

Shekinah Glory

THE SHEKINAH THE GLORY CLOUD OF THE LORD

Related Resources:

- [The Abiding Presence of God Tony Garland](#) - on this page
- [Shekinah - summary](#) - on this page
- [Shekinah-In Depth Discussion by James Murphy \(1846\)](#);
- [The Shekinah by John Cumming \(1854\)](#)
- [Shekinah Sermon by Dave Roper](#)
- [What is the Shekinah glory?](#)

Sermons by C H Spurgeon related to God's glory...

- [Exodus 14:19,20, Isaiah 58:8, Isaiah 52:12 The Glory In The Rear](#)
- [John 1:14 The Glory Of Christ - Beheld](#)
- [Exodus 33:18 A View Of God's Glory](#)

In order to help understand the specific manifestations of God's glory it is important to understand the frequently used term, **Shekinah**.

Shekinah (Shechinah) is a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning "the one who dwells" or "that which dwells" and was used to describe the light on the mercy-seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, the Shekinah symbolizing the Divine presence (Ex 25:8). Shekinah is not found in Scripture but the root word [shakan](#) (07931) (to dwell, to settle down, to tabernacle with, to have a habitation) and the related word [mishkan](#) (04909) (tabernacle) are both frequently used and both are associated with the presence of God (and His glory) dwelling with man.

The meaning of the word **Shekinah** (the One Who dwells) reminds us that we did not seek to dwell with God but He with us and this truth should evoke continual thanksgiving in those who have been brought into covenant with Him under the shelter of His wings. And so in Exodus, we see that it was God Who first expressed His desire to dwell among men, instructing Moses to tell the people to

construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may **dwell (shakan)** among them. According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the **tabernacle (mishkan from shakan)** and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it." (Ex 25:8; 25:9)

Comment: Even the Hebrew verb **shakan** underscores the idea not of loftiness but of nearness and closeness. This recalls the words of David who prays to Jehovah "Oh **draw near to my soul** and redeem it. Ransom me because of my enemies!" (Ps 69:18) **Are you suffering even now dear believer?** As **Spurgeon** says "The near approach of God is all the sufferer needs; one smile of heaven will still the rage of hell. It shall be redemption to me if Thou wilt appear to comfort me. This is a deeply spiritual prayer, and one very suitable for a deserted soul. It is in renewed communion that we shall find redemption realized."

Arnold Fruchtenbaum defines Shechinah Glory as...

the visible manifestation of the presence of God. It is the majestic presence or manifestation of God in which He descended to dwell among men. Whenever the invisible God becomes visible, and whenever the omnipresence of God is localized, this is the Shechinah Glory.

The usual title found in the Scriptures for the Shechinah Glory is: the glory of the Lord. The Hebrew form is **Kvod Adonai (word study)**, which means "the glory of the Lord," and describes what the Shechinah Glory is. The Greek title, **Doxa Kurion (kurios)**, is also translated as "the glory of the Lord." **Doxa (word study)** means "brightness," "brilliance," or "splendor" and it depicts how the Shechinah Glory appears.

Other titles give it the sense of '**dwelling**,' which portrays what the Shechinah Glory does. The Hebrew for Shechinah, from the root shachan, means "to dwell." The Greek word skeinei (see study of related words -

skenos and skenoma) means “to tabernacle,” and is derived from the Hebrew Shechinah.

John Cumming writing on the pillar in Exodus 13:21-22...

The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, when it settled between the cherubim, as a perpetual bright light, and token of the presence of God in the temple, was named the “**shechinah**,” so called from the Hebrew verb **shakan**, which meant “to dwell.” Our Lord was thus the “Shechinah” incarnate (cf Jn 1:14); and when the Bible speaks of his Second Coming, it speaks of his coming “in the cloud.” (Mt 24:30, Rev 1:7) The apostles were told that he would come in like manner as they had seen him go (Acts 1:9-11). So that this pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, seems to have been the dwelling-place, or the place of special manifestation of God our Saviour before He became Man, and was incarnate. ([Sabbath Morning Readings on the Old Testament Book of Exodus](#))

Shekinah originally was used in the Jewish [Targum](#) (Aramaic translation of Hebrew Bible) and rabbinic literature whenever the Hebrew text would mention the presence of God in a way that implied certain human limitations. The Targum Onkelos for example paraphrases Jehovah's declaration in Ex 25:8 as

And they shall make before Me a sanctuary and I shall cause My **Shekinah** to dwell (**shakan**) among them.

In summary, the term **Shekinah** as commonly used describes the visible manifestation of God's presence and glory usually in the form of a **cloud** as discussed below under **Past Glory**.

The picture of the Shekinah cloud of glory **dwelling** on the Temple has a parallel “fulfillment” in the New Testament (obviously written by Jews familiar with the Shekinah in the Old Testament) where John writes that

the **Word** became flesh, and **dwelt** (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld **His glory, glory** as of the Only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (**John 1:14-note**) ([Spurgeon's sermon on -- John 1:14 The Glory Of Christ - Beheld](#))

Spurgeon Commenting on John 1:14 observes believers have something (Someone) far better than the Shekinah Glory Cloud of Israel in the Old Testament: In and around the tent (The OT Tabernacle) wherein the Lord dwelt in the center of the camp there was a manifestation of the presence of God.

