

**The 7-FOLD Excellencies of the Mystery:
"The Church which is His Body:
From Glory to Glory!"**

Review: You will remember that several fellowships back we looked at 1 Cor. 15:45 as that verse indicates that the Christ "became a life giving spirit" in his resurrection which opens the way for the living out of his resurrection life in us who are saved.

The apostle also gave testimony of that risen life, as we saw, in Phil. 1:19 & 20 where he wrote these words concerning "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ":

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and **the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ**. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also **Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.**

I believe this work of God under grace is hereby being distinguished from the works of God in other dispensational contexts. Previously the Holy Spirit worked in ways harmonious to how he was at that time working through the preaching of the coming millennial kingdom. Signs, wonders and miracles were the rule of the day, even at times in the churches as a witness to Israel with whom God was still working. This "Kingdom-Oriented" work continued until Acts 28:28 when Israel was formally set aside by the apostle Paul.

And yes, God still uses the Holy Spirit today in the lives of believers. We saw that as we studied Galatians 5, remember? But he is working according to the riches of his grace and not according to the preaching of the coming kingdom on earth!

Our focus has more recently been on the truth communicated to the Corinthian believers in 2 Cor. 4 primarily:

#1: Paul Suffered -- For the Sake of the Gospel

2 Cor. 4:3-4

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which

believe not, lest **the light of the glorious gospel of Christ**, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

#2: Paul Suffered -- For the Sake of Our Knowledge

2 Cor. 4:6-7

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give **the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency (ὑπερβολή) of the power may be of God, and not of us.

#3: Paul Suffered -- For Our Resurrected Life

2 Cor. 4:10-12

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

#4: Paul Suffered -- For God's Glory and Ours!

2 Cor. 4:15-18

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding (ὑπερβολή) and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

And, then, most blessedly,

2 Cor. 3:17-18

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the

Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Today we are privileged to finish that Fifth Excellency concerning the Body of Truth given for the building up of the Church which is His Body. We shall look at the revelation given by Paul just preceding chapter four of his second letter to the Corinthians.

Our Scriptures Today (all in 2 Cor. 3): 2 Cor. 3:1-3; 7-10; 12-14; 17-18

Our Outline Today:

- #1: The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: In Our Hearts**
- #2: The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: Without Limitation**
- #3: The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: In All Simplicity**
- #4: The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: Always!!**

I. The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: In Our Hearts

[READ] 2 Cor. 3:1-3

1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

3 Forasmuch as **ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.**

- ***This begins a great analogy in several parts. The point of the analogy is that there is a very great contrast revealed here, between the ministry of God through Moses and the ministry of God today, by Christ himself towards us through Paul and his revelation.***
 - ***The first part of the analogy states the contrast between the stone tablets of Moses Law and human hearts softened by God through the preaching of the gospel***
 - ***The second part of the analogy comes next, in verses 7-10:***
 - ***Here there is a direct correspondence drawn between the mask on Moses face when he came down from Mount Sinai and the blindness on human hearts regarding spiritual truth for Israel and even now generally speaking.***
 - ***We should look for a moment at Exodus 34 which is where the apostle is dwelling:***

■ **Exo 34:28-35**

28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.

30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.

31 And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them.

32 And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai.

33 And [till] Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face.

34 But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel [that] which he was commanded.

35 And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

The word here is simple enough, but the apostle wants us to grasp it's perhaps "hidden" meaning, and that is what he gives us here in this chapter before us today in which he explains what was really happening in the Sinai wilderness so many centuries ago.

- ***But, before we go on to this second part of the teaching here, let's take to heart the first part of the teaching***
 - ***The gospel of the grace of God has softened our hearts (they were hearts of stone) and so we have become "living epistles", "living letters" - and not spiritually dead letters, as it were, as dead religion produces.***
 - ***But many today are going to Moses still as their example, though, as we shall soon see, that Law was a ministry of condemnation, not of justification and life as we have today,***

under grace. And, yes, indeed Moses and the law are a great example, a great manifestation of the righteousness of God, but they are not to be taken as our guide - and it is so important to realize this. From glory to glory!

[Your comments?]

II. The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: Without Limitation

[READ] 2 Cor. 3:7-10

7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth (“ὕπερβάλλω”).

- ***So, in great contrast to the mighty work of God under Moses Law which was so limited, we see the work of God today under Grace as so unlimited in scope and power.***
- ***Here we see these two faces contrasted: The face of Moses and the face of Jesus Christ!! And what a contrast it is!***
 - ***Compare and contrast:***
 - ***2 Cor. 3:7*** But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold **the face of Moses** for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:
 - ***2 Cor. 4:6*** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in **the face of Jesus Christ**.
 - ***So the face of our Lord Jesus IS NOT COVERED TODAY, UNDER GRACE! But the face of Moses was covered so that the glory that was displayed there could not be seen and therefore could not be known by the people of Israel, to whom the Law would be ministered.***
 - ***That glory was fading and that seemed to be the issue. The knowledge of this was withheld therefore and the people of Israel were left only with the Law without the***

critically needed hope of glory!

