely, luminously, and in a way that makes the original recognizable, but always as derived reflection rather than as independent source. The conformity to Christ's image that the progressive sanctification has been moving toward will be complete: every dimension of the character, every faculty of the person, every aspect of the embodied life will express the Christlikeness that the Spirit's transforming work has been progressively producing and that the glorification will complete perfectly and permanently.

"Because we will see Him just as He is": this is the specific, theologically breathtaking claim about the mechanism of the final transformation. The seeing, the direct, unmediated, face-to-face, full-clarity vision of the glorified Christ as He actually is, without the veil that the present age interposes between the believer and the divine reality, is itself the transformation. The beholding of the glory of the Lord that 2 Corinthians 3:18 identified as the means of the progressive transformation ("beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image") will, at the eschatological moment of the face-to-face vision, produce its final, complete, and permanent effect. The imperfect, mirror-mediated, progressive transformation of the present age will be replaced by the perfect, direct, instantaneous transformation of the beatific vision: the direct seeing of Christ as He is will make the believer like Christ, because the vision of the perfect Christlikeness will complete in an eschatological moment the conformity that the partial, progressive, mirror-mediated seeing of the present age has been working toward.

B. The Beatific Vision in the History of Christian Theology

The beatific vision (from the Latin *beatus*, blessed, and *visio*, sight, the "blessed sight" of the divine glory) has been one of the most central and the most theologically elaborated concepts in the history of Christian eschatological theology. The Roman Catholic tradition developed an extensive account of the beatific vision as the highest human good and the final destination of the rational creature: the direct, intellectual, unmediated vision of the divine essence that is the specific happiness of the glorified soul. The Reformed tradition has generally affirmed the beatific vision while emphasizing the Christological mediation that 1 John 3:2 specifies: the vision is the vision of Christ as He is, and through Christ the vision of the whole Godhead. Both traditions agree that the beatific vision is not merely the intellectual apprehension of a divine object but the total, whole-person, transformative encounter with the divine reality that produces the likeness it beholds.

The pastoral significance of the beatific vision as the mechanism of the final transformation is the specific, hope-producing, present-age-contextualizing insight it provides: the transformation is not the product of a further, post-mortem process of spiritual effort or moral achievement but the immediate, instantaneous, irresistible effect of seeing the One whose likeness is the destination. The believer whose progressive sanctification has been slow, whose conformity to Christ's image has seemed distant, and whose spiritual effort has produced less fruit than the effort seemed to warrant, this believer will not need to continue the effort after the beatific vision; the seeing will complete the transformation that the effort, sustained by grace, was moving toward. The destination does not require the traveler to arrive already perfect; it requires only that she arrive, and the arriving, the face-to-face seeing of Christ as He is, will do the completing work that the journey could not accomplish.

IV. Romans 8:29 and the Eternal Purpose

Predestined to Conform, Glorified to Complete

A. *The Goal of the Eternal Election*

Romans 8:29 names the specific content of the divine predestination in terms that make glorification not merely the conclusion of the saving work but its specifically stated goal: “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren” (NASB 1995). The predestination is not merely to salvation in the general sense of eternal life; it is specifically to “become conformed to the image of His Son.” The entire *ordo salutis*, every act of the divine saving purpose from the regeneration through the glorification, is aimed at this specific destination: the complete conformity of the redeemed creature to the image of the eternal Son who became incarnate, died, rose, ascended, and reigns at the Father’s right hand in the specific, embodied, glorified humanity that is the pattern of the believer’s own glorified embodiment.

The “so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren” is the Christological and doxological ground of the predestination to conformity: the specific purpose of the believers’ glorification is that the Son would be the firstborn among a family of glorified siblings whose conformity to His image displays the fullness of what the eternal Son became in the incarnation. The glorification is not merely the individual believer’s personal achievement of her eschatological destination; it is the completion of the corporate, family-shaped, Christ-centered display of what the redemption was designed to accomplish, a vast community of glorified human beings who bear the image of the Son, whose conformity to His image is the eternal testament to what the grace of God can do with the fallen creature who was redeemed by the incarnate, crucified, risen Son.

Philippians 3:20–21 provides the most Christologically-explicit statement of the glorification’s content in the Pauline corpus: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself” (NASB 1995). The specific comparison is between the present body (“the body of our humble state”, the mortal, sin-affected, subject-to-weakness-and-death body of the present age) and the body that the glorification will produce (“conformity with the body of His glory”, the glorified, resurrection body of the ascended Christ, which is both the pattern and the guarantee of the believer’s own glorified body). The mechanism is the Christ’s own power: “by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself”, the same omnipotent power that rules the cosmos is the power that will accomplish the glorification of every believing person who is waiting for the Savior from heaven.

B. *The Firstborn Among Many Brethren*

The “firstborn among many brethren” of Romans 8:29 is among the most theologically significant phrases in the entire passage for the glorification doctrine, because it establishes the corporate dimension of the eschatological destination. The glorification is not merely the individual believer’s private achievement of the eschatological destination; it is the final completion of the new humanity that the redemption has been forming across the entire course of the redemptive history. The Son is the firstborn, the first to have the glorified humanity that the resurrection body expresses, and the many brethren are the community of all who have been united to Him by faith and who will, at the day of Christ, receive the same glorified humanity in conformity to His own.

