

7. THE EXPECTATION OF GLORY

According to Paul, we are to walk worthy of the God who calls us into His own kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2.12). At least one translation uses the phrase *His own reign and glory* (YLT). The coming eon is about entering the celestial realm of the kingdom of God. Our place in the kingdom during the eons of the eons will be determined at the judgment seat (*bema, dais*) of God (*Christ*). Suffering and enduring in this day will lead to reigning with Christ in His day. Thus, we are called or invited into God's own reign and glory. This is a tremendous calling and something that is worth diligently pursuing while we are alive and thus remain, or until we fall asleep in Christ, and He comes in the air for us. Every day that passes increases the glorious possibility that our generation of believers may not see death but will be snatched up in the air as those who are alive and remain.

The conquering believers in Christ will be enjoyers of an allotment in the kingdom of God. The conquerors will receive a life that will be immortal, endless and spiritual, a life beyond death and corruption—a life no longer plagued with the thought of sin and death; a life no longer tossed to and fro by the adversity and the uncertainty of life in bodies of corruption; a life no longer led by the soul of a body that relies on the soil of this earth, but led by the spirit; a life no longer in spiritual battle with the dark forces among the celestials, for this new life will judge them; a life no longer restricted to the earth's atmosphere, but a life that enters an entirely different realm that is now reserved for the messengers or angels of God and in which our beloved Lord lives.

How do we enter into the reign and glory? We enter by the grace of God given to us in Christ Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, the Resurrection, and the Life. There is no other way, for no one, not even those who believe in this day, are worthy of God's grace. Grace is that overwhelming power of God that takes the ugly and transforms it into the joyously beautiful and that comes through believing in God's Son and the finished work of His cross.

Grace is God's favor poured out on the ugly, the unbeliever, and the sinner. We are not worthy of God's grace. No one of mankind is worthy, but in God's grace, all mankind will eventually be brought into the glory of God. If we were to have a balance sheet with God in which our merits were listed on one side and our demerits were listed on the other side, we would discover that we all have no merits, only demerits. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. *Sin* means "to miss," and all mankind has missed the mark of God. But thank God, in and through the Son of God, all mankind will experience the grace of God, not all at once, but each in its own class and in its own era. We, who have been called and chosen of God before the disruption of the world, have the glorious blessing of receiving the grace of God in this day so that we might enter the glory of the eons of the eons with Christ.

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If this does not excite your heart, then nothing will.

Now, grace and glory go hand-in-hand, and as we near the conclusion of this book that has been titled *The Purpose of the Eons*, it is appropriate that we consider glory or, more specifically, the expectation of glory.

The number of times the word *glory* appears in the English translations of the sacred Scriptures varies considerably from a low of 209 times to a high of 434 times. Most of the variation occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), for there are at least ten Hebrew words that could be translated into the word *glory*. There is more uniformity in the translations of the Greek Scriptures (New Testament), where the word *glory* is discovered from 165 to 174 times, based on one primary Greek word, *doxa*. What we need to see is that the word *glory* is a very significant word in Scripture and one worthy of our utmost consideration.

To look at every verse in context is beyond the scope of this chapter; therefore, this study has been restricted to mostly Paul's epistles and, even with this, only a few verses are presented. Nevertheless, I trust the spirit of God to open the eyes of your heart to be enlightened as to the true nature of glory.

According to Paul, glory is to be revealed to us (Romans 8.18). We are to be glorying in expectation of the glory of God (Romans 5.2). We are to know the riches of His glory (Romans 9.23; Ephesians 1.18; 3.16; Colossians 3.4). We are to be raised in glory (1 Corinthians 15.43). We are to be transformed into the image of Christ, from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3.18). We are to come into the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God (2 Corinthians 4.6). We are to suffer momentary light afflictions for the eonian burden (weight) of glory (2 Corinthians 4.17). We are to come into the glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, being holy and blameless (Ephesians 5.27). We are to be transformed into conformity with the body of His glory (Philippians 3.21). All our needs are to be supplied according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4.19). We are to be revealed with Christ in glory (Colossians 3.4). We are called into God's own kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2.12). We are to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2.14; 2 Timothy 2.10). We will be taken up in glory (1 Timothy 3.16). We are to be looking for the blessed expectation and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus (Titus 2.13).

These verses alone should pique your interest in this essential matter of glory.

The evangel of the glory of Christ.

Paul uniquely called his evangel *the evangel of the glory of Christ*, which he was called to dispense to the nations. It is the good news of the glory of Christ. We will never know glory apart from our beloved Lord. Praise God; when we are saved, we are placed on a pathway to glory that will never fade but will only grow brighter and brighter until the new day dawns.

