

**HWMR: LIVING AND SERVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S ECONOMY CONCERNING THE CHURCH,  
(Week 2)**

*Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:11; Acts 7:2, 55; 2 Cor. 4:3-4, 6; John 12:31*

**The Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God**

1 Timothy 1:11	According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.
Acts 7:2	And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,
Acts 7:55	But being full of the Holy Spirit, he looked intently into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;
2 Corinthians 4:3	And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those who are perishing,
2 Corinthians 4:4	In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
2 Corinthians 4:6	Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
John 12:31	Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

**Day 1**

<i>Acts 7:2</i>	- <i>And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,</i>
<i>Romans 9:23</i>	- <i>In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,</i>
<i>1 Timothy 1:11</i>	- <i>According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.</i>

**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. Man was created by God in His image in order that **man would express Him in glory**—Gen. 1:26; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

**Objectively**, glorification is that the redeemed **believers will be brought into the glory of God to participate in the glory of God**. This is the objective definition of glorification. It seems that today the glory of God is far away in the heavens, and we, the redeemed ones, are here on the earth; there is a great distance separating the two. Sometimes we feel that we are very far away from the glory of God, but this kind of feeling is only partially accurate.

**Subjectively**, glorification is that the matured **believers will manifest from within them**, by their maturity in life, the **glory of God as the element of their maturity in life**. This is the subjective definition of glorification. We may use an example to illustrate subjective glorification. When a flower in the garden begins to grow, it is just a little green tender sprout. The more it grows, however, the more mature it becomes. Gradually, flower buds begin to appear. If you continue to water the plant, it will grow more. After a while the plant will blossom. When the flowers are in full bloom, that is the glorification. The glory of the flowers does not come from without; rather, **it grows out from within**. Therefore, on the one hand, we have a hope of glory in that **Christ is coming to glorify us**. This is objective. On the other hand, we are **being transformed** into the image of the Lord, with glory upon glory, that is, from glory to glory. This is not glory descending on us; rather, it is glory growing out from within us. In springtime when all kinds of flowers are blooming, none of these beautiful flowers descend on the stems from the outside. Rather, they grow out from within the plant itself. If you are a lover of the Lord, and if you let the Lord live in you and you live by the Lord, then when people observe you, they will see the glory of God upon you. This glory is subjective and not objective. (*God's Salvation in Life, chapter 4*)

## Day 2

*2 Corinthians 4:4 - In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.*

*2 Corinthians 4:6 - Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

### III. “The god of this age has **blinded the thoughts** of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them”—2 Cor. 4:4:

- A. The **god of this age is Satan**, the deceiver, the ruler of the present age—John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2:
1. In addition to his kingdom, Satan, the devil, has his own religion; he is not merely the ruler of this world but also the god of this age—Matt. 12:26; John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4.
  2. *The ruler of this world* refers to Satan’s **rule over people**; *the god of this age* refers to the **worship that he receives** from people today—John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4.
  3. Nearly all people today, whether primitive or highly cultured, have been blinded by the god of this age—v. 4.
- B. If we **drop our concepts** and **turn our heart to the Lord**, the veils will be taken away, the god of this age will have no ground in our being, and the gospel of the glory of God will shine in our hearts—vv. 4, 6.

## Day 3

*John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.*

*John 12:23-24 - And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

Concerning the revelation of God's Son in us, Paul covers two cases in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4—the case of the Jews in particular and the case of the unbelievers in general. When the Jews read the Old Testament, they read it with their understanding veiled. In 2 Corinthians 3:15 Paul says, “*Indeed unto this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.*” Here the veil refers to the religion of Judaism. In 4:4 Paul goes on to say that the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of those who do not believe. **The god of this age is Satan.** Those who are blinded or veiled think that they do not worship anything. Actually, their god is Satan. Atheists worship Satan without knowing what they are doing. Nearly all people today, whether primitive or highly cultured, have been blinded by the god of this age.

The revelation of the Son of God is an inward revelation. This inward revelation is in our spirit through our enlightened mind. Because the mind plays an important part, it is crucial that we **drop our concepts**, all of which are in the mind. If we hold on to the concepts in our mind, the revelation may be in our spirit, but it will not be able to penetrate our veiled mentality. We need to drop our concepts **so that our mind may be released and become transparent.** Then when the Spirit shines in our spirit, this shining will come into our transparent mind. Then we shall receive an inward revelation.