Hebrews 2:10–12 develops this corporate, family-shaped dimension of the glorification with the specific vocabulary that expresses the Son’s solidarity with the glorified community: “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, ‘I will proclaim Your name to My brethren.’” The bringing of “many sons to glory” is the specific, corporate, family-completing dimension of the glorification: the Father bringing the many adopted children to the eschatological glory that the adoption has always been aimed at, with the Son leading the way as the firstborn through whose sufferings the path to the many’s glory was opened.

V. The Redemption of the Body

1 Corinthians 15 and the Imperishable Embodiment

A. The Central Importance of Bodily Resurrection

One of the most theologically distinctive and the most practically significant aspects of the Christian doctrine of glorification is the specific, robust, irreducible emphasis on the resurrection of the body as an essential component of the glorified state. The glorification is not merely the spiritual perfection of the inner person while the body is discarded as the shell that the soul no longer needs; it is the whole-person transformation that includes the resurrection and glorification of the specific, individual, physical body as an integral and permanent dimension of the glorified existence. Christianity is, as many theologians have observed, the most material of all faiths: it insists on the creation of the material world as fundamentally good, on the incarnation of the eternal Son in genuine flesh and blood, on the bodily resurrection of Christ as the specific, physical, historically-verified event on which the whole gospel rests, and on the bodily resurrection of the believers as the specific, physical, eschatologically-certain event toward which the whole gospel is aimed.

First Corinthians 15 is the New Testament’s most sustained and most theologically comprehensive treatment of the resurrection of the body, and its account of the character of the resurrection body is developed around the fourfold contrast of verses 42–44: “It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (NASB 1995). The four contrasts together establish the specific transformation that the resurrection accomplishes: the perishable becomes imperishable (the corruption and decay that characterize the present body are replaced by the incorruptibility of the resurrection body), the dishonorable becomes glorious (the present body’s association with sin, suffering, and death is replaced by the resurrection body’s participation in the divine glory), the weak becomes powerful (the present body’s susceptibility to weakness, illness, and death is replaced by the resurrection body’s participation in the power of the risen Christ), and the natural becomes spiritual (not immaterial, the resurrection body is genuinely physical, as Christ’s resurrection body was genuinely physical, but animated and empowered by the Spirit rather than by the natural biological life of the present age).

The specific pastoral significance of the “imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual” character of the resurrection body is the specific, embodied, permanently-stable character of the glorified existence that it establishes. The glorification is not a disembodied spiritual existence in which the person floats free of the body’s constraints in a

kind of permanent spiritual consciousness; it is the resurrection of the specific, individual, glorified body in which the whole person, the person that has always been both body and soul, inhabits the permanent, eschatological existence of the new creation. The groaning of Romans 8:23 for “the redemption of our body” is the specifically embodied longing of those who know that the adoption’s full expression requires not merely the Spirit’s present testimony but the body’s eschatological transformation.

B. The Resurrection Body and Its Continuity with the Present Body

First Corinthians 15:35–44’s seed-and-plant analogy (vv. 36–38) establishes the specific continuity between the present body and the resurrection body that guards against the docetic error of treating the resurrection body as a completely different entity from the present body rather than the glorified transformation of it. Paul’s analogy: the seed sown and the plant raised from it are genuinely continuous (the plant is the seed’s matured expression), yet genuinely discontinuous (the plant is not identical to the seed; it is the seed’s transformation into the fullness of what the seed always contained the potential to become). The resurrection body is genuinely the present body transformed, not the same body in the same condition (which would be merely resuscitation, like Lazarus’s restoration to the same mortal life) but the present body glorified, the same personal identity expressed in the eschatological fullness that the present age could never provide.

The most direct evidence for the continuity between the present body and the resurrection body is the resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself, whose resurrection body was simultaneously the same body (the tomb was empty; the disciples recognized Him; He bore the marks of the crucifixion) and a gloriously transformed body (He could appear and disappear; He was not always recognized immediately; He had an existence that transcended the normal constraints of physical space and time). The pattern of Christ’s resurrection body, the pattern that Philippians 3:21 says the believer’s body will be conformed to, is the pattern of the continuity-in-transformation that the glorification will accomplish for every believer: the same person, recognized as the same person, yet transformed into the eschatological fullness that the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God have made possible.

VI. The Removal of Sin and the Non Posse Peccare

The Final Eradication of Sin’s Presence

A. The Four States of the Human Will

The classical Reformed theological anthropology distinguishes four states of the human will in relation to sin, which together trace the entire arc of redemptive history from creation to glorification. The first state is the Adamic state before the fall: able to sin and able not to sin (*posse peccare et posse non peccare*). Adam and Eve had the genuine freedom to choose rightly or wrongly; the fall was not inevitable from the structure of their created nature but the historical exercise of a genuine possibility. The second state is the post-fall natural condition of the unregenerate: not able not to sin (*non posse non peccare*). The unregenerate will is not free to choose the good in the saving sense; the bondage of the will to sin is the specific character of the total depravity that regeneration alone addresses. The third state is the regenerate condition in the present age: able not to sin (*posse non peccare*). The new nature produced by the Spirit’s regenerating work is genuinely able to resist sin,

and the sanctifying work of the Spirit empowers the genuine, though imperfect, exercise of that ability across the whole of the Christian life. This is the state of the *simul iustus et peccator*: simultaneously righteous and a sinner, genuinely able to resist sin but not yet finally free from its presence.