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The god of this eon blinds the understanding of the unbelievers to this evangel, but for those who believe, it is illuminated to be seen spiritually with the expectation that one day, we pray soon, we will literally see and experience glory in spiritual bodies of glory.

In his second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul first mentioned this evangel in light of Moses receiving a fading glory when the Lord appeared to him on the mountain. Moses' glory had to be covered, but the glory of Christ is unveiled to the spiritual.

Now, if our evangel is covered, also, it is covered in those who are perishing, in whom the god of this eon blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that **the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ**, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them. For we are not heralding ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, yet ourselves your slaves because of Jesus, for the God Who says that, out of darkness light shall be shining, is He Who shines in our hearts, with a view to **the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**. (2 Corinthians 4.3-6 *cv*)

We are no longer in darkness like the rest of the world, for God has shone in our hearts a view of which the world of darkness knows nothing. It is a view that enlightens our heart with the knowledge of the glory of God. How do we come to know this glory? It is in the face of Jesus Christ. We do not see Him with our physical eye but rather with our spiritual eye; with the eye of the heart we see Jesus and, in Him, we see the glory of God. How do we see Jesus? Where does this spiritual sight begin? It begins as we see Him in Scripture and, in some measure, through life's experiences.

As John recorded: *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth* (John 1.14 *NASB*). John, along with the other disciples from among the circumcision, in many respects, only saw the veiled glory of Jesus, the Man. It was not until He was transfigured on the mount in the presence of Peter, James and John that the hidden glory of Christ broke forth in a preview of Christ in His coming kingdom and glory. In that precious moment on the mount, John and the others beheld His glory (see Matthew 17.1-8).

However, Paul saw the risen and glorified Christ in heaven (Acts 9.1-19) and was charged with unveiling the marvelous glory of the Lord to the nations. He saw the Lord in glory, and the secret of all that this means was unveiled to this most unlikely Pharisee.

Through Paul's evangel, the eyes of our heart are opened to see that Christ is the image of the invisible God. No man can see God, but He has given us His exact image in His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. As we behold the Son, we see the Father. As we behold the glory of Christ, we behold the glory of God. The

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Father delights in His Son and delights to reveal His Son to us and in us. This is why Paul, in his letter to Timothy, called it the evangel of the glory of the happy God (1 Timothy 1.11 cv), with which he was entrusted.

Paul is the apostle of the nations and, according to his own words, he was charged to dispense the evangel of the glory of Christ to the nations.

Let us be perfectly clear that glory does not come apart from Christ; there is no other way to glory but through Christ. The Lord of glory was crucified so that we can enter the glory of the Lord. Christ is our Life, and He is our Expectation. Paul wrote to Timothy, his beloved child of the faith, and declared that the Lord Jesus Christ is our *Expectation* (1 Timothy 1.1 cv). Christ is among us to bring us into His glory.

Christ among the nations.

The secret which has been concealed from the eons and from the generations, yet now was made manifest to His saints, to whom God wills to make known what are the glorious riches of this secret among the nations, which is: **Christ among you, the expectation of glory....** (Colossians 1.26-27 cv)

Paul was given the charge to dispense the secret of God in Christ. Today, it is no longer to remain secret, for it has been revealed through Paul's epistles. Notice that in these verses, Paul referred to the glorious riches of the secret of God, and this secret was made known among the nations. It was one secret, and this secret is that Christ is among the nations, the expectation of glory. In other words, He is among those who have been called out from among the nations, which refers to the believers of the body of Christ.

When He came to this earth in His first advent, Jesus walked among the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Some of the Jews beheld His glory (John 1.14) but many rejected Him; consequently, they rejected His glory as well. But through the apostle of the nations, we are told that Christ is now among the nations. Of course, He is not walking among us in the literal sense so that we can see Him with our physical eyes. In spirit, He is among the nations that comprise His spiritual body, the ecclesia.

Christ among you, the nations, is the expectation of glory. In other words, because Christ is among us, we can be assured that glory will come to us one day. He has not left us nor forsaken us but continues to walk among us to bring us into His glory. What comfort this should bring to our hearts!

Further, Christ is now walking among the unbelievers of the nations and is saving many in these dark days right before His arrival in the air. Praise God!

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Now, this is all well and good as sound doctrine, but let us ask ourselves a practical question.

What is our expectation or hope?

