

Message Six

The Gospel of the Glory of Christ

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:3-7; 1 Tim. 1:11

- I. Glory is an attribute of God; glory is the expression of God, God expressed in splendor—Exo. 40:34; Acts 7:55; 2 Pet. 1:3; Rev. 21:11.**
- II. The glory of God is intrinsically related to the economy of God—Eph. 1:6, 10, 12, 14; 3:21; 5:27:**
 - A. The Triune God is a God of glory—Acts 7:2; Eph. 1:17; 3:14, 16; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Pet. 4:14.
 - B. God's eternal goal is to bring His many sons into glory—Heb. 2:10; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5-6, 12, 14.
 - C. Man was created by God in His image in order that man may express Him in His glory—Gen. 1:26; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6.
 - D. God created us as vessels unto honor, prepared unto glory; we were predestinated in His sovereignty to be His vessels to express what He is in glory—Rom. 9:21, 23.
 - E. To sin is to fall short of God's glory and thus to express sin and the sinful self and to love the glory of men more than the glory of God—3:23; John 5:44; 7:18a; 12:43.
 - F. Christ's redemption has fulfilled the requirements of God's glory—Rom. 3:24-25; Heb. 9:5; cf. Gen. 3:24.
 - G. Through the gospel of the glory of Christ, God has called us by and into His eternal glory—2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11; 1 Thes. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3.
 - H. The all-inclusive Christ dwells in us as the hope of glory—Col. 1:27; 3:4, 11; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 - I. As we behold and reflect the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the Lord's image from glory to glory—2 Cor. 3:18.
 - J. The goal of God's organic salvation, and the last stage of this salvation, is glory—our glorification—Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:17, 21, 30.
 - K. When we are strengthened with power by the Father of glory through His Spirit into the inner man, when Christ makes His home in our hearts, and when we are filled unto all the fullness of God, there is glory to God in the church—Eph. 3:14-21.
 - L. The Lord Jesus prayed that we would enter into the highest stage of oneness—the oneness in the divine glory for the corporate expression of the Triune God—John 17:22.
 - M. The building of God is the Triune God wrought into us so that we may become His glorious corporate expression—Eph. 2:21-22; 3:17a, 19b, 21; 4:16; 5:27; cf. Exo. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezek. 43:4; Hag. 2:7, 9.
 - N. Since the kingdom of God and the glory of God are inseparable, the glory of God will be manifested in the coming kingdom—Matt. 6:13; 16:27; 26:64; 1 Thes. 2:12; Rev. 5:13.

- O. An outstanding feature of the New Jerusalem is that it has the glory of God, His expression; the entire city of New Jerusalem will bear the glory of God, which is God Himself shining out through the city—21:10-11.
- P. The glory of God in the economy of God involves the high peak of the divine revelation—God becoming man so that man may become God in life, nature, and expression but not in the Godhead—John 1:14; Col. 3:4; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 21:10-11.
- Q. The goal of God’s economy is that we all shine forth His glory—vv. 11, 23-24.

III. The glory of God is involved with Christ’s incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and coming again and His being the lamp in the New Jerusalem:

- A. The Word became flesh, and the glory of His divinity was concealed within the shell of His humanity, yet the disciples beheld His glory—John 1:14; Matt. 17:2.
- B. In His life and work the Lord Jesus did not seek His own glory but the glory of the One who sent Him—John 7:18; 8:50, 54.
- C. The glory of Christ’s divinity was released through the breaking of the shell of His humanity by His death—12:23-24.
- D. Christ was glorified in His resurrection—Luke 24:26; John 7:39; 17:5; Acts 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:21.
- E. Christ was glorified in His ascension; the Lord Jesus is a model of a person who has “crossed the river” and entered into God’s glory, where He is crowned with glory and honor—Heb. 2:9-10; 6:19-20; 9:24.
- F. The Lord as the Son of Man will come in the glory of the Father—Matt. 16:27; Luke 21:27.
- G. In the New Jerusalem for eternity, Christ, the Lamb as the lamp, will shine with God as the light to illuminate the New Jerusalem with the glory of God, which glory is the expression of the divine light—Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5.

IV. Christ is the image of God and the effulgence of His glory; hence, the gospel of Christ is the gospel of His glory that illuminates and shines forth—Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Rev. 6:2:

- A. The gospel of the glory of Christ is the gospel of the glory of the blessed God—1 Tim. 1:11:
 - 1. The expression *the gospel of the glory of the blessed God* refers to God’s economy in verse 4.
 - 2. The gospel with which the apostle Paul was entrusted is the effulgence of the glory of the blessed God—Heb. 1:3; Rom. 1:25; 9:5.
 - 3. By dispensing God’s life and nature in Christ into God’s chosen people, this gospel shines forth God’s glory, in which God is blessed among His people—2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3, 6, 12, 14.
- B. The gospel is the gospel of the glory of Christ, which illuminates, radiates, and shines in our hearts—2 Cor. 4:4, 6:
 - 1. God’s shining in our hearts results in the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that is, in the enlightenment that causes us to know the glory of God in the gospel of Christ—vv. 4, 6.

2. In verse 4 *God, image, Christ, glory, gospel,* and *illumination* are all in apposition, referring to the same wonderful person; God is the image, the image is Christ, Christ is the glory, the glory is the gospel, and the gospel is the illumination.
 3. The illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ; this indicates that the gospel of the glory of Christ is a lovely person on whose face we can see the glory of God—vv. 4, 6; Matt. 17:2.
 4. The glory of God manifested in the face of Jesus Christ is the God of glory expressed through Jesus Christ, who is the effulgence of the glory of God; to know Him is to know the God of glory—Acts 7:2; Heb. 1:3.
- C. Through the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, the Christ of glory as the excellent treasure is received by the believers; now the shining reality of Christ, the embodiment and expression of the Triune God, is the treasure within us—2 Cor. 4:6-7:
1. God's shining, which is God's dispensing, in our hearts brings into us a treasure, the all-inclusive Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God as the life-giving Spirit to be our life and everything—vv. 4, 6-7; Col. 2:9; 3:4, 11; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 2. This treasure, the indwelling Christ, is the divine source of the supply for the Christian life—2 Cor. 13:5; 4:7; Phil. 4:13.
- D. God shines in our hearts that we may shine on others so that they may have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that is, the knowledge of Christ, who expresses and declares God—2:15; John 1:18:
1. The gospel of the glory of Christ first shines into us, and then it shines out from within us—Matt. 5:16.
 2. In our preaching of the gospel, there should be an illumination; we need to shine forth the gospel of the glory of Christ from within us—Phil. 2:15.
 3. Christ as the treasure within us is the source of the power energizing us and enabling us to manifest the truth; if we would live for the manifestation of the truth, we must renounce the hidden things of shame, not walk in craftiness, and not adulterate the word of God—2 Cor. 4:2, 7.
 4. In proclaiming the gospel of the glory of Christ, we should not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, who is the content of the gospel (v. 5); Christ Jesus as Lord comprises:
 - a. Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever—Rom. 9:5.
 - b. The eternal Word incarnated to be a man—John 1:1, 14.
 - c. Jesus crucified as a man to be our Savior and resurrected to be the Son of God—Acts 4:10-12; 13:33.
 - d. Christ exalted to be the Lord, even the Lord of all men, who is the image of God, the effulgence of God's glory—2:36; 10:36; Rom. 10:12; John 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:3; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3.
 5. Those who receive the gospel of glory through our shining will have Christ as the precious treasure dispensed into them; then, like us, they will be earthen vessels containing this priceless treasure—2 Cor. 4:4, 6-7.