The fourth state is the glorified condition: not able to sin (*non posse peccare*). In the glorified state, the presence of sin, not merely its guilt (forgiven in justification) or its dominion (broken in regeneration) or its gradual weakening (addressed in sanctification) but its very presence in the person, is finally and permanently eradicated. The glorified believer does not merely choose not to sin with greater consistency than the present-age believer; she is unable to sin, because the nature that has been completely conformed to Christ's image no longer contains the residual corruption that makes sin possible. The *non posse peccare* is not a limitation of the freedom of the glorified person but its fullest expression: the freedom to love God completely, without the resistance of the remaining flesh, without the conflict of Galatians 5:17, and without the warfare of Romans 7:14–25, is the specific freedom of the glorified existence, the freedom of the finally-liberated will that needs no more mortification because there is no more remaining sin to mortify.

B. What the Removal of Sin's Presence Means

The removal of sin's presence in the glorification is not merely the elimination of a liability; it is the completion of the person. Sin is not part of the human nature as God originally created it (it entered through the historical fall); it is a corruption of the created nature, an alien intrusion that distorts and damages what the original creation made good. The glorification is therefore not the subtraction of something essential from the human person but the elimination of the alien corruption that has been distorting the person since the fall. The glorified person is not less human than the present-age person; she is more fully human in the specific sense that the corruption has been removed and the original created goodness has been restored, perfected, and eschatologically expressed in the fullness of what the image of God was always designed to be.

Revelation 21:3–4 provides the most doxological and the most emotionally direct account of what the glorification's removal of sin's presence will mean in the lived experience of the glorified community: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away'" (NASB 1995). The "there will no longer be any death... mourning... crying... pain" is not merely the description of the absence of negative experiences; it is the specific, forensically-accurate account of what sin's presence in the world has produced, and what the removal of sin's presence in the glorification will therefore permanently eliminate. Death is sin's consequence; mourning and crying and pain are sin's fruit; and the wiping away of every tear is the eschatological expression of the completed, irreversible work that the glorification has accomplished in removing the sin whose presence produced every tear that was ever shed.

VII. Continuity and Discontinuity

The Same Person, Transformed

A. The Same Person

One of the most pastorally important questions about the glorification is the question of personal identity: will the glorified person be the same person who lived the specific, named, historically-embodied Christian life in the present age? The question matters pastorally for several reasons: the hope of reunion with those who have died in Christ rests on the continuity of personal identity through the glorification; the accountability of the present-age choices to the eschatological judgment presupposes the identity of the one who made the choices with the one who will stand at the judgment; and the specific, embodied, historically-located character of the Christian life, the specific faith, the specific love, the specific suffering, the specific service, finds its meaning in its continuation into and expression in the glorified existence.

The New Testament's account of the glorification consistently affirms the continuity of personal identity through the transformation. The resurrection of Christ, the pattern of the believers' own glorification, was the resurrection of the same Jesus who was crucified: the disciples recognized Him, His resurrection body bore the marks of the nails, and the women at the tomb heard their own names addressed to them by the One they had known in His earthly ministry. The continuity is real: the glorified Christ is the same person as the crucified Christ. By extension, the glorified believer will be the same person as the present-age believer: the one who knew the specific relationships, bore the specific burdens, fought the specific spiritual battles, experienced the specific joys and griefs of the specific Christian life, recognized by the brethren who loved her in the present age, accountable for the present-age choices at the eschatological judgment, and the specific, individually-known, personally-loved person whom the Father has been forming toward the Christlikeness of the glorification across the whole of the adopted life.

B. The Transformed Person

The continuity of personal identity does not mean that the glorified person is simply the present-age person in a new body without any fundamental change. The transformation is genuine, permanent, and complete: the corruption that has distorted the present-age person is gone; the weakness that has limited the present-age person is replaced by the power of the resurrection body; the sin that has resisted the Spirit's work in the present age is finally and permanently absent; and the partial, progressive, incomplete conformity to Christ's image that has characterized the Christian life is completed in the full, permanent, eschatological Christlikeness of the glorification. The transformed person is genuinely the same person, and genuinely different: the difference is the difference between the seed and the full-grown plant, between the acorn and the oak, between the caterpillar and the butterfly (to use Paul's seed-and-plant analogy's logic applied more broadly): the continuity of identity, the transformation of expression.

Second Corinthians 5:1–4 provides the most poignant account of the present-age believer's relationship to the glorification: "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life" (NASB 1995). The groaning is real and the longing is real: the present-age person who has understood the glorification is the person who groans with the desire for the completion that the present age cannot provide. But the groaning is the groaning of the one who knows what she is groaning toward: not the oblivion of death but the "building from God... eternal in the heavens," the clothing with the

“dwelling from heaven,” the swallowing of the mortal by life. The groaning is the eschatological longing of the person who has tasted the first fruits and is waiting, with patient and Spirit-sustained hope, for the harvest.

The doctrine of glorification, this lesson’s subject and the subject of the three lessons that follow, is the specific, eschatological, doxological word that gives the entire soteriology series its forward-facing, hope-oriented, destination-possessing character. The regeneration was the beginning; the justification was the declaration; the adoption was the relational establishment; the sanctification is the progressive formation; and the glorification is the completion. He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. The chain is golden, unbreakable from foreknowing to glorifying, and the final link is as certain as the first. We are on our way. The destination is as sure as the character of the God who chose and redeemed and regenerated and justified and adopted and is sanctifying the people He has determined to glorify. And the glory that awaits is not worthy to be compared with the sufferings of this present time.

