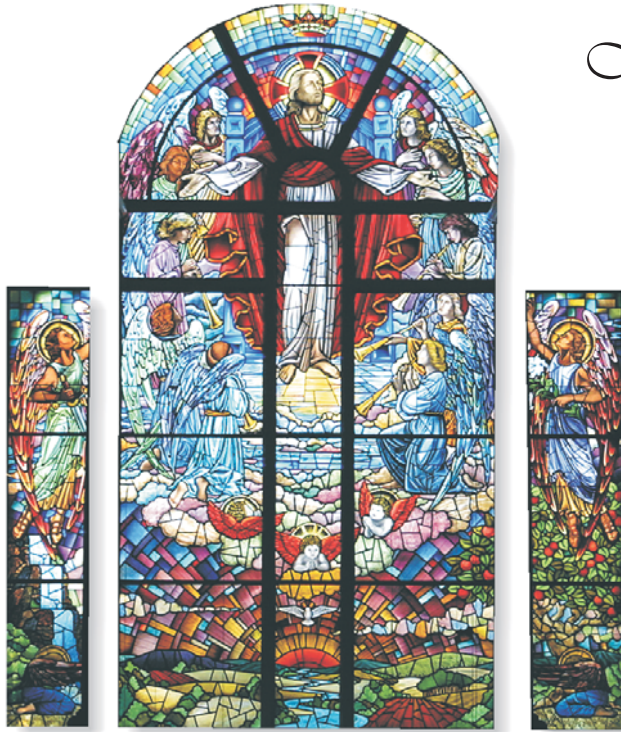


# Jesus Christ, the Glorious One



## Introduction

I have a theory that true art is something more than just a picture of an object or a snapshot of a moment in time. An artist can express more than what lies on the surface of a painting by somehow capturing what lies beneath as well. The artist is able to portray those things which come only with reflection. Some of us are too busy to take the time to look beneath the surface. We want to be told the shortcut and avoid discovering the truth ourselves. Perhaps we consider it high-brow or even boring, but this is not true of the treasure hunter. The time spent in discovering hidden treasure is, for them, worth all the effort. This is especially true when the subject of the art is taken from the scriptures. Like genuine art, scripture must be mined so that truth can be discovered. There is an added richness in your life when you meditate upon the

Word, turning it over in your mind until at last the Spirit speaks to you and brings words to life. It changes you deep inside in ways you may never understand.

The process of choosing the artist to create the stained glass window began in the summer of 2000. At that point, I turned my attention to a detailed study of the theme of the window. I sought to effectively communicate to others not only the theme of the window, but also the meaning of the elements, and their relationship to each other. My journey began by defining the window's elements, gleaning from the scriptures their meaning. This was a process of asking the Holy Spirit to shed light on why He chose certain scriptural pictures to reveal the glory of Jesus Christ to us.

It is my prayer that as you gaze upon the window, you will desire to know more about the one the scriptures refer to as "*He who sits at the Right Hand of the Father*" on the throne in majesty and glory. He is Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, whose name is above all names, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to whom one day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is truly Lord! I desire that you experience the love that compelled Him to come and walk the earth as a man just like us. I want you to take in the truth that He knows what it is to be a man, all the frustrations, disappointments, grief and sickness. Likewise, He knows laughter, celebration and worship. Be in awe that He willingly accepted the cross, its humiliation and pain. He not only accepted the cross, but in John 12:23 He referred to it as His glory. Do you know the power of the One who rose from the dead and paid our sin debt, purchased our forgiveness and offers eternal life to those who would believe what He did on their behalf? Do you believe He is the one who ascended into heaven and will one day return and take his church home with Him?

I began my study by searching for scripture that described the Throne Room of God. Two places in the Bible describe in detail the heavenly scene: Ezekiel and Revelation. The descriptions are almost identical. In Revelation, you will find references to the Throne of God and the Lamb. In Ezekiel and other Old Testament passages, you find references to the House of the Lord or the House of God. Notice as you read these passages that their descriptions of what was revealed left both writers "short of words." They found it necessary to explain the indescribable in terms of things that the heavenly scene resembled... "there was something resembling a throne." Ezekiel 1:26

*"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting [was] like a jasper stone and a in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. and before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal."*

Rev 1:2-6a

*"Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking."* Ezekiel 1:26- 28

As a student of the scriptures I am in awe of how the Word of God fits together. I love how scripture confirms scripture. Truths are spoken throughout the Word in various ways, by various authors, but there is a consistency that shows they were inspired by the Spirit of God and are of the heart and mind of the Father. That is why the Word is so beautiful. Each layer of study reveals new truths. The study of the elements and themes of the window unfolded in this same beautiful way, because the window's theme is grounded in scripture. Elements were woven together in a way that demonstrate the magnificence of our God, the extent of His concern for us, and the greatness of His purposes. The Prophet Isaiah said it best:

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."* Isaiah 55:8-9

The Lord, through His Word, chose to draw us a picture of what heaven is like by using images that are familiar to us: rivers, trees, clouds, gemstones and rainbows. I found while I studied these "pictures," and considered what they were trying to show us about Christ's glory, I could see, if only through a glass dimly, the reality of the Heavenly Throne and the majesty of the His Beloved Son and our Lord Jesus Christ. Meditate on these truths and you will begin to see Him in greater detail too.