**This was the glory of that house:
but how scanty was the revelation!**

A bright light which I have already mentioned, the **Shekinah**, is said to have shone over the [Mercy-Seat](#); but the high priest only could see it, and he only saw it once in the year when he entered with blood within the veil. Outside, above the holy place, there was the manifest glory of the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. This sufficed to bear witness that God was there; but still, **cloud and fire** are but physical appearances, and cannot convey a true appearance of God, who is a spirit. God cannot be perceived by the senses; and yet the fiery, cloudy pillar could appeal to the eyes only. The excellence of the **indwelling of God in Christ** is this — that there is in Him a **glory** as of the only begotten of the Father, the moral and spiritual **glory** of Godhead.

This is to be seen, but not with the eyes — this is to be perceived, but not by the carnal senses: this is seen, and heard, and known, by spiritual men, whose mental perceptions are keener than those of sight and hearing.

In the Person of the Lord there is a **glory** which is seen by our faith (2Cor 5:7, 2Cor 4:18), which is discerned of our renewed spirits, and is made to operate upon our hearts.

The **glory of God** in the sanctuary was seen only by the priest of the house of Aaron; the **glory of God** in the face of Christ is seen by all believers, who are all priests unto God.

That glory the priest beheld but once in the year; but we steadily behold that glory at all times, and are transformed by the sight (2Cor 3:18). The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2Cor 4:6) is not a thing of outward appearance, to be beheld with the eyes, like the pillar of cloud and fire; but there is an abiding, steady luster of holy, gracious, truthful character about our Lord Jesus Christ, which is best seen by those who by reason of sanctification are made fit to discern it.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Mt 5:8); yea, they do see Him in Christ Jesus. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:18) Many of us besides the apostles can say, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) We have not seen Jesus raise the dead; we have not seen Him

cast out devils; we have not seen Him hush the winds and calm the waves; but we do see, with our mind's eye, His spotless holiness, His boundless love, His superlative truth, His wondrous heavenliness; in a word, we have seen, and do see, His fullness of grace and truth; and we rejoice in the fact that the tabernacling of God among men in Christ Jesus is attended with a more real glory than the mere brilliance of light and the glow of flame.

The condescension of Christ's love is to us more glorious than the pillar of cloud, and the zeal of our Lord's self-sacrifice is more excellent than the pillar of fire. As we think of the divine mysteries which meet in the person of our Lord, we do not envy Israel the gracious manifestations vouchsafed her when "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord covered the tabernacle" (Ex 40:34); for we have all this and more in our incarnate God, Who is with us always, even to the end of the world. ([The True Tabernacle and Its Glory of Grace and Peace](#))

We see a manifestation of the Shekinah Glory at the Transfiguration..

While he was still speaking, behold, **a bright** (photeinos = splendid, full of light, well illuminated) **cloud** overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Mt 17:5)

Peter comments...

For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" (2Pe 1:17)

Plumptre: This description (the Majestic Glory) relates to the transcendent brightness of the Shekinah cloud and identifies the person of God the Father with the glory which betokens his presence

Bigg: (The Majestic Glory) is a respectful paraphrase for God. It is probably rightly identified as a reference to the 'bright cloud' (the Shekinah) of Matthew 17:5

Green: The bright cloud which overshadowed Jesus expresses in another way the same reality, that is, none other than God Himself.

Christ is visible presentation of the **Shekinah Glory**, or as the writer of Hebrews says...

the **radiance** (**apaugasma**) of His glory (**doxa**) (Hebrews 1:3-note)

Paul adds that...

it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to **dwell** in Christ (Col 1:19-note) and that in Christ all the fulness of Deity **dwells** in bodily form (in Christ) (Col 2:9-note)

Paul writes that Christ is "the Lord of **glory**" (1Cor 2:8). This same **Shekinah glory** now rests (dwells) upon all those who are in Christ. Thus Paul records that God made

known the riches of His **glory** upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for **glory** (Ro 9:23-note)

He prays for the **Ephesian** saints that

the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the **riches of the glory** of His inheritance in the saints" (Ep 1:18-note)

Paul reminds the Colossian saints that

God willed to make known what is the riches of the **glory** of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ ("dwelling") in you, the **hope of glory**. (Col 1:27-note)

Comment: Ponder (**meditate on**) this truly awesome thought for a moment - the Shekinah Glory of God in us as Christ followers! How can we comprehend such mystery and majesty? And yet it is our privilege to show forth the Shekinah glory for all the world to see! How?

Answer: Our "*good* (God) *works*" (Mt 5:16-note, Phil 2:14,15-note, cf 2Cor 2:14-17, 2Cor 5:20), works initiated and wrought by the Holy Spirit in the abiding (Jn 15:5), surrendered, yielded, filled (Eph 5:18-note), empowered saint, the saint who is making the moment by moment choice to walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-note)! (cp 2Cor 3:5,6-note)

The presence of the **Holy Spirit** is also a representation of the **Shekinah** as when the Spirit descended and remained on Jesus (Jn

1:33) and at Pentecost the Spirit came down and rested on the 120 disciples appearing

to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them" (Acts 2:3)

William Barclay adds an interesting note regarding **Shekinah** writing that

There are two words totally different in meaning but similar in sound which in early Christian thought became closely connected. **Skēnē** is one; and the Hebrew **shechinah**, the glory of God, is the other. SKĒNĒ—SHECHINAH—the connection in sound brought it about that men could not hear the one without thinking of the other. As a result, to say that the **skēnē of God** is to be with men immediately brought the thought that the **shechinah of God** is to be with men. In the ancient times the shechinah took the form of a luminous cloud which came and went. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press](#) or [Logos](#))

OLD TESTAMENT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SHEKINAH GLORY: A PROPOSED CHRONOLOGY

Genesis 3 - This instance is a possible manifestation of the Shekinah glory and would be the first recorded instance in Scripture...

