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GETTING A GRIP ON GOD'S GLORY

I. Introduction: God's Exclusive Right to Glory

- A. The glory of God refers to the unique, incomparable, and infinitely great weightiness, worthiness, and wonder that is God's alone.

Isa 42:8 - I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another

Isa 46:9 - ...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me

- B. What constitutes the unsurpassable weight, worth, and wonder, i.e., the glory, of God?

II. The Priority and Centrality of the Divine Transcendence to the Glory of God

- A. Contemporary Christian culture is marked by a "rush" to the divine immanence

- B. The sad state of contemporary evangelical Christianity

A. W. Tozer: "...the Christian conception of God current...is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God..." (*Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 10)

David F. Wells: "It is one of the defining marks of Our Time that God is now weightless. I do not mean by this that he is ethereal but rather that he has become unimportant. He rests upon the world so inconsequentially as not to be noticeable" (*God in the Wasteland*, p. 88).

III. The Central Expression of the Divine Transcendence in the Self-Sufficiency of God

- A. Self-Sufficiency Defined: God possesses within himself, intrinsically and eternally, every quality in infinite measure

Rom 11:34-36 - ³⁴ For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? ³⁵ Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Acts 17:24-25 - ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything (cf. Isa 40:12-17; 66:1-2).

- B. The doctrine of process theologians and others whereby God is understood as the eminent recipient of value apprehended from the world is here utterly rejected.

IV. Implications from the Divine Transcendent Self-Sufficiency for the Glory of God

- A. God alone possesses all that is qualitatively good (i.e., all perfections), and hence he alone possesses all that is worthy of commendation, admiration, praise, honor, and worship. That is, he alone deserves unqualified and absolute glory.
- B. As creatures, we depend upon God for all that we are, all that we have, and all that we will become. Just as there are no qualities that are not God's, possessed by him intrinsically, eternally, and infinitely, so there are no qualities we possess that are not his. Our humility is grounded, first and foremost, in our identity as wholly-dependent creatures before this glorious, eternal, and infinite self-sufficient God.

V. Select Questions and Issues Arising from God's Glory as seen in God's Transcendent Self-sufficiency

- A. Isn't God benefitted and perhaps made more glorious by the glory we ascribe to him as his creatures?
- B. How can God truly be personal and loving if he does not need the created order that he has made? Wouldn't this mean that he is indifferent to us and all of creation?
- C. If God is self-sufficient and doesn't need us or anything that we have to offer, why does he demand our obedience to him?
- D. Why does God enlist our service (e.g., Ps 100:2) when, as self-sufficient, he is not "served by human hands, as though he needed anything" (Acts 17:25)?

VI. Conclusion: the infinite Weight, Worth, and Wonder of God alone is constituted by his eternal and exclusive self-sufficiency; in contrast, the finite and derivative worth we possess is constituted entirely by our connection, through Christ, to the One who has it all!!!