If this question were asked of believers, most would probably respond that their expectation is eternal life. Of course, by now the reader should understand that Scripture refers to eonian life and not eternal life. Nevertheless, inherent in the response of eternal life is the thought of an endless life. Those who will have the joy of entering the celestial realm in the next eon will enter into the fullness of eonian life, which really is the same as having an endless or eternal life.

No matter which term one uses—eonian life, endless life or eternal life—the expectation is actually summed up in the word *immortality*. Isn't immortality truly the desire or expectation of believers?

What is immortality? It is having life beyond death, that is, a life that can no longer be touched by death. If there is no longer death, there also can no longer be sin, for death brings on sin. *Through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned* (Romans 5.12 cv). Death brought sin into mankind and in death sin reigns. Remove death and sin can no longer exist. Thus, being immortal puts the believer beyond death in which sin reigns. The sting of death, which is sin, is swallowed up by victory, for which we will be forever praising and thanking God, who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15.54-57).

As tremendous as *immortality* is, the word in itself does not tell us anything about endless life other than there will be no death or sin. This truly is tremendous, but it tells us little of the quality or the character of the life that the believer will have in the eons of the eons and beyond into what could be called eternity. How do we know that living forever will not be a boring or dull existence? How do we know that it will be a most pleasing and satisfying existence? How do we know that it will answer every desire of our heart beyond anything we hope or expect? How do we know that it will be beyond anything our eye has seen and our ear has heard (1 Corinthians 2.9)?

We need something to qualify immortality, some expectation of what immortality will be like. We know that we will be with the Lord forever, but even this thought does not tell us what it will be like. What will it be like to be in the presence of the Lord?

Sure and certain hope—expectation.

The answer to these questions lies in the word *glory*, for in this word we discover the expectation of the believer and what immortality is all about. We are to expect glory. What does expectation mean? It means the sure and certain hope in something that we cannot see today but fully expect to see in a future day. Hope

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as revealed in Scripture has no uncertainty implied in its meaning. The hope that Paul revealed is a sure thing, and we should never doubt for a moment that it will come to pass, for as sure as Christ was raised from among the dead, our hope, one day, will be manifested.

When the fulfillment of our hope comes, then hope will be no more. As Paul wrote: *Hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?* (Romans 8.24 NASB). Today, faith, hope, and love abide, but in the coming eons only love, the greatest of these, will abide.

Paul referred to hope in several ways. We are to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15.13). We are waiting for the hope of righteousness (Galatians 5.5). We are called in one hope of our calling (Ephesians 4.4). We have a hope laid up for us in the heavens (Colossians 1.5). We have the steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father (1 Thessalonians 1.3). We have the hope of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5.8). We fix our hope on the living God (1 Timothy 4.10; 5.5). We have the hope of eonian life (Titus 1.2; 3.7).

Further, a word that, most likely, many fail to grasp declares that the Father of glory has the hope of His calling (see Ephesians 1.17-18). The call going out to the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, comes from the Father of glory. This alone indicates that the hope and calling have something to do with glory.

Hope or expectation is something great, with many dimensions to it. Paul was not alone in bringing to light the hope that is in Christ, for many call Peter the apostle of hope. However, Paul was unique among the apostles, for he has revealed to us the reconciliation of all, the justification of all, and God being *All* in all, which ultimately is the hope of all mankind, whether mankind knows it or not. Further, Paul alone has given us the unique expression *the expectation of glory*.¹

Glory is to be seen and experienced.

The expectation of glory means that we are to expect glory. We are to anticipate it, to desire it, and to long for it. But what is glory? If we do not know what it is, how will we know what to expect?

In Scripture, we discover the expressions the God of glory (Acts 7.2), the Father of glory (Ephesians 1.17), and the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2.8). We also

¹ The Concordant Version uses the word *expectation* in place of the word *hope*. *Expectation* is probably the more accurate rendering, for within this word is the concept of hope with the added dimension of certainty that what is not seen will most definitely come to pass. In the world, the word *hope* does not always convey the thought of certainty. Many people hope for things that they never receive. In this regard, it is more like a wish or wishful thinking than a sure thing. The hope of the believer will not disappoint (Romans 5.5). It cannot disappoint, for it has no uncertainty in it. Consequently, expectation more appropriately describes our hope. Henceforth, the word *expectation* will be used.

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discover the expressions the glory of God (e.g., Acts 7:55; Romans 3:23; 5:2; Philippians 2:11; Revelation 21:11), the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4), and the glory of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18; 8:19). On the one hand, glory is presented as coming forth from God and His Son. On the other hand, glory is presented as an attribute of God and His Son that is theirs alone. As we behold God and His Son, we behold their glory. In other words, it is a descriptor of who they are. We behold the Son, and we must proclaim glory. When the Son shines upon us or moves in our lives in very special ways, we too proclaim glory. However, this alone does not explain glory to us.