Therefore the LORD God sent him (Adam) out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed (Hebrew = **shakan** = the word related to Shekinah) the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life. (Ge 3:23-24)

Comment: The definite article "the" is present before "flaming sword" which makes this a very specific entity - the flame of the sword. It is possible that this is the first manifestation of the Shekinah glory of the Lord. It is also worth noting that Cherubim are elsewhere associated with the appearance of the Shekinah Glory ([see below](#)).

Genesis 15 - The Abrahamic Covenant (See **Abrahamic versus Mosaic**)

And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared **a smoking oven and a flaming torch** which passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates (Ge 15:17, 18)

Comment: This example of a visible manifestation of the glory of God is in a sense the Shekinah Glory. And it would only be fitting that the Shekinah Glory of God would be present at what amounts to Jehovah's "signing" of the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant.

ENTHRONED ABOVE THE CHERUBIM

2Samuel 6:2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts **Who is enthroned above the cherubim**

Puritan **Thomas Watson** rightly said that "A sight of God's glory humbles. The stars vanish when the sun appears."

2Kings 19:15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, **Who art enthroned above the cherubim**, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth.

1Chronicles 13:6 And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim, which belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD **Who is enthroned above the cherubim** where His name is called.

1Sa 4:21 And she called the boy **Ichabod**, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

Comment: Ichabod means "no glory." Phinehas son was named Ichabod because the capture of Ark by Philistines resulted in departure of the glory from Israel.

Ps 80:1 (For the choir director; set to El Shoshannim; Eduth. A Psalm of Asaph.) Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, Thou who dost lead Joseph like a flock; Thou **Who art enthroned above the cherubim**, shine forth!

"Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." **The Lord's special presence was revealed upon the mercyseat between the cherubim, and in all our pleadings we should come to the Lord by this way: only upon the mercyseat will God reveal His grace, and only there can we hope to commune with Him.**

Let us ever plead the Name of Jesus, Who is our true Mercyseat, to Whom we may come boldly, and through Whom we may look for a display of the glory of the Lord on our behalf. Our greatest dread is the withdrawal of the Lord's presence, and our brightest hope is the prospect of His return. In the darkest times of Israel, the light of her Shepherd's countenance is all she needs. (see [Spurgeon's note](#))

Comment: This psalm could be paraphrased "O Thou Who art the Shekinah between the cherubim, shine forth!" Or "O Thou who art the pillar

Ps 99:1 The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; **He is enthroned above the cherubim**, let the earth shake!

He sitteth between the cherubims. In grandeur of sublime glory, yet in nearness of mediatorial condescension, Jehovah revealed Himself above the mercy seat, whereon stood the likeness of those flaming ones who gaze upon his glory, and for ever cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts." The Lord reigning on that throne of grace which is sprinkled with atoning blood, and veiled with the covering wings of mediatorial love, is above all other revelations wonderful, and fitted to excite emotion among all mankind, hence it is added,

Our friend Mr. Charles Stanford, in his delicious work, "Symbols of Christ," has beautifully brought out the connection between Mt 23:37 and Mt 23:38. The house was left desolate because Christ, who was set forth by the symbol of shelter, was rejected by them, and was not permitted to cover them with His wings. **It was customary for the Jews to say of a proselyte, "He has taken refuge under the wings of the Shekinah." We now see that to take shelter under the wings of the Shekinah is to hide beneath the wings of Christ.** Beneath that living shield which beats back the destroying stroke, and is broad enough to canopy a fugitive world, we take shelter, and there the promise is fulfilled, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." (from Ps 91:4) (see [Spurgeon's note](#))

Ps 132:8 Arise, O LORD, to Thy resting place; Thou and the ark of Thy strength.

In essence we have here a prayer by the psalmist for Jehovah to descend in the Shekinah (the glory cloud) and dwell above the ark of the covenant.

Spurgeon comments : In these three verses we see the finders of the ark removing it to its appointed place, using a formula somewhat like to that used by Moses when he said, "Rise up, Lord", and again, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." The ark had been long upon the move, and no fit place had been found for it in Canaan, but now devout men have prepared a temple, and they sing, Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. They hoped that now the covenant symbol had found a permanent abode -- a rest, and they trusted that Jehovah would now abide with it for ever. Vain would it be for the ark to be settled if the Lord did not continue with it, and perpetually shine forth from between the cherubim. Unless the Lord shall rest with us there is no rest for us; unless the ark of his strength abide with us we are ourselves without strength. The ark of the covenant is here mentioned by a name which it well deserved; for in its captivity it smote its captors, and broke their gods, and when it was brought back it guarded its own honour by the death of those who dared to treat it with disrespect. The power of God was thus connected with the sacred chest. Reverently, therefore, did Solomon pray concerning it as he besought the living God to consecrate the temple by his presence. It is the Lord and the covenant, or rather say the covenant Jehovah whose presence we desire in our assemblies, and this presence is the strength of his people. Oh that the Lord would indeed abide in all the churches, and cause his power to be revealed in Zion.

Isa 37:16 "O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, **Who art enthroned above the cherubim**, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth.

A devotional comment from **F B Meyer** on the **Shekinah**...