## Christ Alone

The main theme of the stained glass window is Christ and Christ alone, high and lifted up, the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father. As I studied this, another theme arose. I recognized it as the reconciliation of God and man. This topic has been spoken of often in our church. We have been taught that through Christ we have been given the Ministry of Reconciliation. I was pleased that this second theme reflected a truth we as a church have recognized as our calling from God.

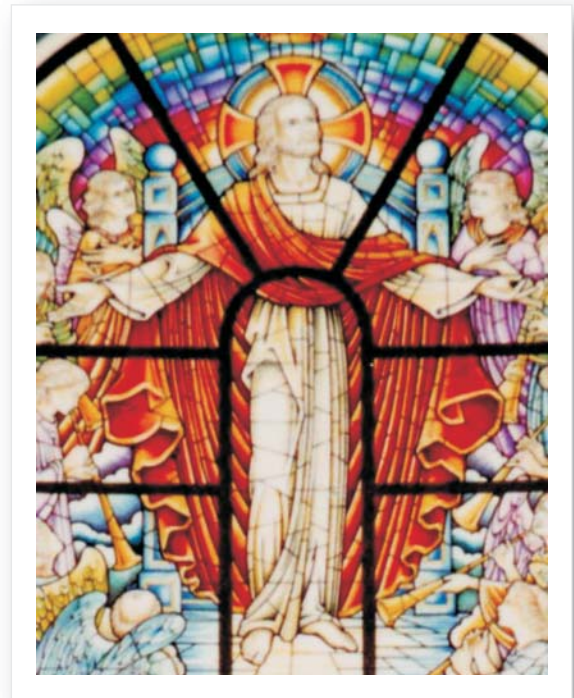
*"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation ."* 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

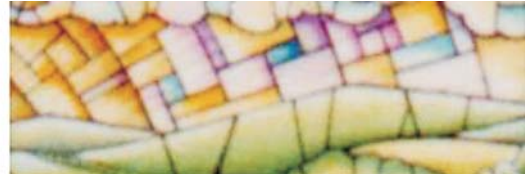
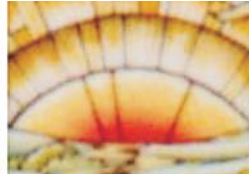
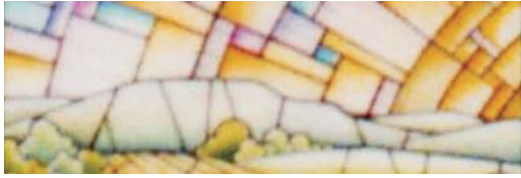
Again, it was in Ezekiel and Revelation that I first uncovered the picture of reconciliation. At Christ's return the Lord will place His sanctuary, His dwelling place, in the midst of His people, and He will dwell with them forever.

*"Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore."* Ezekiel 37: 26

*"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."* Revelation 21: 3-5

These scriptures depict the complete reconciliation of God and man, heaven and earth made one. His sanctuary will one day be placed in the midst of His people. Once in His presence, we will not be far off from the Father because of our sin.





Soon after I became a believer I began what I call "personal Bible studies." These consist of reading scripture, looking up cross references, reading commentary from my NIV Study Bible and defining words with a dictionary. Over the years, my skills and tools have developed and been refined, but the method has remained the same. I ask questions and seek answers.

Have you ever done a personal Bible study? I encourage you to try one, if you have not. You will discover fascinating insights into the application of God's Holy Word to your life. A personal study can be as simple or as complex as you desire. My studies usually are the result of a problem I need to address. I can not rest until whatever is troubling me is settled. I need to know what the Bible says and how it applies to my situation. This process has taught me to listen to God by studying His Word.

As I study, I begin to see answers to questions. The answers come not only in the Word, but are often confirmed or corrected while speaking to other believers and praying with them. Listening to a sermon or a speaker often provides further guidance.

It has always been exciting to me to know that God speaks to us. The design and the writing of this study proceeded in the same manner as my personal studies, except I have studied over a longer period of time and have covered many different subjects. Like my other inquiries, the window study began with a problem. What exactly should the stained glass window say? What did the Lord want to share with the church? What statement did we as a church want to make to our community? I knew that the window wasn't about me or any artistic expression that I may have desired to make. The window was to be about the church at Hunters' Glen and our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. You, my church family, asked me decide how to represent the church to the community and into the future. I spent time reflecting on your heart and your desire to accurately present the truth about our God to the world.