Actually, glory is a difficult word to define. In many respects, glory is something to be seen and to experience. Mere words seem to fall far short of expressing the depths of glory. There are many facets to this word. Glory does not stand alone in Scripture, for it is often joined with other words or concepts, such as grace, light, love, freedom, oneness, and happiness. It is through these concepts or attributes of God that we see glory. We could say that *glory is an outcome*. The outcome of grace is glory. The outcome of love is glory. When glory bursts forth there is freedom, there is oneness, and there is happiness. At times, glory is likened to something that is heavy, as a weight or burden. And yet, glory is often portrayed as light; perfect, unadulterated light. God is light, and when we see God in the face of Christ, we see glory.

Glory must be seen and experienced in the Person of our Lord Jesus. It is not something to grasp through head knowledge or intellect. Most assuredly, when we enter the celestial realm, behold our beloved Lord Jesus and grasp our spiritual bodies, the new creation in Christ, one word will come forth from our transformed lips: *“Glory!”*

This reminds me of the day when my beloved wife was faced with a very serious, even life-threatening illness. I stood in the emergency room of the hospital and looked down at my wife as she lay on the stretcher ready to be taken into the operating room to have surgery. We did not know what the outcome would be with this illness, whether it would be life or death. The doctors did not give us much hope. All we could do was trust the whole matter to the Lord that His will would be done. Our prayer was: “Lord, Thy will, will be done and to You will go all the glory.” This was not a prayer for healing; it was an acknowledgment of faith that God’s will was being worked out in this situation no matter what the outcome. In death, God would receive the glory. In life, God would receive the glory. Either way, it would be to the glory of God.

The grace of God came upon both of us in such a powerful way that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding filled our hearts. I will never forget looking at the lovely face of my wife as she lay there. Her body was in distress, but her spirit was soaring among the celestials in glory. She looked so peaceful, so calm, so rested, even as she was about to enter something that was filled with risk and uncertainty. I not only saw and experienced grace that day, but I also saw glory. I cannot describe it; all I can say is that I saw the glory of God in the face of my

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wife. I will carry this image in my heart until the day that we enter glory. Grace and glory go hand-in-hand, and we experienced both over the months that followed as the Lord began to restore her back to health. We experienced the outcome of the lavish grace of God; the outcome of grace upon grace was glory unto glory. We give God all the praise and glory!

The point of sharing this is that no matter how much any of us write or teach on the matter of grace and glory, there is always this sense that we have merely touched the edges of the essence of God's grace and glory. Mere words that attempt to explain these gifts of God seem to fall short. Grace and glory are to be experienced and to be seen, not merely talked about.

Glory is the outcome of grace.

In unfolding one of the pillars of his evangel, Paul brought grace and glory together.

Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into **this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God.** (Romans 5.1-2 cv)

We are justified by faith so that we may have peace toward God. *Peace* refers to being reconciled to God. *Justification* and *reconciliation* go hand-in-hand. *Grace* is what gives us access to God, and by faith we are to stand in grace and be glorying in expectation of the glory of God. Notice we are to be glorying, which means that our justification and reconciliation give us a foretaste of glory. So, right from the beginning of our being justified by faith we are to have the expectation of glory. We could say that as we stand in the grace of God, we glory in the expectation of the glory of God that is ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord. It is by grace that we see the glory of God and will come into His glory. The two are inseparable.

To add to this thought, we are given a word of encouragement about grace and glory through a Psalm.

For the LORD God is **a sun and shield**; the LORD gives **grace and glory**; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
(Psalm 84.11 NASB)

The Lord gives grace and glory, which is a good thing. He does not withhold grace and glory from His people who walk uprightly or with integrity. This is an encouragement to press on toward the goal, to run the race of the faith according to the rules, to get hold of eonian life.

It is significant that this verse starts with the Lord God is a sun and shield, for these describe glory and grace. Glory is a sun and grace is a shield. As a shield,

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grace keeps us, protects us and preserves us for God and His Son. It is by God's grace that we will arrive safely at His celestial kingdom. Glory is a sun which means it is a light, but not just any light; it refers to God who is Light and to His Son who is the Light of the world. Consider these verses.