It should never be forgotten that nothing can afford to us protection and succor but vital union with Christ. We must hide in His secret place if we would abide under His shadow. We must dwell in the most holy place if we would be shadowed by the wings of the **Shekinah**. There must be nothing between us and God, if we are to walk together, and enjoy fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Dost thou know the hope of His calling to a life within the veil, with the veil behind thee, and the light of the Shekinah ever on thy face?

Harry Ironside...

An uncreated light, the Shekinah glory, shone above the mercy seat between the golden cherubim, whose wings were spread out over it. Into this sacred enclosure, where the presence of GOD was manifested, the ordinary priests were not permitted to enter; only the High Priest, and that just once a year. He went in carrying a golden basin filled with atoning blood, which he sprinkled upon the mercy seat and before it, where he himself took his stand.

Commenting on Exodus 24:16 **Robert Rayburn** writes...

The verb the NIV translates "**covered**" is literally the verb שכן)) "**dwelt**." The glory of the Lord dwelt upon the mountain. It will be used later in a technical sense of God's **Shekinah**, the outward manifestation of his presence to men. From this we get the idea of the God "**tabernacling**" with men in John 1:14. "We have seen his glory," John says, when the Word dwelt among men.

In 1Cor 10:1 Paul says "FOR (**term of explanation** which is explaining 1Cor 9:27) I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all **under the cloud**, and all passed through the sea

Guzik: The cloud of Shekinah glory overshadowed Israel throughout their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. During the day, the cloud sheltered them from the brutal desert sun, and during the night, it burned as a pillar of fire. It was a constant, ready reminder of God's glory and presence (Exodus 13:21-22).

Acts 1:9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Steven Cole comments: Luke succinctly repeats the story of Jesus' ascension, which he told at the end of his gospel. The cloud that received Jesus out of their sight was probably the **Shekinah glory of God**.

"The Indwelling of the Spirit" makes the believers body a temple for the indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Shekinah Glory (Ro 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16).

The Holy Spirit indwells every believer in order to provide a temple for the indwelling of the **Shekinah Glory**, the Lord Jesus Christ, which serves as the principle of victory over the indwelling old sin nature. The Holy Spirit's purpose during the church is to indwell every believer in order to provide a temple for the indwelling of the Shekinah Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, which serves as the principle of victory over the indwelling old sin nature and provides the believer the spiritual capacity to understand the Word of God since the Spirit serves as the believer's true teacher and mentor in place of the absent Christ. (William Wenstrom)

2Cor 12:9-note And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell (**episkenoō**) in me.

Comment: The verb **episkenoō** means literally to pitch a tent upon and thus to descend and abide upon or rest upon. This is the only use of this verb in Scripture. The picture as portrayed in Wuest's paraphrase reminds us of the OT Shekinah Glory, depicting the presence of Jehovah upon the Mercy Seat in the Holy of holies. **A T Robertson** adds that **episkenoō** means: to fix a tent upon, here upon Paul himself by a bold metaphor, as if the Shekinah of the Lord was overshadowing him (cf. Lk 9:34), the power (**dunamis**) of the Lord Jesus." "**May dwell in me**" is picture similar to that which describes God descending from heaven and dwelling in the tabernacle among the people of Israel. And so here in 2Corinthians 12:9 Paul employs dramatic imagery teaching NT believers that the glorious Christ "pitches His tent" with His people in their weaknesses, not with the "rich and famous and powerful"! As **Hughes** says "Christ pitches his tent with the weak and the unknown, the suffering shut-in, the anonymous pastor and missionary, the godly, quiet servants in the home and the marketplace."

Wuest paraphrases Paul: And He has said to me, and His declaration still stands, My grace is enough for you, for power is moment by moment coming to its full energy and complete operation in the sphere of weakness. Therefore, most gladly will I the rather boast in my weaknesses in order that the power of the Christ [**like the Shekinah Glory in the Holy of Holies of the Tent of Meeting**] may take up its residence in me [working within me and giving me help].

Hodge commenting on **most gladly** writes that Paul is saying: most sweetly, with an acquiescence delightful to himself. His sufferings thus became the source of the purest and highest pleasure. I will rather boast about

my weaknesses does not mean "I glory in the midst of infirmities", but on account of them. This rejoicing on account of his sufferings or those things which implied his weakness and dependence, was not a fanatical feeling, (but) it had a rational and sufficient basis, viz., that the power of Christ may rest upon me; i.e., dwell in me as in a tent, as the Shekinah dwelt in olden days on the tabernacle. To be made thus the dwelling place of the power of Christ, where He reveals His glory, was a rational ground of rejoicing in those infirmities which were the his present condition and the occasion for the manifestation of Christ's power. Most Christians are satisfied in trying to be resigned under suffering. They think it a great thing if they can bring themselves to submit to be the dwelling-place of Christ's power. To rejoice in their afflictions because thereby Christ is glorified, is more than they aspire to. Paul's experience was far above that standard.

The power of Christ is not only thus manifested in the weakness of His people, but in the means that He employs to achieve his purposes. Believers are in all cases utterly inadequate in themselves and the means disproportionate to the results to be obtained. This treasure is in clay jars so that the excellency of the power may be God's. By the foolishness of preaching he saves those who believe. By twelve illiterate men the church was established and extended over the civilized world. By a few missionaries heathen lands are converted into Christian countries. So in all cases the power of Christ is perfected in weakness. ([An exposition of the Second epistle to the Corinthians. By Charles Hodge.](#))

Peter writes to believers...