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”

1 John 3:2, NASB 1995

Theological Terms and Definitions

Glorification	The final, eschatological act of God by which the genuinely elect and regenerate believer is completely and permanently conformed to the image of Christ, body and soul, freed from every trace of sin's corruption and presence, and brought into the fullness of the eternal life that the new birth initiated and the progressive sanctification was progressively approaching. Glorification is the eschatological terminus of the <i>ordo salutis</i> : it completes what the regeneration began, expresses what the adoption established, fulfills what the justification declared, and perfects what the sanctification was progressively producing. The past tense of Romans 8:30 ("these He also glorified") establishes its certainty: so absolute in the divine purpose that Paul describes it as already accomplished from the divine perspective, in the same tense as the foreknowing and justifying that have already been accomplished in time.
Beatific Vision	From the Latin <i>beatus</i> (blessed) and <i>visio</i> (sight): the direct, unmediated, face-to-face vision of the glorified Christ as He is, which 1 John 3:2 identifies as both the content and the mechanism of the final transformation: "We will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." The beatific vision is the eschatological completion of the 2 Corinthians 3:18 progressive transformation ("beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image"): the imperfect, mirror-mediated, progressive transformation of the present age will be replaced by the perfect, direct, instantaneous transformation of the face-to-face vision. The direct seeing of Christ as He is will make the glorified believer like Christ in the completeness and permanence that the present age's progressive beholding could not achieve.
Non Posse Peccare	Latin: "unable to sin", the fourth and final state of the human will in the classical Reformed account of the four states. Distinguished from the three preceding states: <i>posse peccare et posse non peccare</i> (the Adamic state before the fall: able to sin and able not to sin), <i>non posse non peccare</i> (the post-fall unregenerate state: not able not to sin), and <i>posse non peccare</i> (the regenerate state in the present age: able not to sin, but not yet free from sin's presence). In the glorified state, the presence of sin is finally and permanently eradicated, the glorified person does not merely choose not to sin with greater consistency but is unable to sin, because the nature has been completely conformed to Christ's image and no longer contains the residual corruption that makes sin possible. The <i>non posse peccare</i> is not a restriction of the glorified person's freedom but its fullest expression.
Resurrection Body	The glorified, imperishable, powerful, spiritual body that the believer will receive at the resurrection of the dead at the day of Christ's return. Described in 1 Corinthians 15:42–44 through four contrasts with the present body: perishable/imperishable, dishonor/glory, weakness/power, natural/spiritual. The resurrection body is not a different body from the present body but the present body glorified and transformed, in continuity with the present body (as the plant is continuous with the seed) but transformed beyond the present body's limitations (as the full-grown plant transcends the seed's capacities). Patterned on and conformed to the resurrection body of Christ Himself (Philippians 3:21: "who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory"), which is both the prototype and the guarantee of the believer's own resurrection body.
Conformity to Christ's Image	The specific content of the divine predestination (Romans 8:29: "predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son") and the specific destination of the entire <i>ordo salutis</i> . The progressive sanctification of the present age is the incremental, Spirit-accomplished, partial conformity to Christ's image that the progressive sanctification produces. The glorification is the eschatological completion of the conformity: the complete, permanent, full-person (body and soul) expression of the Christlikeness that the Spirit has been progressively forming across the whole of the Christian life. The conformity is not ontological identity with the Son (the creature remains creature; the Son of God remains who He is) but

	the moral, spiritual, and embodied reflection of the Son's character and nature in the created person who has been redeemed and glorified.
The Four States	The classical Reformed theological account of the four states of the human will in relation to sin, tracing the arc from creation to glorification: (1) <i>Posse peccare et posse non peccare</i> , the Adamic state before the fall: able to sin and able not to sin; (2) <i>Non posse non peccare</i> , the post-fall unregenerate state: not able not to sin (total depravity); (3) <i>Posse non peccare</i> , the regenerate state in the present age: able not to sin, but not yet free from sin's presence (the <i>simul iustus et peccator</i>); (4) <i>Non posse peccare</i> , the glorified state: unable to sin, because the presence of sin has been finally and permanently eradicated. The four states trace the complete soteriological arc from the created goodness through the fallen corruption through the redemptive restoration to the eschatological perfection that the glorification accomplishes.
Firstborn Among Many Brethren	Paul's description in Romans 8:29 of the Son's relationship to the glorified community: "predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." The firstborn is the one who is first in the family order, pre-eminent among the siblings, the pattern that the others are conformed to. The Son is the firstborn in that His resurrection is the first and paradigmatic instance of the glorified humanity that the many brethren will share at the day of Christ. The many brethren are the entire redeemed community whose conformity to the image of the firstborn is the specific, corporate, eschatological display of what the redemption was designed to accomplish. Hebrews 2:10–12 develops the corporate dimension: the Son bringing the many sons to glory, the sanctifier and the sanctified sharing the same Father, the Son proclaiming the divine name to His brethren.
Groaning for Redemption	Paul's description in Romans 8:23 of the specific, eschatologically-oriented longing of the present-age believer for the glorification: "we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." The groaning is the specific, forward-reaching, embodied longing of those who have the Spirit's first fruits and await the full harvest, who have been adopted in the Spirit and await the bodily expression of the adoption in the resurrection. The groaning is not despair or hopelessness; it is the legitimate, Spirit-sustained, eschatologically-calibrated longing of those who know what they are groaning toward and who groan precisely because they have tasted the first fruits and cannot be satisfied with anything less than the full harvest of the glorification that the first fruits guarantee.
Continuity and Discontinuity	The theological framework for understanding the relationship between the present-age person and the glorified person: the glorified person is the same person (continuity of personal identity, the same person recognized, the same name known, the same history remembered, the same accountability maintained) yet a transformed person (discontinuity of condition, the corruption removed, the weakness replaced by power, the sin's presence eradicated, the conformity to Christ completed). The seed-and-plant analogy of 1 Corinthians 15:36–38 establishes the specific character of the continuity-in-transformation: the plant is genuinely the seed's expression (continuity) yet genuinely more than the seed (discontinuity). The pattern of Christ's resurrection body, recognizable yet glorified, bearing the crucifixion marks yet transcending physical constraints, is the specific paradigm of the continuity-and-discontinuity of the believer's own glorified body.