If we would see the revelation of Christ, we must also **turn our hearts to the Lord.** According to 2 Corinthians 3:16, when the heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. The **more** we turn our heart to the Lord, the **less** ground the god of this age will have in our life and in our being. We should tell the Lord that we hold on to nothing besides Him and that our heart is wholly for Him. Then we will be under the shining of the heavenly light, and we will receive the revelation of the living person of the Son of God. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament: Experiencing, Enjoying, and Expressing Christ, Volume 2, chapter 324*)

#### **IV. The glory of God is involved with Christ's **incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and coming again:****

- 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 by 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.

#### **Day 4**

*Hebrews 1:3* - Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

*2 Corinthians 3:18* - But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

**V. 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 1 Timothy 1:4.
  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.

In 2 Corinthians 4 verse 4 Paul continues, "*In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, should not shine in them.*" The god of this age is Satan, the deceiver, the ruler of this present age. He dominates today's world and hunts for man's worship by **blinding his mind and his thoughts**. In this verse blinded means to veil a person's understanding. Furthermore, the thoughts here denote the understanding or the mind. **Christ as the image of God is the effulgence of His glory**. Hence, the **gospel of Christ is the gospel of His glory** that illuminates and shines forth. Satan, the god of this age, has blinded the minds and the thoughts of the unbelievers, so that the illumination of the gospel of Christ's glory should not shine into their hearts. This is similar to covering the lens of a camera so that the light cannot shine into the camera.

What Paul describes in verse 4 is a kind of spiritual photography. We are like cameras with a lens and a shutter. When the shutter is pressed, there is a way for the light with the object, the figure, the image, to shine into the camera and be impressed on the film. The light brings the figure to the film and forms an image on it. However, if the lens of the camera is **covered**, there is **no way** for the light to shine into the camera. Sometimes when we preach the gospel to others, they are like a camera with the lens covered. The light cannot shine into them. Praise the Lord that, by His mercy and grace, the satanic cover has been removed from our minds! We have not only an unveiled face, but also an uncovered mind. (*Life-Study of 2 Corinthians, chapter 9*)

### Day 5

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - *In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.*

**2 Corinthians 4:6** - *Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

2. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 *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 means that the gospel of the glory of Christ is a **lovely person in 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.

## Day 6

*Philippians 2:15-16* - That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world, Holding forth the word of life, so that I may have a boast in the day of Christ that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.

*2 Corinthians 4:7* - But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

### VI. **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—the knowledge of Christ, who expresses and declares God—Phil. 2:15; John 1:18:

- A. The gospel of the glory of Christ **shines into us**, and then it **shines out from within us**—Matt. 5:16.
- B. 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.
- C. 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**—2 Cor. 4:5.
- D. Those who receive the gospel of the glory of Christ 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—vv. 4, 6-7.

We need to see that **Christ** as the **marvelous treasure** in earthen vessels empowers and energizes us from within. He supplies us continually with the excelling power through His dispensing, thereby constituting us, the worthless and weak vessels, as ministers of a new covenant. As believers, **we have Christ operating within us as a living and active treasure**. This treasure even constrains us to do certain things. This treasure is the power, the source of strength, for the apostles to behave themselves in such a way as to shine the gospel and manifest the truth.

We are the earthen vessels to contain the Christ of glory as the excellent treasure. These vessels are like today's camera, into which **Christ the figure enters through the flash of God's shining**. The shining reality of Christ is the treasure in us, the earthen vessels. Outwardly we are earthen vessels, but inwardly we have a priceless treasure—Christ as the embodiment of the processed Triune God to be the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This treasure has a power, and this power is excellent. Christ as the life-giving Spirit in us is the One who shines and works. This is the treasure we have in us.

Within us, we have Christ as an excellent treasure; outside us, we **bear Christ as the image of God**, the embodiment and expression of the Triune God. According to Hebrews 1:3, Christ is the effulgence of God's glory; that is, He is the expression of the image of God. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, we received more than simply a Redeemer; we received the most excellent One, the highest excellence, in the universe. Through the **shining** of the gospel, **Christ was illuminated into our being**. Now Christ, the embodiment and expression of the Triune God, is in us. Within us, Christ is the excellent treasure; outside us, He is the image, the expression, of God. Daily we need to experience and enjoy Christ as the treasure within and the image of God without. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament: Experiencing, Enjoying, and Expressing Christ, Volume 1, chapter 317*)