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (1Peter 4:14-note)

Wiersbe: Suffering Christians do not have to wait for heaven in order to experience His glory. Through the Holy Spirit, they can have the glory now. This explains how martyrs could sing praises to God while bound in the midst of blazing fires. It also explains how persecuted Christians (and there are many in today's world) can go to prison and to death without complaining or resisting their captors.

MacArthur comments on the Spirit of glory: That is, the Spirit who has glory, or Who is glorious. In the OT, the glory of God was represented by the **Shekinah** light, that luminous glow which signified the presence of God (Ex 33:15–34:9). When a believer suffers, God's presence specially rests and lifts him to strength and endurance beyond the physical dimension (cf. Ac 6:8–7:60; 2Co 12:7–10).

Constable: Their curses (1Pe 4:13) become blessings because the Holy Spirit, Who is the Spirit of glory, already indwells us. Peter's thought was that the indwelling Holy Spirit is already part of our glorification, the first-fruits of our inheritance. As the Israelites enjoyed the presence of God in the fiery pillar even during their wilderness testing, so we enjoy His presence during our wilderness experience.

ESV Study Bible: the Spirit of glory, the Holy Spirit, rests upon believers in an especially powerful way. Further, it is the same Spirit that rested on Jesus (Isa. 11:2; cf. Matt. 3:16) who now rests upon the believer.

Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version: When Christians suffer unjustly on behalf of Christ, they will discover that the close relationship they have with God during that period will refresh their spirit.

Adrian Rogers devotional thoughts...

When King Solomon dedicated that magnificent temple on Mount Moriah, it was among other things an object lesson, an illustration of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. For now, after Pentecost, at the moment of our salvation we become temples of the Holy Spirit. God through His Holy Spirit indwells us, just as His Spirit came and filled the holy of holies of Solomon's temple with Shekinah glory when it was fully dedicated to Him: "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD" (1Ki 8:10-11). Yet, some Christians appear not to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Glory does not fill their house. They have allowed the self-life and the cares of this world to move the Lord Jesus from that place of preeminence that is rightfully His. They are no longer Spirit-filled but are what the Bible calls "carnal" or fleshly. Therefore, we have this admonition of the Apostle Paul: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). (The Power of His Presence)

Anthony Garland commenting on the **Book of Revelation** writes...

The first question of the Westminster Confession asks: "What is the chief and highest end of man?" To which the following answer is given: "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever." [emphasis added] Like God's sovereignty, the theme of God's glory stretches from Genesis to Revelation. His

manifest presence among His people is represented by His abiding glory (**Shekinah** , Ex. 14:10; 16:10; 24:15-16; 40:34; Lev. 9:23; Num. 14:10; 16:19, 42; Nu 20:6; 2Chr. 7:1; Isa. 4:5; 35:2; 40:5; Eze. 1:28; 3:23; 9:3; 10:18; Acts 9:3). Here in the last book of the Bible, God's glory is seen through the visions and choruses of worship and praise offered up to God. From the first chapter, the glory of God and John's response are clearly revealed (Rev. 1:17). (A Testimony of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation)

From Nave's Topic...

SHEKINAH, the visible sign of God's presence on the ark of testimony in the Holy of holies, Ex 25:22; Lev 16:2; 2Sa 6:2; 2Ki 19:14, 15; Ps 80:1; Isa 37:16; Eze 9:3; 10:18; He 9:5.

From the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia...

SHEKINAH - ("that which dwells" from the verb shakan "to dwell," "reside"): This word is not found in the Bible, but there are allusions to it in Isa 60:2; Mt 17:5; Lk 2:9; Ro 9:4. It is first found in the Targums.

The Abiding Presence of God

Tony Garland

■ [Resource](#)

At the heart of the idea of a [Temple](#) is the abiding presence of God. Although God is omnipresent, He has chosen to manifest His presence in certain locations and at certain times within history. This physical manifestation of God has come to be called the Shekinah.

the *Shechinah Glory is the visible manifestation of the presence of God*. It is the majestic presence or manifestation of God in which He descends to *dwell* among men. Whenever the invisible God becomes visible, and whenever the omnipresence of God is localized, this is the Shechinah Glory. The usual title found in Scriptures for the Shechinah Glory is *the glory of Jehovah*, or *the glory of the Lord*. The Hebrew form is *Kvod Adonai*, which means 'the glory of Jehovah' and describes what the Shechinah Glory *is*. The Greek title, *Doxa Kurion*, is translated as 'the glory of the Lord.' *Doxa* means 'brightness,' 'brilliance,' or 'splendor,' and it depicts how the Shechinah Glory *appears*. Other titles give it the sense of 'dwelling,' which portrays what the Shechinah Glory does. The Hebrew word *Shechinah*, from the root *shachan*, means 'to dwell.' The Greek word *skeinei*, which is similar in sound as the Hebrew *Shechinah* (Greek has no 'sh' sound), means 'to tabernacle.' . . . In the Old Testament, most of these visible manifestations took the form of light, fire, or cloud, or a combination of these. A new form appears in the New Testament: the Incarnate Word [John 1:14].⁷

The concept of the Shekinah is behind the wonder of the incarnation. The very glory of God "tabernacled" within human flesh and was handled and beheld. "And the Word became flesh and **dwelt among us** ([σκήνωσεν](#) [eskēnōsen]), and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" [emphasis added] (John 1:14).