Practical Application

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe that glorification is the certain, divinely-guaranteed, eschatologically-fixed destination of every genuinely elect and regenerate believer, not a possibility that may or may not be reached depending on the quality of the present-age sanctification, but the specific, Romans-8:30-past-tense-certain completion of the saving work that the God who foreknew and predestined and called and justified has already, from the divine perspective, accomplished. The past tense is not rhetorical; it is theological: the God whose purposes are as immutable as His character has already glorified every person He has foreknown. The present-age believer whose conformity to Christ is most incomplete, whose sanctification is most imperfect, and whose holiness most falls short of the divine standard is, in the divine reckoning, already glorified, and the specific confidence this produces is the confidence of the one who knows that the eschatological destination is not contingent on the quality of the present-age journey.

We must believe that the glorification is a whole-person, embodied, resurrection event, not the escape of the soul from the body into a disembodied spiritual existence, but the resurrection and transformation of the specific, individual, physical body in the pattern of the glorified Christ's own resurrection body. This means that the body matters now: the body that will be raised imperishable in glory is the body that is being offered as a living sacrifice to God in the present age (Romans 12:1), that is being disciplined and mortified in the Spirit-empowered pursuit of holiness (1 Corinthians 9:27; Colossians 3:5), and that is the specific, embodied instrument through which the adopted child's service, love, and worship are expressed in the present age. The eschatological destination of the body gives the body's present use its full meaning: we are stewards of something that will be raised.

We must believe that the non posse peccare of the glorified state is the completion rather than the negation of the freedom that the present age's posse non peccare has been developing. The freedom from sin in the glorified state is not a coercive constraint imposed from outside but the fullest expression of the regenerate will's genuine desire for the holiness that the progressive sanctification has been moving toward. The believer who genuinely desires to be free from sin in the present age is glimpsing the specific desire that will be fully and finally satisfied in the glorification, and the satisfaction will not be the disappointment of the constrained will but the liberation of the finally-freed will that can love God completely, without resistance, without the flesh's opposition, and without the warfare that the present age's simul iustus et peccator produces.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

Desire the specific, embodied, groaning-but-hope-filled forward-orientation that Romans 8:23–25 describes as the appropriate posture of the present-age believer in relation to the glorification: groaning with the legitimate, Spirit-sustained, eschatologically-calibrated longing of those who have the Spirit's first fruits and await the full harvest; hoping with the patient, God-grounded, promise-anchored confidence of those who know that the harvest is coming and that the God who gave the first fruits has committed Himself to delivering the full harvest at the day of Christ. The groaning without the hope produces despair; the hope without the groaning produces the shallow triumphalism that has not honestly confronted the present age's genuine suffering; the groaning-and-hoping together produce the specific, mature, patient, Spirit-sustained eschatological posture of the genuinely regenerate pilgrim who is on the way to a certain destination.

Desire the specific, forward-looking, 2 Corinthians 3:18 quality of the daily engagement with the Word, the prayer, the fellowship, and the other means of grace: the beholding that is moving, by increments, from the partial and progressive transformation of the present age toward the complete and instantaneous transformation of the beatific vision. Each day of the faithful, expectant, Spirit-trusting engagement with the means of grace is a day of the “from glory to glory” movement, not a dramatic advance, perhaps not even a visible one, but a genuine increment of the conformity to Christ that the glorification will complete. Desire to live the present-age Christian life as the specific, daily, incremental, glory-to-glory movement toward the eschatological destination that the divine faithfulness has guaranteed.

Desire for those in your pastoral care the specific, eschatologically-grounded hope that the doctrine of glorification provides for the specific sufferings of the present-age Christian life. The believer whose sanctification is most discouraging, whose holiness is most incomplete, and whose conformity to Christ is most distant from the desired destination has not been abandoned by the God whose Romans-8:30-past-tense-certain glorification is as sure as His own character. He who began a good work will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. The destination is fixed; the arrival is certain; and the glory that awaits is not worthy to be compared with the sufferings of this present time.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

