

Word: glory
Text: John 2:11

1. Diachronic Analysis (Etymology and History)

A. Classical Greek

The meaning of the word "*doxa*" has changed quite a bit since the classical Greek period. In fact, Brown suggests, "this word-group affords one of the clearest examples of change in meaning of a Greek word when it came under the influence of the Bible." (Brown, 44) The meaning of *doxa* during the classical Greek period was expectation, view, imagine, suppose, magnify, praise, or extol. (Brown, 44) This is somewhat different from the current definition.

B. Old Testament (LXX) and other Jewish Literature

Brown begins his description of the Old Testament usage of *doxa* and *doxazo* by stating these two words had been "transformed." in the LXX. (Brown, 44) It is important to notice how the Septuagint treated the text. Its treatment of the word is valuable information, because the Septuagint is the Bible used by Paul and the early Christians. Brown supports this idea of the world having been "transformed" based on the fact that the original meaning "opinion" is not found. However, the word *doxa* was frequently used for the honor brought to, or given to God. (Brown, 44). Brown labels the following passages as examples of *doxa* being interpreted as bringing honor to God, Psalms 29:1 and Isaiah 42:12. (Brown, 44). *Doxa* was apparently seldom used to express honor shown to man. "Above all, *doxa* expresses God's glory and power." (Brown, 44). Though the meaning of *doxa* has been transformed over the period of the Old Testament, the general structure of the meaning remains essentially unchanged.

This new definition of *doxa* is quite different from the original. Behind this new meaning is the Old Testament concept of *kabod*, glory and honor. (Brown 45) The Septuagint assigns nearly the same meaning to *doxa*. "When it is used of God, it does not mean God in his essential nature, but the luminous manifestation of his person, his glorious revelation of himself." (Brown, 45). One Bible dictionary affirms this progression in definition in this way, "In classical Greek *doxa* means opinion, conjecture, expectation, and then praise." (Butler, 557)

In the Old Testament, the concept of glory seemed to be confined to God's self-revelation. (Brown, 45) However, the inter-testamental period had a heavy focus of the heavenly realms. Glory was applied to numerous aspects of the heavenlies such as God's throne and the angels. (Brown, 45) A key development, which resulted from this line of thinking, is the idea that Adam had glory when he was in Paradise, but lost it when he fell. This opens the way for man to share in the glory. (Brown, 45) This concept is illustrated in texts such as Exodus 33:17-23 and 34:29-36.

The inter-testamentals were not alone in placing stress on the concept of glory being shared. In fact, the Qumran "expected that the elect would inherit all the glory of Adam." (Brown, 45) Glory was used during this period as a description of the glory of God, as well as the eschatological revelation of glory. (Brown, 45) The Qumran also stated that it is the visible glory of God, which would cause Jerusalem to accept the faith of Israel. (Brown, 45)

2. Synchronic Analysis (Contemporary and Contextual)

A. New Testament in General

- a. Concordance Study: The definition of "doxa" obtained from Brown's Theological Dictionary only lists the first three meanings below. After study of the 129 texts cited in this study, it was evident that there were clearly passages, which would not easily slide into one the options provided by Brown. Therefore, the words represented as "d" and "e" below, are the addition of this writer, in an attempt to be more specific and hopefully more accurately represent the meaning in each passage.

(1) Matthew

- a. "repute": 6:2
- b. "radiance": 4:8; 6:29; 25:31
- c. "glory": 19:28;
- d. "heaven": 16:27
- e. "power": 24:30

(2) Mark

- a. "repute": none
- b. "radiance": 13:26
- c. "glory": none
- d. "heaven": 8:38; 10:37
- e. "power": none

(3) Lukan (Luke, Acts)

- a. "repute": Luke 2:14; 17:18; Acts 12:23
- b. "radiance": Luke 2:9; 4:6, 9:31; 9:32; 12:27; 21:27; Acts 7:55; 22:11
- c. "glory": Luke 2:32; 19:38
- d. "heaven": Luke 24:26; Acts 7:2
- e. "power": Luke 9:26

(4) Pauline (Romans-2 Timothy)

- a. "repute": Rom. 2:7; 4:20; 11:26; 15:7, I Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 1:20; 4:15; 8:19; Gal. 1:5; Eph. 3:21; 2:11; Phil. 4:20; 1 Thes. 2:6; 2:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18
- b. "radiance": Rom. 8:18; 1 Cor. 11:7; 11:15; 15:40; 2 Cor. 3:7; 3:9; 3:10; 3:18; Eph. 1:6; 1:12; Col. 1:27; 1 Thes. 2:12; 2 Thes. 1:9;
- c. "glory": Rom. 2:10; 3:7; 3:23; 9:4; 1 Cor. 15:43; 2 Cor. 4:6; 4:17; 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 1:18; 3:13; 3:16; Phil. 3:19; 2 Thes. 2:14; 2 Tim. 2:10
- d. "heaven": Rom. 9:23; I Cor. 2:8; 15:43; Eph. 1:17; Phil. 4:19; Col. 1:27; 3:4; 1 Tim. 3: 16
- e. "power": Rom. 1:23; 5:2; 6:4; Phil. 1:11