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that **God is Light**, and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1.5 NASB)

In Him was life, and **the life was the Light of men**. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1.4-5 NASB)

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "**I am the Light of the world;** he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have **the Light of life**." (John 8.12 NASB)

God, who is the invisible God and Father, is Light, and His Son, who is the visible image of God, is the Light of the world. There is no darkness or even shadow in them. They represent the purest of light in which no evil, or no sin, or no imperfection of any kind lurks. Darkness often refers to that which is evil, but in the Son there is no evil of any kind.

My wife's illness could be placed in the category of something ugly. After all, when we face death, is this not something ugly? But praise God; the overwhelming grace of God transformed what was ugly into something joyously beautiful, the glory of God. When we see the grace of God in action, it brings joy to our hearts. It makes us happy, and the outcome is glory. It is like being refreshed and cleansed in the light of God. Again, words seem to fail in describing glory.

Glory is light.

Nevertheless, as we press on in this matter, as we have seen, glory can refer to the purest of light. In encouraging the saints, Paul wrote that God the Father makes us competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light.

Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear, do not cease praying for you and requesting that you may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, you to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God; being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy; at the same time giving thanks to the Father, **Who makes you competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light, Who rescues us out of the jurisdiction of Darkness, and transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His love....** (Colossians 1.9-13 cv)

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Paul contrasted the jurisdiction of darkness and the kingdom of the Son of His love. One kingdom or domain is dark, and the other is light. The enjoyment of an allotment will be an allotment in the kingdom of light. What does this mean? It means that in the kingdom there will be absolutely no evil, no corruption, no illness, no sin, no death, no war, no pain, no suffering, and the list could go on almost endlessly. The kingdom of light is one in which everything is as pure as the Son of God is pure. There will be no imperfection in the kingdom of the Son of God's love. This is the glory of God, for God is Light, and His Son is Light.

All imperfections, all darkness, all failures, all the bad will be settled at the bema of Christ so that we will enter the celestial realm unhindered and unencumbered; set free from corruption and all that hinders the glory of God.

Today, our Lord makes His home in inaccessible light that no man can perceive, for Christ alone possesses immortality.

He is King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone has immortality, **making His home in light inaccessible**, Whom not one of mankind perceived nor can be perceiving, to Whom be honor and might eonian! Amen! (1 Timothy 6.15b-16 cv)

Praise God; a day is coming when the body of Christ will possess His immortality and will enter the kingdom of light, which is the kingdom of glory. So, we can see that, in some respects, light and glory are the same.

Glory is the outcome of love.

Further, just as grace and glory, and light and glory go together, so do love and glory go together.

“Father, those whom Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may be **beholding My glory** which Thou has given Me, for **Thou lovest Me** before the disruption of the world.” (John 17.24 cv)

Love brings forth glory. The Father and the Son have an unbroken, unrestrained love relationship that must reach out to all mankind and all creation. However, until the consummation of the eons, only those who are the Lord's in our current eon and the eons of the eons to follow will be with the Lord in glory. They will behold His glory that He alone possesses as the Son of God. In love, Christ will reveal Himself to His people. When love is unrestrained, glory breaks forth.

The kingdom of glory is the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Love and glory go hand-in-hand. Again, when we believe, we are transported into the *spiritual* kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1.13). In His kingdom, we are bathed in the love of God that is in the Son, and we experience the glory of God.

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In the midst of our trial, my wife and I knew the love of God for us and the love that we have for each other. In her days of illness, we saw glory and love kiss each other in such a way that it is hard to describe. Obviously, this is poetic language, but it is meant to convey the thought that glory is the outcome of love. When we see the love of Christ manifested, we have to say that we behold the glory of Christ.

But again, words seem to fail in describing glory.

Glory is freedom.

When you woke this day, you did not know what the day would bring. You probably had many thoughts on your mind, some good, some bad, and some perplexing. You had to make a multitude of decisions. You most likely were also bombarded with a host of thoughts, perhaps doubts and things that bothered your mind. You may be struggling with some sin in your life or with some conflict with another person. Perhaps you have had some anger build up in you over some conflict you have encountered. Perhaps you are feeling ill or hungry. Perhaps your day started out good and joy filled your heart but now it is gone and you are wondering what tomorrow will bring. Perhaps your soul is screaming at you for some form of pleasure and satisfaction. Perhaps you are suffering in some manner. Perhaps you are uncertain about your future and perplexed as to what lies ahead and how you should proceed. The list of issues that you have faced and that you will face tomorrow, the next day and all the days to follow seem countless. We could say that this list contains many points of darkness and shadows in the midst of light. It would be the most unusual person that goes through a week without some weight or pressure weighing down his spirit, soul and body, without some darkness or shadow lurking in his day.