[Σκηνή](#) [Skēnē] was the word used by the translators of the Septuagint for the Hebrew [מִשְׁכָּן](#) [miškān], "tabernacle" (Ex.25:9). During Israel's pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan the tabernacle was the place of worship for the people. The tabernacle or tent in the wilderness was the "tent of Jehovah," Himself a pilgrim among His pilgrim people. In sound and meaning [σκήνω](#) [skēnō] recalls the Hebrew verb [שָׁכַן](#) [šāḱkan] meaning "to dwell," which is sometimes used of God's dwelling with Israel (Ex. 25:8; 29:46). In postbiblical Hebrew the Jews used the term [שְׁכִינָה](#) [šēkīnā] ("Shekinah," literally, "presence") of the bright cloud of the presence of God that settled on the tabernacle. The Shekinah glory was nothing less than the visible manifestation of God.⁸

The manifestation of the Shekinah is at the heart of understanding the meeting of God with man. In the earliest communion of man with God, God is said to have been "walking in the Garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8). This must speak of a localized presence with which Adam and Eve could interact—the Shekinah. The word itself embodies the notion of *dwelling* or *abiding*. This emphasizes the single most important aspect concerning God's localized presence: *where is He abiding?* For wherever the Shekinah is, there is relationship with God in a more intimate way and all the benefits which come from His special presence. This is the essence of the promise made to the overcomer in Philadelphia, the fulfillment of that *first love* which was lacking in Ephesus: to walk once again in full fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8; 5:24; Rev. 21:3, 22). This was the ultimate desire of the psalmist (Ps. 23:6; 65:4). Thus, it is an incredible blessing to enjoy the presence of God.

This was the primary purpose of the Temple throughout history: to house the Shekinah glory of God among men. It is in the Temple where God's presence "dwells *between* the cherubim" over the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89;

1Sa. 4:4; 2Sa. 6:2; 1Ki. 7:29; 2Ki. 19:15; 1Chr. 13:6; 2Chr. 5:7; 6:41; Ps. 80:1; Ps. 99:1; Isa. 37:16; Eze. 41:18). Unless the glory of God “inhabits” the Temple (1K. 8:10-11; 2Chr. 7:1; Eze. 43:2-4; 44:1-2; Hag. 2:7-9; Mat. 20:12) it is just a dead architectural edifice.⁹

Conversely, in the history of the Temple, there are grave consequences when the Shekinah departs from the Temple, for it indicates God’s displeasure with those among whom He previously dwelt and the removal of His protection and blessing in His departure. The Temple, the *house* of Israel, is left *desolate* when the glory of God departs. In at least two occasions in history, the result has been the destruction of the Temple. When the Shekinah left [Solomon’s Temple](#) in the days of Ezekiel’s prophecy (Eze. 10:18; 11:22-23), the eventual result was the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. When the Shekinah left the [Second Temple](#) in the days of Jesus (Mat. 23:38), the eventual result was the destruction of the Temple by Titus Vespasian of Rome (Mat. [24:1-3](#)). Whether God remains in His house is *serious business!*

Although it is beyond the scope of our treatment here to consider an extensive discussion of God’s abiding presence, it will be helpful to note some of the most significant historical events related to the Shekinah.¹⁰ The Shekinah glory:¹¹

- Illuminated the earth prior to the creation of the sun and moon (Gen. 1:3, 14).
- Walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen. 3:8).
- Ratified the Abrahamic covenant while Abraham slept (Gen. 15:17).
- Descended upon Mount Sinai at the giving of the law (Ex. 19:18; 24:15-16; 33:18-23; 34:5-6).
- Filled the [Tabernacle](#) in the wilderness (Ex. 40:34).
- Filled Solomon’s Temple upon its dedication (1Ki. 8:10-11; 2Chr. 7:1).
- Left Solomon’s Temple due to Israel’s sin (Eze. 8:4-6; 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23). The Temple is left unprotected.
- Returned to the Second Temple in the form of the incarnation of Messiah Jesus (Mat. 12:6; 21:12; John 1:14; 2:15).
- Left the Second Temple desolate upon the departure of Jesus (Mat. 23:38; 24:2; Luke 13:35; 21:6). The Temple is left unprotected.
- Appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mat. 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:29).
- Appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3; 22:11; 26:13; 1Ti. 6:16).
- Will return to the [Millennial Temple](#) (Isa. [60:3](#); Eze. 43:2-4).
- Illuminates the [New Jerusalem](#) (Rev. 21:23▶; 22:5▶).

The significance of the Mount of Olives derives from its association with the departure and arrival of the glory of the Lord:

The mountain which is so clearly defined and located in this prophecy [Zec. 14:4] is already associated with many events and crises in Israel’s history. . . it was from this mountain, which is before Jerusalem on the east, that the prophet Ezekiel saw the glory of Jehovah finally taking its departure. It was from this mountain also that He, who was not only the symbol, but the living personal revelation of the glory of Jehovah, finally took His departure from the land, after He had been rejected by the nation. He led His handful of disciples out as far as Bethany (on the Mount of Olives), and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ‘And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up to heaven’ [Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9]; since then a still darker era in the long Ichabod period of Israel’s history commenced. . . . And what is this but a prophecy in symbolic language of the same event which the heavenly messengers announced to the men of Galilee [Acts 1:9-11]. We love to think that this same mountain on which He once shed tears of sorrow over Jerusalem, the slope of which witnessed His agony and bloody sweat, shall be the first also to witness His manifestation in glory; and that His blessed feet, which in the days of His flesh walked wearily over this mountain on the way to Bethany shall, ‘in that day,’ be planted here *in triumph and majesty*.¹²