- Read Romans 8:18–30 as the most concentrated single passage on the eschatological hope of the glorification in the Pauline corpus. Note the threefold groaning: creation groaning (vv. 19–22), believers groaning (v. 23), and the Spirit groaning (vv. 26–27). For each: what is the specific content of the groaning (what is it directed toward?) and what is the specific hope that qualifies the groaning (what does the groaning not yet have but is directed toward with confidence)? Then note how the golden chain of verses 29–30 grounds the hope: the foreknowing-predestining-calling-justifying-glorifying sequence establishes the groaning’s direction as the fixed, undeviating trajectory of the divine purpose. Ask: how does the past-tense “glorified” of verse 30 specifically address the groaning of verse 23? And what specific application of the past-tense glorification does your current season of present-age suffering most urgently require?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:35–58 as the New Testament’s most comprehensive account of the resurrection body. Note the seed-and-plant analogy (vv. 36–38) and the fourfold contrast (vv. 42–44: perishable/imperishable, dishonor/glory, weakness/power, natural/spiritual). For the fourfold contrast: what specific aspect of the present body’s limitation does each contrast address, and what specific aspect of the glorification’s completion does each contrast describe? Note the climax of verses 54–57: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?” Ask: how does the specific, bodily, imperishable character of the resurrection body address the specific fear of physical death that the present-age believer carries? And how does the “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” of verse 57 establish the ground of the resurrection hope in the completed work of the crucified and risen Christ rather than in the quality of the present-age sanctification?
- Read Revelation 21:1–5 as the most doxological and the most emotionally direct account of the eschatological destination of the glorified community. Note the specific dimensions of the new creation: the new heaven and new earth, the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven, the tabernacle of God among men, the personal presence of God with His people, the wiping away of every tear, the elimination of death and mourning and crying and pain, and the declaration “Behold, I am making all things new.” For each specific element: what specific present-age reality does it address (what specific suffering, limitation, or grief of the present age will be permanently eliminated)? And how does the specific, embodied, communal,

divinely-present character of the new creation's eschatological existence correct the popular but mistaken picture of the glorified state as individual souls floating in a disembodied spiritual cloud?

- Meditate on Philippians 3:20–21 as the Pauline account of the glorification that grounds the present-age ethical exhortation of the preceding verses. Note that Paul introduces the glorification in the context of the warning against those “whose god is their appetite... who set their minds on earthly things” (v. 19): the eschatological orientation of the citizen of heaven (v. 20) is the specific, identity-establishing, present-life-shaping reality that the anticipation of the glorification produces. Ask: how does the specific hope of the body’s transformation into conformity with the body of Christ’s glory shape the present-age use and care of the body? And how does Paul’s account of the glorification as the motivation for the present-age ethical life (vv. 17–21) model the specific pastoral use of the glorification doctrine as the eschatological grounding of the practical Christian life?
- Write a brief personal meditation (one to two pages) on the specific dimension of the glorification that most directly addresses the specific suffering or limitation of your current Christian life. Which of the following is most urgently needed in your current season: the past-tense certainty of Romans 8:30 (for the discouraged sanctification), the beatific vision of 1 John 3:2 (for the thin experienced assurance), the conformity-to-Christ of Romans 8:29 (for the incomplete Christlikeness that most troubles you), the imperishable resurrection body of 1 Corinthians 15 (for the fear of death or the body’s limitations), the non posse peccare of the four states (for the exhausted warrior against remaining sin), or the eschatological wholeness of Revelation 21 (for the grief and pain of the present age)? Write the meditation specifically, personally, and doxologically, not as a theological exercise but as the honest, eschatologically-calibrated prayer and praise of the one who is on the way to the destination.

Key Texts: *Romans 8:18–25, 29–30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–58; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:1–5; Hebrews 2:10–12; Revelation 21:1–5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24*

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- The doctrine of glorification is the eschatological destination of the entire soteriology series, the completion of what God began in the election and has been accomplishing through the regeneration, justification, adoption, and sanctification. Before engaging the lesson's specific content, what is your most vivid personal image of the glorified state? Is it primarily the absence of the things the present age produces (death, suffering, sin) or primarily the presence of the things the glorification provides (the beatific vision, the resurrection body, the complete Christlikeness, the face-to-face communion with God)? And which dimension of the glorification, the removal of sin's presence, the resurrection of the body, the conformity to Christ, or the beatific vision, do you find most personally hope-producing in the specific circumstances of your current season of Christian life?

Observation Questions (*What Do the Texts Say?*)

- Read Romans 8:29–30 carefully. In verse 29, what is the specific content of the predestination ("predestined to become..."), and what is the stated purpose of the conformity to the Son's image ("so that He would be...")? In verse 30, trace the complete golden chain and note the grammatical tense of each verb. What is the grammatical tense of "glorified," and why is it significant that Paul uses the same tense for the glorification as for the calling and justifying that have already occurred in time? And how does the unbroken sequence of the chain, the same persons foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified without any losses between links, establish the certainty of the glorification for every genuinely foreknown person?
- Read 1 John 3:1–3. In verse 1, what is the present-tense reality ("now we are...") and what explains the world's failure to recognize the believers' identity? In verse 2, what is the not-yet dimension ("it has not appeared as yet what we will be..."), what is the certain future content ("when He appears, we will be..."), and what is the specific mechanism of the final transformation ("because we will see...")? In verse 3, what is the present-tense ethical implication of the future glorification hope ("every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself...")? And how does verse 3's connection of the eschatological hope to the present-age pursuit of purity establish the glorification doctrine's motivational force for the progressive sanctification of the present age?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:35–58. In verses 35–38, what is the specific question Paul addresses ("How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"), and what is the analogy he uses to answer it? In verses 42–44, what are the four contrasts between the present body and the resurrection body? In verses 47–49, what is the comparison between the two Adams ("the first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven"), and what does the bearing of "the image of the heavenly" in verse 49 establish about the resurrection body's relationship to the glorified Christ? And in verses 54–57, what is the specific triumph that the resurrection accomplishes ("Death is swallowed up in victory..."), and what is the ground of the triumph (v. 57)?
- Read Philippians 3:17–21 and 2 Corinthians 5:1–8. In Philippians 3:20–21, what is the specific description of the glorification's mechanism ("who will transform... into conformity with... by the exertion of the power that...")? In 2 Corinthians 5:1–8, what are the two images Paul uses for the present body (tent; unclothed state) and the two images for the glorified state (building from God, house not made with hands; clothed with the dwelling from heaven)? In verse 4, what is the specific desire Paul expresses ("we do not want to

be unclothed but to be clothed...”), and what does this express about the bodily, embodied character of the eschatological hope? And what does the phrase “so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life” (v. 4) suggest about the relationship between the present body and the glorified body?

