

My Story: To God Be the Glory

Joel Hemphill

Joel Hemphill and his wife LaBreeska were in the preaching and Gospel music ministry for over 45 years. They traveled around the world, and along with their family, wrote and recorded over 300 Gospel songs. They received 8 Dove Awards and had numerous #1 songs. Joel was nominated 10 times by the Gospel Music Association as "Song Writer of the Year." He spoke at our 2008 Theological Conference:

In 2002 I got hold of a book called *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound*. I thought, this is interesting; I've never believed in the Trinity. I was Oneness...It looked interesting and I read it. It had to germinate so I laid it aside for about a year. God has different ways of bringing us to proper understanding...

In Israel we were sponsored by a very dear lady who came to this understanding 35 years ago. She was a Gospel music promoter. God opened her understanding. She tried to share it with a few people and they didn't understand it, so she just had to keep it to herself. We were sitting on her balcony drinking coffee, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, the most beautiful view I've ever seen, and she said, "Joel, why don't we let Jesus be who he said he is — the Son of God?" I said, "Wow! That's right." So that began to soak in, and then some friends of ours wrote and recorded a song, "God So Loved," which is God's viewpoint of Calvary. You see, Christianity has made Calvary a display of Jesus' love. And yes, Jesus went there in love. Paul said Jesus loved the Church and gave himself for it. But we've forgotten John 3:16: "For **God** so loved..." It's a display of God the Father's love. These friends of ours wrote this song from that perspective. I would play that CD in my truck and weep aloud over it. I developed an empathy for God the Father. I began to see God.

So in November of 2005 the scales began to fall from my eyes. I began to write. I thought I was writing a Gospel tract — just Scriptures about God. I read Isaiah 44:24 where God says, "I created it all by Myself. There was no God with Me. I did it alone." I began to find other Scriptures about One God in the Old and New Testaments and began to write those. I was driven to write. It established a foundation in my mind of who God is — who the one Most High God is. He revealed Himself to me in His word. I now see God the Father on every page. Yes, I see Jesus — the supernaturally conceived, virgin-born, sinless Son of God, our Savior, Redeemer, Messiah, soon-coming King, but his Father is now my God! Jesus is my Savior, my Messiah.

My understanding was completed when I went through the book of Revelation and highlighted every time it says "God," "Jesus," and "Lamb." It says God 99 times, Jesus 14 times, and Lamb 29 times. The focus of the book is clearly God the Father. I was looking for who is on that main throne; who is the King of the universe? In my mind it was Jesus. And when I could not put Jesus on that main throne in heaven, I stood in our living room and literally wailed. I had to change Gods. That's the day I changed Gods! Can I say that? Jesus was my God, and it was an emotional adjustment. So I can have compassion on people who struggle with this. God used different ways to bring me to this understanding, but ultimately He revealed Himself to me in His word.

So I wrote this book called *To God Be the Glory*. I would wake up every morning at 5 o'clock with a question in my mind: Where is Jesus now? I had to answer that question for myself. He's at the right hand of the Father. What is he doing there? He's our intercessor. Hebrews says that he's expecting. May I humbly say, God the Father is not expecting anything! He just speaks and it's done. But Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father with a right to expect what God the Father promised him in Psalm 110:1: "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." So I saw that Jesus came at Bethlehem, spoken before time, brought forth in time, in the womb of a virgin, promised the throne of his father David. There's not a verse in the Bible that promises Jesus God's throne in heaven. Jesus said in Revelation 3:21, "He who overcomes I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and sat down with my father in His throne." God the Father is the King of Universe and His glory is the ultimate glory!

This is why my book is called *To God Be the Glory*. In Isaiah 42 the first seven verses are about the Messiah, an awesome promise about our Lord Jesus who was to come in Bethlehem some 740 years later.

But God the Father says in verse 8: **“My glory I will not give to another.”** This was very strong in opening my understanding. In Isaiah 48:11 He says it again. I began to see the distinction between God the Father’s glory and Jesus’ glory. God the Father’s glory is innate. Jesus’ glory is a given glory. There’s absolutely no comparison between God the Father’s glory and Jesus’ glory. Jesus has awesome glory. He told his disciples, “You will see the Son of Man coming in great glory.” Jesus’ glory is so great that the brightness of his coming will destroy the antichrist. But Jesus’ glory is a given glory.

1 Peter 1:20-21 says Christ was “foreordained before the foundation of the world,” not preexistent, “but manifest in these last times for you, who through him believe in God who raised him up from dead and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in **God.**” I realized that in my sincere desire to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ I gave him God the Father’s glory. I repented of that and I no longer do that. Glory, honor and praise to our Lord Jesus Christ, but the ultimate glory goes to the Most High God the Father! When we do that we’re obeying so many Scriptures that say, “Give unto God the glory due unto His name.”

I never thought the day would come when we would have to defend God as the Creator! Christianity has taken the creation and given it to Jesus. As you know Jesus’ part in creation is redeeming creation. The first Adam lost it through sin; the last Adam bought it back at Calvary through his righteous blood. But we’ve taken God’s throne and given it to Jesus; we’ve taken the creation and given it to Jesus; we’ve taken God’s name and given it to Jesus! God told Moses at the burning bush, “My eternal name is the Lord God,” and He called Himself the Lord God over 200 times in the book of Ezekiel. When the angel appeared to Mary he said, “The Lord God...” Who is that? That’s God the Father: “The Lord God shall give to this child the throne of his father David.” He’s called Lord God 9 times in the book of Revelation. So I’m out now to give God the Father the glory due to His name!

Revelation 14:6-7 says, “I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel.” The end-time message declared by a mighty angel is “Fear God and give glory to Him and worship Him.” Who is that? God the Father, the Creator. “Worship Him who created the heavens, and the earth, and the seas, and the fountains of water.” So when we give God the Father His glory we’re right on message, and we’re right on time.

If anybody asks you what I believe you be quick to tell them. I’m not going to hide it. We’re telling everybody that this is the message for today. We don’t have to hide it. I sent a tract called “Can You Face Reality?” to over 91,000 Christian ministers. Another tract, “Shocking Admissions” has gone out to over 43,000 Christian ministers. We’ve given away hundreds of books, *To God Be the Glory*.

Now I pray to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of my Lord Jesus Christ, and my God. And I have absolutely just fallen in love with God the Father! Jesus said in Mark 12:29 that’s the greatest commandment: “Thou shalt the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy mind and all thy strength.” How are people going to love God the Father if they don’t know who He is?✧