Meditate on these questions: What would it be like to live free of all these countless weights and pressures, with no darkness clouding your days; to live free of the pressures and demands of the soul? What would it be like to live every day in the most marvelous light with no doubts, worries, cares, or uncertainties? What would it be like to live in the perfect light of God? What would it be like to live in perfect righteousness, joy, peace, and love? What would it be like to live every moment for God, bringing Him pleasure and delight? What would it be like to be in continual fellowship with our God and our Lord? What would it be like to be bathed continually in the love of God?

Dear brethren, this is a glimpse of glory. It is being set free from all the weighty encumbrances of living in bodies of death that only bring us affliction of body, soul, and spirit. It is living in the full expression or complement of God's Son.

Living in the pure light of God is living in freedom. Glory is freedom! We see this in Paul's message to the Romans. All creation is groaning as it waits to be set free from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. When we are set free, all creation will be set free as well. All creation groans and

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travails along with us until that day comes in which the children of God are freed from the corruption brought on our bodies by sin and death (see Romans 8.15-25). Freedom means glory!

During the time of my wife's illness, we experienced a freedom that we had never known. We were cast upon the Lord; we were bathed in His love; we were shut in with the Lord, and all the cares and uncertainties of the situation faded from our sight. Each day was a new day to trust the Lord and to experience His life. This does not mean that we did not have what could be called "bad days," for we most surely did, but when we look back over those days, we both realize that there was a power beyond us that moved us along each day. We could say that they were momentary light afflictions; they were only for a moment, and then the grace of God overwhelmed and the glory of God shone brightly on the situation and we were at peace and in love with one another in a way that we never knew in our 30 years of marriage. To God be the glory!

As Paul experienced a daily renewal within (see 2 Corinthians 4.16), we can say that something was renewed within both of us during this time that has remained with us even after four years.

Glory is the image of the Lord's glory.

What is this renewal within? It has to do with grace producing glory within our spirit, our inner man. We are to go from glory to glory as we are transformed into the image of the Lord's glory. Notice that the image we are to take on is glory, which means it is actually an appearance just like our Lord.

Now the Lord is the spirit; yet where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Now we all, with uncovered face, mirroring **the Lord's glory**, are **being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory**, even as from the Lord, the spirit. (2 Corinthians 3.17-18 cv)

Do you see how Paul connected freedom to glory? We may not see it but it is there, doing a work on the inside of all of us that will burst forth just as it did with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration. It is His life within that is doing the transforming work. We *are being conformed* to His image. This is a present work of the spirit of the Lord. His spirit is a freeing spirit.

Glory to glory comes as we see more of the secret of the evangel of the glory of Christ. We are to continually see Christ in this evangel. As the secrets of God were revealed to him, Paul went from glory to glory. He began by seeing the body of Christ taken up in the air, then he saw all the members of the body changed in the twinkling of an eye, then he saw the third heaven of the new creation, then he saw the body of Christ as a new creation in Christ identified with the new creation, and then he saw the new creation in Christ ascend to the heavenly realm, seated among the celestials. In this evangel, we see the Lord's glory, and the more we see Him and His glory, the more we are transformed into the same image.

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Dear brethren, this is going from glory to glory. As the secret of the evangel of the glory of Christ is revealed to our heart, we too go from glory to glory until we see ourselves seated among the celestials and, one day, we literally will be seated among the celestials in glory. Until that day, we are, in some measure, to experience the grace and glory of God in Christ Jesus through the spirit of the Lord as we are being transformed into His image of glory, from glory to glory. However, this requires suffering in this day.

Glory is heavy.

Paul wrote of the struggle that he had in bringing the evangel to the nations. He was afflicted in every way, and he declared that death worked in him but life in the Corinthians (see 2 Corinthians 4.7-12). He was continually encouraged by the spreading of grace to more and more people. He did not lose heart even as he recognized that his outward man was decaying, as it suffered daily affliction. However, something within him was being renewed day by day.

For all is because of you, that the grace, increasing through the majority, should be **superabounding in thanksgiving to the glory of God**. Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless that within us is being renewed day by day. For **the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory**, at our not noting what is being observed, but what is not being observed, for what is being observed is temporary, yet what is not being observed is eonian. (2 Corinthians 4.15-18 cv)

For the all things are because of you, that the grace having been multiplied, because of the thanksgiving of the more, may **abound to the glory of God**; wherefore, we faint not, but if also our outward man doth decay, yet the inward is renewed day by day; for **the momentary light matter of our tribulation, more and more exceedingly an age-during weight of glory doth work out for us....** (2 Corinthians 4.15-17 YLT)

Paul considered the affliction that he encountered as momentary (for a season) and light compared to the glory to come in the eons or the ages to follow. The suffering and affliction of this day is child's play compared to what is to come to us in the eons. It is in suffering that we become more like our Lord. If indeed we are suffering together, we will be glorified together also (Romans 8.17). We are to glory in our afflictions, for they produce endurance and testedness that result in expectation (Romans 5.3-5).