- Read Revelation 21:1–5. In verse 1, what is the specific description of the new creation (“I saw a new heaven and a new earth...”), and what is the significance of the departure of the “first heaven and the first earth” and the sea (in John’s symbolic universe, the sea represents chaos and separation)? In verse 2, what descends from heaven? In verse 3, what is the specific covenant-fulfillment declaration (“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men... and God Himself will be among them”)? In verse 4, what specific realities of the present age are permanently eliminated, and what does the elimination of each reveal about the nature of what produced them (death... mourning... crying... pain)? And in verse 5, what is the divine declaration (“Behold, I am making all things new”), and how does the present progressive tense (“am making”) establish the new creation as an active divine work rather than a passive divine decree?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson presents the past tense of “glorified” in Romans 8:30 as the theological expression of the absolute certainty of the glorification from the divine perspective. Evaluate the theological significance of this grammatical observation. Is the past tense a genuine theological statement about the divine perspective on the eschatological event, or is it a rhetorical device (the “prophetic aorist” of confident futurity that is common in Semitic literature and its Greek equivalents) that expresses certainty without implying that the event has already occurred from the divine perspective? And what specific pastoral difference does the choice between these two interpretations make, how does the “already accomplished in the divine reckoning” interpretation address the present-age believer’s discouragement differently from the “absolutely certain future” interpretation?
- The lesson presents the beatific vision of 1 John 3:2 (“we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is”) as the mechanism of the final transformation: the seeing itself will make the glorified believer like Christ. Evaluate the theological adequacy of this account of the transformation’s mechanism. Is the causal claim (“because” the seeing produces the likeness) supported by the text, or does the “because” indicate the ground of the assurance (we know we will be like Him because the vision of Him is the eschatological revelation) rather than the mechanism of the transformation? And how does the connection between the beatific vision and the progressive transformation (2 Corinthians 3:18’s “beholding... are being transformed”) help to establish the continuity between the present-age means of transformation and the eschatological completion?
- The lesson presents the four states of the human will (*posse peccare et posse non peccare, non posse non peccare, posse non peccare, non posse peccare*) as the theological account of the arc from creation to glorification. Evaluate the adequacy of the four-states framework for the biblical account of the glorified state. Does the *non posse peccare* of the glorified state threaten the genuine freedom of the glorified person (if the will cannot sin, is it truly free?), or does the four-states account address this concern by establishing that freedom is not the ability to sin but the fullest expression of the will’s genuine desires? And how does the Adamic *posse non peccare* (able not to sin) relate to the glorified *non posse peccare*: is the difference one of degree (the glorified state achieves what the Adamic state only possessed as a possibility) or of kind (the glorified state is a fundamentally different state of the will)?
- The lesson presents the continuity of personal identity through the glorification as essential for several specific purposes: the hope of reunion with those who have died in Christ, the accountability of the present-

age choices at the eschatological judgment, and the meaning of the specific Christian life as it continues into the glorified existence. Evaluate the adequacy of the continuity claim. What specifically ensures the continuity of personal identity through the radical transformation of the glorification? Is it the material continuity of the body (the same physical matter transformed), the psychological continuity of the memory and the will, or the formal continuity of the personal identity that God knows and maintains? And how does the resurrection of Christ, the same person, recognized as the same person, bearing the marks of the crucifixion, yet transformed in the resurrection body, provide the specific paradigm for the kind of continuity-in-transformation that the glorification produces?

- The lesson presents the glorification as the “destination toward which every aspect of salvation has been moving”, the eschatological fulfillment of the whole *ordo salutis*. Evaluate the adequacy of this teleological account of the relationship between glorification and the preceding elements of the *ordo salutis*. Is the glorification simply the last chronological step in the sequence, or is it the specific, purpose-giving destination that gives the preceding steps their meaning (the election was the election to glorification; the regeneration was the beginning of the conformity to Christ that glorification completes; the justification was the legal ground for the glorification’s eschatological standing)? And how does the teleological account of the *ordo salutis* as aimed at glorification shape the specific pastoral use of the glorification doctrine, not merely as the last chapter of the doctrinal account but as the destination that gives the whole journey its meaning and its hope?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- The lesson argues that the past-tense certainty of the glorification (Romans 8:30’s “these He also glorified”) provides the specific, eschatologically-grounded confidence for the believer whose present-age sanctification is most discouraging. Evaluate how this doctrine applies to your own current spiritual situation: is the certainty of the glorification producing the specific, patient, groaning-but-hoping forward-orientation of Romans 8:23–25, or is the distance between the current state and the eschatological destination producing the discouragement that the doctrine is designed to address? And what specific spiritual practice, the daily reception of the Romans 8:30 past tense as personally addressed, the regular meditation on the eschatological destination, the deliberate recalibration of the present-age assessment against the eschatological perspective of Romans 8:18, would most directly strengthen the eschatological confidence that the present-age discouragements most threaten?
- The lesson presents the *non posse peccare* of the glorified state as the completion rather than the negation of the present-age believer’s genuine desire for freedom from sin. Evaluate the motivational implications of this account for the present-age pursuit of holiness. Does the certainty of the glorification’s *non posse peccare* motivate the present-age mortification of sin and pursuit of holiness (because the destination toward which the sanctification is moving is the complete freedom from sin that the mortification is aimed at) or does it produce the complacency of those who assume the destination will be reached regardless of the quality of the present-age pursuit (because the glorification is certain regardless of the sanctification’s completeness)? And how does the lesson’s consistent emphasis on the glorification as the completion of the sanctification rather than its replacement help to address the complacency concern?
- The lesson presents glorification as a whole-person, embodied, resurrection event that establishes the present-age body’s eternal significance. Evaluate the practical implications of this doctrine for the specific, practical, everyday choices about how you use, care for, and steward your body. Does the eschatological destination of the body, the resurrection in the pattern of Christ’s glorified body, shape the way you think about the body’s present use? What specific present-age body-related decisions, the physical disciplines of