(5) Hebrews

- a. "repute": 2:7; 13:21
- b. "radiance": 1:3; 2:9
- c. "glory": 3:3
- d. "heaven": 2:10; 9:5
- e. "power": none

(6) James

- a. "repute": none

- b. “radiance”: none
- c. “glory”: none
- d. “heaven”:2:1
- e. “power”: none

(7) Petrine (1-2 Peter)

- a. “repute”: 1 Peter 1:7; 5:1; 2 Peter 3:18
- b. “radiance”: 1 Peter 1:24
- c. “glory”: 1 Peter 1:21; 4:13; 4:14; 5:4; 2 Peter 1:3; 1:17
- d. “heaven”: 1 Peter 5:10
- e. “power”: none

(8) Jude

- a. “repute”: 25
- b. “radiance”: 24
- c. “glory”: none
- d. “heaven”: none
- e. “power”: none

b. Semantic Domain Study

In this study of the word “glory”, 129 uses of the noun “doxa”, were identified in the New Testament based on Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. This is thirty-six fewer than identified by *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. A semantic domain study on the word “doxa” resulted in the identification of five semantic domains for this word. Applying each of the 129 uses of the word “doxa” to the semantic domains, subdomains, and meaning provided, provided a comparison of the New Testament uses of the word in question. From this comparison it was determined that the most commonly used semantic domain for “doxa” is domain 33. This domain is “Communication.” It is broken down into 56 subdomains, alphabetically lettered. Entry 33.357 is the most commonly used meaning for “doxa” in the New Testament. It appears approximately 37 times. This entry is located within the subdomain “K,” entitled “Praise.” The meaning listed in 33.357 includes “something deserving of honor or praise.”(Lowe & Nida, 349-736)

Another domain followed in a close second behind “Communication.” This domain was domain 79, “Features of Objects.” The word “doxa” appears 35 times in the New Testament using the meaning identified in entry 79.18. This meaning includes “the quality of splendid remarkable appearance- glory, splendor.” This meaning is located in subdomain “E”, which is entitled “Glorious.” Though these two domains were the most common, *doxa* also appears in three additional semantic domains. These domains are 1, “Geographical Objects and Features”; 12, “Supernatural Beings and Powers”; and 87, “Status.”(Lowe & Nida, 349-736)

B. John In General

John is credited with writing five books in the New Testament. These books are: John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation. It is interesting to note that each time John uses the word “glory”, he uses the word “doxa” as represented by number 1391 in the Strong's Concordance. This word is used twenty-seven times by John. These uses occur strictly in John and Revelation. No mention of glory is made in the other three books written by John.

Of these twenty-seven uses of *doxa*, John uses the meaning found in 87.23, subdomain D, of semantic domain 87 eleven times. This is nearly double his use of any other meaning. This would indicate that John wanted to emphasize the greatness and glory of God, rather than His power or splendor. This is true particularly in the book of Revelation. Of these eleven uses, ten occur in Revelation. It is as if John keeps pointing to the greatness of God over and over. *Harper's Bible Dictionary* made a statement, which was not derived from this study, but is interesting. This article noted, "The Gospel of John develops furthest the notion of glory as applied to Christ's human existence." (Achte-meir, 349)

C. John In John 2:9

In Chapter 2, verse nine in the Gospel of John, Jesus performs his first miracle. John conveys that the result of this miracle was the revealing of Christ's glory. As evidenced thus far, *doxa* falls in a wide range of semantic domains. For this passage of scripture, two domains seem applicable. The first semantic domain is 87, "Status". In subdomain C, "High Status or Rank," entry 87.23, this meaning is given, "a state of being great and wonderful." In John 2:9, Jesus does demonstrate his greatness and high status through his miracle. However, semantic domain 12, "Supernatural Beings and Powers" seems even closer to the meaning intended by John. In subdomain B, "Supernatural Power", entry 12.49, this meaning is given, "a benevolent supernatural power deserving respect and honor." (Lowe & Nida, 149) By turning the water into wine, Jesus demonstrated more than his greatness, he showed his supernatural power. He was able to take common water and change its state, before his disciples. As a result of this miracle, his disciples caught a glimpse of who Jesus is. As a result, they believed. One commentary suggests, "if they were disciples they must already have had some tinge of faith." (Torrance, 50) The narrative genre of John's gospel allows the reader to more effectively grasp what is going on in at this celebration. In a crisis, Mary calls on her son. Jesus appears to wrestle with obedience to his mother, or heavenly Father. Quietly, without fanfare, Jesus does the unthinkable. As a result, his glory, *doxa*, is revealed.

3. Conclusions

In preparation for this word study, it is amazing how many different approaches scholars take to not only a given passage, but to a specific word. This one word, *doxa*, is packed with meaning and implication. For this study, the word was classified by definition. However, it would be beneficial and interesting to also break *doxa* down by whom it applies or makes reference to. Even with an extensive concordance study, it is surprising how many additional scriptures appear in various resources, which were not included in Strong's Bible Concordance. It is a bit challenging to classify "glory" in terms of a definition. The range of meaning is so vast. After hours of reading, comparing, interpreting, and research, it is evident that this minor study has only scratched the very surface of the meaning of "glory."

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