The word *burden* or *weight* has the meaning of being "heavy." We might think that something heavy does not sound very good, but we must understand that we will have bodies like our Lord's body, and they will be able to carry the weight or burden of glory. The bodies of death that we occupy today would be crushed under the weight or burden of glory. It is as if Paul wanted the brethren to know

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that glory is a crushing thing to that which is not suited for it. Glory is something very special; it requires a very special body to take on the exceedingly great glory of God or, as the Concordant Version states, *a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory*.

This makes the glory that is for all who are conformed to the image of Christ something beyond measure. No mere mortal can ever experience this glory. It requires the resurrection and transformation that comes when the Son comes from heaven to meet us in the air.

Resurrection and transformation bring us into immortality, and immortality leads us into glory, and this comes about through Christ who is the Resurrection, the Life, and our Expectation of glory.

Glory is Christ's body.

For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, **to conform it to the body of His glory**, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself. (Philippians 3.20-21 cv)

Today, we occupy bodies of humiliation. Those of us who have a few years under our belts remember when we were young and full of energy. Then, our bodies seemed almost indestructible. However, as we have aged in our earthly tents, the humiliation of our bodies has become more and more apparent, and we long to be freed from these restricted and disease-prone bodies. We long to be like our Lord and put on His celestial body.

Our hope is to be like our Lord one day, to be conformed to the body of His glory. No more humiliation, no more suffering, no more disease, no more death! We have been sown in dishonor, but when Christ comes, we will be roused in glory. Today, we wear the image of the soilish, but then we will be wearing the image of the Celestial (see 1 Corinthians 15.47-49 cv). Hallelujah!

Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested **together with Him in glory**. (Colossians 3.4 cv)

Not only will we be conformed to His body of glory, but we will be in glory. Entering the coming celestial kingdom will be glory through and through. This is all possible because Christ is our Life, and when He is manifested as who He is, we will be manifested as He is. Think about it!

THE EXPECTATION OF GLORY

Glory is oneness.

Being conformed to the body of His glory is an individual glorification, but according to our Lord Jesus, glory is oneness of the body as well.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.... (John 17.22 KJV)

The Father and the Son are one in glory, and all who belong to Christ are to share in Christ's glory and be one.

Paul wrote of the one body of Christ (Ephesians 4.4; Colossians 3.15). Today, it seems that what we see with our eyes that most people call the "church" is parted and far from expressing oneness. There are so many divisions among God's people that it seems that the Lord's prayer to His Father has not been answered. But let us not be distracted by what our eyes see. What matters is what the Lord sees and knows to be His body. The Lord knows those who are His (2 Timothy 2.19). Do we think that this prayer has gone unanswered and that the glory given to the Lord will not yield oneness? May it not be coming to that!

Paul exhorted the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus with this matter of oneness.

There is **one body** and **one Spirit**, just as also you were called in **one hope** of your calling; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all** who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4.4-6 NASB)

This is the spiritual reality. The one body was hidden as a secret from all the previous generations. In many respects, the true ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, remains a secret to the world at large and to Christendom itself. All that we see is a shell that many call the "church." But what does God see? He sees the true ecclesia. We might not see it, but the Lord sees it, and when He comes for His body, glory will come forth as well. Glory demands oneness, for Paul revealed the very heart of oneness. There is one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

The Father will answer the prayer of His Son, and all His people will be one with one God in glory. There can be no glory without oneness, but we can be assured that in glory there is oneness. Praise God!

Glory is seem.

This leads us to attempt to answer the question of what is glory. There does not seem to be a good definition of glory, but the following is offered for consideration.

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The word *glory* is translated from the Greek word *doxa*. The Concordant Greek Text sublinear word for *doxa* is *esteem*. The Greek-English Keyword Concordance word for *doxa* is *seem*, which is defined as “a highly favorable opinion and that which impresses on the senses or the mind.” Both *esteem* and *seem* have similar meanings. However, let us start by looking at the common meaning of *seem*.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, the word *seem* is derived from a Middle English word that means “to conform to” or “to bring into agreement.” It is defined as “to appear to be,” “to appear to exist,” or “to be apparently true.”