In summary, the Shekinah is the visible representation of the localized presence of God. By God’s design, the Temple is the location where His abiding presence is intended to dwell and where He has put His name (Deu. 12:5, 11, 21; 2Chr. 6:20; 7:16; 20:19; Ezra 6:12; Ne. 1:9; Mat. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

SHEKINAH ARTICLE

SHEKINAH (Shechinah) - The word **SHEKINAH** is not found in the Bible but is a rabbinical term used in the [Targums](#) (Aramaic paraphrase of the OT) to describe the glorious divine light dwelling on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies (Ex 25:8-[note](#), cf Lev 26:11-[note](#)). As discussed below, SHEKINAH was also used to describe a number of other OT manifestations of light, fire, and/or a cloud, each manifestation associated with the presence of God. **SHEKINAH** is from the verb **SHAKAN** which means to settle down or dwell which in turn gives us a beautiful picture of “One Who dwells”, of the Holy God mercifully dwelling with undeserving people. **Fruchtenbaum** notes that “The usual title found in Scriptures for the Shekinah Glory is

the GLORY OF THE LORD" adding that "Whenever the invisible God becomes visible, and whenever the omnipresence of God is localized, this is the SHEKINAH GLORY." As one ponders this incredible picture of a God Who is described as "like a consuming fire" (Ex 24:17-note = a Shekinah-like manifestation) and yet Who still seeks to dwell with those who did not seek to dwell with Him (cf Ro 3:11-note; Recall God calling "Where are you?" to Adam hiding in sin and shame! Ge 3:7, 8-9-note), this truth of **SHEKINAH** should evoke continual gratitude in the hearts of all of us who have been brought into the "everlasting covenant" (Heb 13:20KJV) with the "Lord Christ Jesus, the LORD OF GLORY" (Jas 2:1ESV-note).

In the OT, the rabbis used **SHEKINAH** to describe "the LORD going before (the children of Israel during their 40 years of wilderness wandering in the form of) a PILLAR OF CLOUD by day to lead them on the way and in a PILLAR OF FIRE by night to give them light." (Ex 13:21-note, cf Nu 9:17, 18, 22-note). Even as Israel experienced the protection, presence and power of the Shekinah GLORY OF THE LORD during their wilderness testings (See Ex 14:9-note, Ex 14:19, 20-note), so too can we experience His protecting presence and power during our times of wilderness testing! Indeed, in the New Testament Paul alludes to the presence and power of the **Shekinah, the "One Who dwells,"** when he prayed for removal of a thorn (2Cor 12:7,8-note) and Jesus answered "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in your weakness," to which Paul responded (as should we) "Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may **DWELL** upon me **"like the Shekinah Glory in the Holy of Holies of the Tent of Meeting"** (Wuest paraphrase of 2Cor 12:9-note)

Robertson explains that in 2Cor 12:9-note the Greek verb DWELL (episkeno) means "to pitch a tent upon Paul, as if the SHEKINAH OF THE LORD were overshadowing him." And so as we "boast" (enabled by His Spirit) in our weaknesses, the "LORD OF GLORY" (title of Jesus in 1Cor 2:8-note) Himself will "PITCH HIS TENT" upon us, enabling us to experience His supernatural presence and power in our time of need (which is all the time!). **Kent Hughes** adds that "Christ PITCHES HIS TENT with the weak and the unknown, the suffering shut-in, the anonymous pastor and missionary, the godly, quiet servants in the home and the marketplace." Hallelujah! **Wiersbe** reminds us that "Strength that knows itself to be strength is actually weakness, but weakness that knows itself to be weakness is actually strength!" **Spurgeon** agrees that "Our weakness should be prized as making room for divine strength. We might never have known the power of grace if we had not felt the weakness of our fallen nature. Just as the **SHEKINAH** light dwelt in the tent of the wilderness beneath the rough badger skins, so I boast to be a poor frail tent and tabernacle, that the **SHEKINAH** of Jesus Christ may dwell upon my soul." **John Piper** adds "What a tragic waste when people turn away from the Calvary road of love and suffering. All the riches of the **GLORY OF GOD IN CHRIST** (cf "Shekinah") are on that road. All the sweetest fellowship with Jesus is there. All the treasures of assurance. All the ecstasies of joy. All the clearest sightings of eternity. All the noblest camaraderie. All the humblest affections. All the most tender acts of forgiving kindness. All the deepest discoveries of God's Word. All the most earnest prayers. They are all on the Calvary road where Jesus (dwells) with His people. Take up your cross and follow Jesus. On this road, and this road alone, life is Christ and death is gain. Life on every other road is wasted." In a parallel passage, Peter reminds us that "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the SPIRIT OF GLORY (cf Shekinah) and of God RESTS UPON upon you." (1Pe 4:14-note) as it did on Spirit filled Stephen as he was being stoned (Acts 6:15-note, Acts 7:54-55, 56-note)!