the spiritual life, the stewardship of health, the use of the body in the service of the neighbor, the mortification of the body's sinful appetites, are most directly shaped by the conviction that the body you now inhabit will be raised and glorified?

- The lesson closes with the doxological declaration that glorification is the destination toward which every aspect of salvation has been moving, and it is certain because the God who began the work will complete it. Think of the person in your pastoral care whose current season of Christian life most needs the eschatological perspective that the glorification doctrine provides, whose suffering is most severe, whose holiness is most incomplete, whose conformity to Christ is most distant from the desired destination. What specific dimension of the glorification doctrine, the past-tense certainty of Romans 8:30, the beatific vision of 1 John 3:2, the imperishable body of 1 Corinthians 15, the removal of every tear in Revelation 21:4, or the non posse peccare of the four states, would most directly address the specific suffering of that specific person? And what specific pastoral conversation would most effectively bring that specific dimension of the glorification hope to bear on the specific situation?

Prayer Focus

Open this lesson's prayer time, and the opening of Unit 11, with the full reading of Romans 8:18–30 as the most sustained single passage on the eschatological hope of the glorification. Read it slowly, in the three movements that the passage's groaning structure describes: the groaning of creation (vv. 19–22), the groaning of the believers (v. 23), and the groaning of the Spirit (vv. 26–27). Let each groaning be named and received honestly: the creation's frustrated subjection to futility, the believers' eager waiting for the redemption of the body, and the Spirit's own too-deep-for-words intercession for the specific weaknesses of the specific people He indwells. Then receive the golden chain of verses 29–30 as the specific, divine-purpose-grounded answer to all three groanings: the God who has foreknown, predestined, called, and justified has, in the past tense of the divine certainty, already glorified. The groaning does not have the final word. The glorification does. And the glorification is as certain as the chain that leads to it.

Pray the past-tense glorification of Romans 8:30 over specific members of your congregation as the specific, eschatologically-grounded, discouragement-addressing word that each of them most needs. Name those whose present-age Christian life is most discouraging: the sanctification most incomplete, the conformity to Christ most distant, the suffering most severe. For each one, pray: "This one is foreknown by You, known before the foundation of the world by the God who chose her. She is predestined, appointed to become conformed to the image of Your Son. She is called and justified. And she is glorified, in the past tense of Your certain purpose, she is already what she has not yet become: completely, permanently, whole-person conformed to the image of Your Son. Father, let the eschatological certainty of the glorification be more real to her than the discouragement of the present-age distance from it."

Pray 1 John 3:2 as the specific, personally-directed, hope-producing declaration of the beatific vision's transforming power: "Beloved, now we are children of God. And it has not appeared as yet what we will be. But we know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." Let the "will see Him just as He is" be the specific, hope-orienting, suffering-contextualizing vision of the eschatological destination: not merely the reunion with those who have gone before (though that is included), not merely the absence of the present age's sufferings (though that is included), but the direct, unmediated, face-to-face, full-clarity vision of the One whose image the entire progressive sanctification has been moving toward, and whose seeing will complete, in an eschatological instant, the transformation that the Spirit has been progressively accomplishing across the whole of the adopted life.

Pray for the congregation's eschatological orientation, for the specific, Romans-8:18 proportionality that sees the present sufferings in the light of the glory to be revealed, and for the specific, Romans-8:23 groaning-and-hoping that is the appropriate present-age posture of those who have the first fruits of the Spirit and await the full harvest. Ask the Spirit to protect the congregation from the two opposite errors that the absence of the eschatological orientation produces: the this-worldly despair that treats the present-age sufferings as the final word (which the glorification's certainty addresses), and the gnostic escapism that treats the present-age body and the present-age world as ultimately unimportant (which the bodily resurrection's permanence addresses). Ask for the specific, balanced, eschatologically-calibrated hope that is grounded in the certainty of the glorification while remaining fully engaged with the significance of the present-age embodied life.

Close with Revelation 21:3–5 as the doxological vision of the eschatological destination that the glorification is aimed at: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Let the “He will wipe away every tear” be the specific, personally-received, personally-believed declaration of the God who has counted every tear shed in His name, in His service, in the dark night of the soul, in the long and painful pursuit of the progressive sanctification, and who has committed Himself to the specific, personal, eschatological answer to every one of them in the face-to-face wiping that the beatific vision will accomplish. Every tear. Answered. By the One who wipes them. At the destination that Romans 8:30 has already, in the past tense of the divine certainty, secured.

“And those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.”

Romans 8:30, NASB 1995

Key Texts: Romans 8:18–25, 29–30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–58; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:1–5; Hebrews 2:10–12; Revelation 21:1–5

Soli Deo Gloria
To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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