It would make for very awkward reading if we used the word *seem* in the place of glory. The word *esteem* fits a little better into these verses. Christ among you, the expectation of *esteem*; together with Him in *esteem*; conformed to the body of His *esteem*. Each conveys the thought of coming into a highly favorable place (opinion). Of course, Christ truly is highly favorable. However, if we carefully consider the definition of *seem*, we will see an apparent truth of Scripture. The key words in the definition are *conform*, *agreement*, *exist*, and *true*.

What is God’s purpose for mankind? The answer is given in Genesis, the book of beginnings. Man was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1.26). We were created to look and be like the Son of God, to be in His likeness and image, to be like Him in appearance, in character and in glory. When creation looks at the sons of God, they are to see an image of the Son who is the Image of the invisible God (Colossians 1.15). The Son of God reflects God the Father, and the sons of God are to reflect the Son of God. It is like the moon and the sun. At night, the moon shines brightly, not because it has any light of its own, but because the sun, which is hidden from sight, is shining on it and giving it light. This is a picture of the sons of God reflecting the image and likeness of the Son of God.

When all the saints and, eventually, all mankind (at the consummation) put off corruption and put on incorruption, and put off mortality and put on immortality, there is only one word to describe such a wonder. The word is *glory*.

Glory means that mankind is conformed to the Image of the invisible God as reflected in His Son. It means that all mankind reach their ultimate destiny and purpose for being, and that is to be in agreement with God, and God to be in agreement with His entire creation; to exist in the true state in which God always intended man to be. There is no more discord, no more disagreement, no more separation, no more hatred, no more evil, no more darkness, no more sin, no more death, no more crying, no more fear, and no more disappointment.

We could say that glory is reaching God’s intended end, which is explained in the purpose of the eons.

THE EXPECTATION OF GLORY

Glory is the happy God.

When mankind is in total and absolute agreement with God, then God is the happy God, the God who is fully satisfied, the God who fills *All* in all, and the God who fills the entire creation with love. The entire creation is in love with God the Father of mankind. This is reconciliation!

Now, to some, the happy God might be a strange expression. However, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul had to deal with some issues which opposed the sound teaching, the evangel with which he was entrusted.

If any other thing is opposing sound teaching, in accord with **the evangel of the glory of the happy God**, with which I was entrusted. (1 Timothy 1.10b-11 cv)

Paul described his evangel, which contained the secrets of God, as the evangel of the glory of the happy God. *Happy* means “joyousness springing from within.” In other words, when God is happy, glory springs from within Him and flows throughout His creation. What will bring supreme happiness to God? When mankind is fully reconciled to Him through His Son!

Glory will be the happy God when His end is reached.

God’s glory will no longer be measured out, but it will burst forth to fill all when everything in God’s creation is in total, absolute harmony and *agreement* with God. Everything in God’s creation will pour forth the very life of God, for He will be in all. Everything in God’s creation will come into the reason for its *existence*. Everything in God’s creation will continually worship God and pour forth songs of praise, adoration, and love that will make one harmonious tune that soothes the heart of God. Everything in God’s creation will be *true*; there will be nothing false. Everything in God’s creation will be in a *highly favorable opinion which is impressed on the senses and the mind*. Everything in God’s creation will be *highly favorable* to Him and be the delight of His heart. Everything in God’s creation will be in a continual state of ecstasy—full of love, joy, peace, righteousness, and absolute *harmony*.

It will be like a finely-tuned orchestra that plays a continual love song that flows through the heart of creation. All creation will be reconciled to God!

Glory is wow!

This is not based on Scripture, but when we enter glory, the one expression or word that I believe will come forth from believers and, eventually, all mankind will be—*Wow!* Glory is wow!

I recall the first time I stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon and gazed upon the majesty of this natural phenomenon. What came forth from my lips was “wow.”

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Can you imagine what it will be like to not only gaze upon the glory of God but to be in the glory of God? Wow!

Glory is God is All in all.

There is only one way to sum up glory. It is summed up in the word *all*. Glory is when Christ is *All* in all, and God is *All* in all. We could say that glory is the outcome of *all*.

Does your heart long for the day in which God is fully satisfied and He fills His entire creation? In that day, it will *seem*, for life will be as it was always intended to be, highly favorable in the presence of the Almighty.

Everything will *seem* as it was always meant to be! Like the Son of God!

This is the purpose of the eons.

Let us exult in the expectation of the glory of God!