- **THEY COULD NOT KNOW WHAT GOD WAS REALLY DOING SINCE THE REVELATION OF THE DEPARTURE OF THIS GLORY WAS HIDDEN FROM THEIR VIEW! GOD DOES NOT ALWAYS MAKE IT CLEAR WHAT HE IS DOING THEREFORE! THIS IS SO IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND SO THAT WE DO FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS BEEN REVEALED OF WHAT GOD IS DOING TODAY.**
- ***So, our Lord's face is not covered NOW, Paul says, so that the glory there was clearly seen, first by Paul, and NOW by us as we read this revelation set before us here.***
- ***And so the Law was a ministry of CONDEMNATION AND DEATH, not a ministry of RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LIFE! And this is necessarily so, because Law always condemns (since no one could or can live up to it and one failure to do so brings condemnation (see Gal. 3:10 & James 2:10, one transgression of the Law breaks the entire Law!) - an illustration.***
- ***And therefore there is really no comparison between the work of God today in Righteousness and the ministry of condemnation under the Law - Note also that to emphasize this great contrast between Law and Grace, here in verse 10 the apostle uses again this word “περβάλλω”, this time in the verbal form!***
- ***But he continues with the analogy and its explanation in the next verses, but now draws a most blessed conclusion from the analogy. He writes that the ministry of the spirit never condemns but always brings glory “in the face of Jesus Christ”. This is very interesting wording indeed. What I think this means is simply this: the communication from God concerning his working under grace is completely TRANSPARENT, as if he were speaking directly to us face to face. Amen. Do we see this? Do we know it? From glory to glory!***

[Your comments?]

III. The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: In All Simplicity

[READ] 2 Cor. 3:12-14

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel

could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

- ***It seems to me that the veil on Moses face practically speaking removed the hope of Israel through the Law. Not through the works of the Law but only through Christ himself could there be any hope!***
- ***The veil Moses wore points to the veil that is on the hearts of unbelieving Israel, even today (and upon unbelieving Gentiles too).***
- ***But, by contrast, there is nothing obscuring the full revelation of what God is doing today, UNDER GRACE -- and that is most glorious indeed. We have such hope therefore. There is no confusion since all is revealed and none is hidden concerning the working of God today.***
- ***Such hope indeed! From glory to glory!***

[Your comments?]

IV. The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: Always!!

[READ] 2 Cor. 3:17-18

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
18 But we all, **with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

- ***Here we have the words “from” and “to”, “from glory to glory”. We will consider the meaning of this expression, but first let’s look at what he says here in these last two verses of the chapter, since it is clear that these verses are the culmination of Paul’s teaching in this chapter.***
- ***Verse 17:***
 - ***Lit. “Now the Lord is the Spirit” - there are two definite articles here, very unusual wording. This seems to me to be yet another reference to the same “supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ” he revealed for us in Phil. 1:19.***
 - ***And, “where the the spirit [Lord] is, there is liberty”***
- ***Verse 18:***
 - ***“Beholding as in a glass”: as in a mirror that perfectly reveals the Christ of heavenly glory and that represents our heavenly hope indeed, that nothing in us shall take away from the***

presence and the power of being together with him for all eternity.

- *“Are being changed”*: This is a present tense and will be paralleled in the language ending chapter 4 as we saw in our last fellowship. Remember the words “while we look . . .” of 4:14-18.
- *“Into the same image”*: meaning the heavenly one **BY GRACE**
- *“From glory to glory”*
- *“By the spirit of the Lord [lit. by Lord spirit]”*
- *Open face beholding the glory of the Lord: Nothing is hidden, all is revealed. The “hyperbolic working” of the Lord through the abundance of grace is so great indeed. Amen?*

[Your thoughts / testimonies?]

- *WHAT IF WE IGNORE PAUL’S TESTIMONY AS SO MANY DO TODAY? KNOWING THIS CHANGES (OR ABSOLUTELY SHOULD CHANGE) EVERYTHING FOR US IN THIS LIFE. OUR BURDENS SHOULD BE LIFTED, OUR TRIALS MADE LIGHT. Have we believed that? Have we received this teaching? What about our trials? How heavy are they?*
- *Paul is proclaiming here that as we live out the resurrection life of Christ Jesus that dwells within each of us, we shall each bring great glory to God. It is such a privilege for us “earthen vessels” to share in his working according to the abundance of his grace through Christ Jesus.*

Our subject today in a nutshell, as it were, has been this: The Glory of God Is Revealed, From Glory to Glory: In Our Hearts, Without Limitation, In All Simplicity, and Indeed, Always. FROM GLORY TO GLORY, EVEN AS BY THE LORD SPIRIT!! AMEN AND AMEN!

Conclusion: As I remarked in closing last time, “ALL THINGS ARE WORKING OUT SO GLORIOUSLY FOR US!!”, he adds here (my paraphrase - forgive me!). The apostle uses such “ὑπερβολή” again here as in chapter 4 and elsewhere. For God’s working is to accomplish A FAR MORE EXCEEDING (ὑπερβολή) “WEIGHT OF GLORY” -- The risen and ascended Christ Jesus has been made for us a life giving spirit -- and he has been poured out into each of us believers -- What will our response be? That is the question.

[Any Testimonies?]