Many hours studying and patiently waiting for the Lord to speak to me have passed. Like the Israelites in the desert, I started and stopped often along the way. It has been a time of waiting while attuned to His voice, and it became a life-changing experience for me.

## Beginning the Window Design

The Summer of 1999 Kim Hall, our pastor, asked Dorinda Crump and I to come up with a theme and concept drawing for the stained glass window in the church's new sanctuary. From the moment the request was made, it was in my heart that the theme should be Christ and Christ alone. This was confirmed while reviewing the sanctuary building plans. The window was to be the focal point of the sanctuary. Its position would cause us to look upward. The window would also be the only natural light source in the room. There was only one subject that was appropriate for the position of the window: Christ Jesus high and lifted up. It seemed even more appropriate to depict Him in the heavenly realm. The verse we began with was Acts 1:9-11.

*"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. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.'"*

We decided the scene should be ambiguous, so those who viewed the window could decide if Jesus had just ascended or if He is about to return. We believe personal interpretation allows the stained glass window to have a more profound effect on those who view it. This is also the reason that the face of Christ is shown slightly turned and overshadowed by the radiance of the glory of God.

The Mount of Olives is placed below Christ because it was the place of His ascension. It is also the place where I believe the scriptures say He will return.

*"This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11*

In Zechariah, the promise of His return was declared by the Lord of Hosts to the prophet.

*"...In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west ..."* Zechariah 14:3-4

With Christ above in the heavens and the Mount of Olives below, the design of the window began to have a definite split. This created a design problem. The window seemed to contain two separate pictures. We needed something to connect heaven and earth in a way that visually made sense. This problem was compounded by the space between the lower panels. While focusing on this artistic dilemma, God showed me His purpose in sending His Only Son. I began to see the design problem as an illustration of sinful man's separation from a Holy God. The design solution was to use a picture of a waterfall to bring both heaven and earth together. It was inspired from the description of the Heavenly temple in Ezekiel 47. Heaven and earth in our window is connected by the River of Life, which symbolizes eternal life, the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel going forth to all nations.

As the rest of the elements of the window were filled in, I began to see that each element could be placed into one of two categories, or into both. The elements were expressions of Jesus Christ's Holiness and Kingship, or they were symbols of our reconciliation to God. I do not believe you can separate the exultation of Christ from His work of reconciling man to God. The window split between heaven and earth is also a picture of Christ being fully God and fully man. It would take his passion and death to reconcile man to God.

My exploration of the connection between Christ's glory and His humanity and suffering began in Philippians 2:5-11. In these verses I found a direct link between Christ's humanity, suffering and exultation. Clearly the scriptures state that because Jesus Christ emptied Himself and took the form of a bondservant and was obedient into death, *therefore* God highly exalted Him. The story of the Exalted Christ *is* the story of our reconciliation to God.

I do not know what my Lord looks like. I do know that He is wonderfully glorious and that any piece of art will fall short of that expression, no matter how magnificent. If the design of the window is grounded in the scripture, the window will point beyond itself, through the Word of God, to those things above that He has asked us to set our minds upon. For me, the window is the story of the redemption of man. It declares Christ our Intercessor, Redeemer, Healer, Sanctifier and King. I trust the window to be an invitation for those who truly seek to know Christ better to become more intimately acquainted with Him.

*"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Philippians 2:5-11

# *Sub Themes of the Window*

## *Christ's Holiness and Lordship*

### **Heavenly Elements**

His Radiance: Holiness

His Crown: Kingship

The Throne of God: Power and Authority

### **Christ's Appearance**

His White Clothing: Purity

### **Earthly Elements**

Dove: God Declares Christ as His Only Son

Clouds: The presence of God

Angels: Messengers and Worshipers

Trumpets: Announcement and Victory

Angels from the Ark of the Covenant: An Earthly Picture of the Throne of God

## *Reconciliation of Man to God*

### **Heavenly Elements**

Rainbow in the Radiance: Promise

The Crystal Sea: Washing of Our Sins

The Throne of God: Jesus as Intercessor

### **Christ's Appearance**

Red Robe: Blood of Jesus

Nail Prints in Hand: His Sacrifice

### **Earthly Elements**

Dove: The Holy Spirit sent as Teacher and Comforter, heavens opened at baptism

River of Life: Salvation, the Holy Spirit sent, the Gospel going forth, waterfall connecting heaven and earth

Tree of Life: Eternal life in Christ, the Church's ministry of Reconciliation

Angels from the Ark of the Covenant: Mercy Seat