

LIVING AND SERVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S ECONOMY CONCERNING THE CHURCH

(Thursday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

The Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God

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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.
 - 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.

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.