At the completion of the OT Tabernacle "the (Shekinah) CLOUD covered the tent of meeting, and the (Shekinah)**GLORY OF THE LORD** filled (Same Gk verb in Acts 2:4-note Pentecost = "they were all FILLED with the Holy Spirit") the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the CLOUD had settled (Hebrew = shakan = was dwelling) on it, and the **GLORY OF THE LORD** filled the tabernacle (Heb = mishkan = "dwelling place" from shakan)... throughout all their journeys, the (Shekinah) CLOUD of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was (Shekinah) FIRE in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel." (Ex 40:34-35, 38-note) Similarly when King Solomon dedicated the Temple as "the priests came out of the Holy Place, the (Shekinah) CLOUD filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the **GLORY OF THE LORD** had filled the house of the LORD" (1Ki 8:10-11-note). **Adrian Rogers** remarks that this dramatic OT event "was an object lesson, an illustration of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. For now, after Pentecost, at the moment of our salvation we become temples of the Holy Spirit. God through His Holy Spirit indwells us, just as His Spirit came and FILLED the Holy of Holies with SHEKINAH GLORY when it was FULLY DEDICATED to Him. Yet, some Christians appear not to be FILLED with the Holy Spirit. GLORY does not fill their house. They have allowed the SELF-LIFE and the cares of this world to move the Lord Jesus from that place of preeminence that is rightfully His. They are no longer Spirit-filled but are what the Bible calls "carnal" or fleshly. Therefore, we have this admonition of the Apostle Paul: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be (being continually) filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (even as wine controls the thoughts, words and deeds of a drunken man!)" (Eph 5:18-note).

Just before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the "(SHEKINAH)**GLORY OF THE GOD** of Israel" departed from the Temple and "went up from the midst of the city and stood over the (Mt of Olives) which is east of the city." (Eze 11:23-note) The Shekinah, which throughout Israel's history had been the visible symbol of the PRESENCE OF JEHOVAH was gone, gone even from the rebuilt Temple (including Herod's). And yet some 400 years later, "in the greatness of (God's) lovingkindness" (Ps 69:13-note), "when the fullness of time came" (Gal 4:4), John records "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became a human being and lived (literally "tabernaced" or "fixed His tent") with us, and we

saw His Shekinah (even as Israel had seen the Shekinah dwelling upon the first Tabernacle), the Shekinah of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:1,14-note Jewish New Testament translation) Indeed, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of all the OT shadows of Shekinah, the ultimate visible manifestation of God's presence, "Immanuel, God with us." (Mt 1:23) "Pleased, as Man, with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!" (cf Lk 2:14) Christ is the "King of GLORY" (Ps 24:7-10-note), the One Who "is the radiance (brightness, effulgence) of His (Father's) GLORY and the exact representation of His nature" (Heb 1:3-note) "for God Who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made us understand that this light is the (Shekinah) brightness of the GLORY OF GOD seen in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Cor 4:6NLT-note) Who Himself declared that "he who beholds Me beholds the One Who sent Me." (Jn 12:45). Indeed, Jesus is the ultimate answer to Moses' incredible prayer "LORD, show me Thy glory." (Ex 33:18-note) As Spurgeon writes today the SHEKINAH GLORY of JESUS "is to be seen, but not with the eyes — this is to be perceived, but not by the carnal senses: this is seen, and heard, and known, by spiritual men, whose mental perceptions are keener than those of sight and hearing. (cf Mt 16:17-note) In the Person of the Lord Jesus there is a glory which is seen by our faith (2Cor 5:7-note, 2Cor 4:18-note), which is discerned of our renewed spirits, and is made to operate upon our hearts. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Mt 5:8-note); yea, they do see Him in Christ Jesus."

Now that Jesus has ascended to the right hand of Glory, where is the "Shekinah"? Paul says it is "Christ in us, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27-note) adding that that as we "with unveiled face are beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (His Word Jas 1:23-25-note), we are being transformed into the same image (of God's Son Ro 8:29-note) from GLORY to GLORY, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." (2Cor 3:18-note) Indeed, our "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (of Jesus, Acts 16:7-note) Who is in us, Whom we have from God, and that we are not our own, for we have been bought with a price and are therefore called to GLORIFY God in our body." (1Cor 6:19-20-note).

Paul writes that "now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1Cor 13:12-note) And so while it is difficult imagine what God's glory will look like when we see our Lord Jesus Christ, the various descriptions in Scripture would indicate that His Glory will be the most beautiful sight we will experience throughout eternity. All of the goodness and beauty we see in the present will be nothing in comparison to the refulgent GLORY OF GOD. As we consider our future face to face (Coram Deo) encounter with the Shekinah Glory of God, may we be motivated to reflect His glory, living as "children of God above reproach, as lights in the world" (Php 2:15-note) allowing "our light to shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works, and GLORIFY our Father Who is in heaven." (Mt 5:16-note)

In the final manifestation of God's Shekinah, we read that "the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them" in the New Jerusalem which "has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the GLORY OF GOD has illumined it, and its lamp is the LAMB." (Rev 21:3-note, Rev 21:23-note) And so in God's final manifestation of perfect communion and oneness with His redeemed children, we will enter into the true HOLY OF HOLIES illuminated by the SHEKINAH GLORY of the King of kings and Lord of lords. And "In His temple everyone shouts, "GLORY!" (Ps 29:9NLT-note)

Father by Thy Spirit strengthen us with power in our inner being (Eph 3:16-note), so that as we hope for what we do not see, we will with perseverance "wait expectantly and in great anticipation for" (Ro 8:25-note), the appearance of "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and GREAT (Shekinah) GLORY" (Mt 24:30). Amen.

Mediate on the greatness of His Shekinah Glory as you sing...

- "[King of Glory](#)" (Third Day)
- "[Glorious One](#)"
- [Glorious One](#) (Steve Fee)