

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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The Riches of His Glory

by Dan Trygg

“What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath having-fitted-themselves for destruction? ²³And *what if He did this* in order to make known the riches of His glory on objects of mercy that He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴...on us whom He also called, not only from the Jews but also from the nations?”

Romans 9:22-24

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...”

Ephesians 1:18

“To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; ¹⁰ so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 3:8-10

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 3:14-19

“To [His saints] God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations; which is Christ in you, the hope of the glory: ²⁸ We proclaim Him, admonishing (placing in the mind of) every person and teaching every person with all wisdom, in order that we may present every person mature (brought to the end point) in Christ.”

Colossians 1:27,28

Prayerfully read over these passages a few times. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and insight.

For a little background, it is significant to know that **the word translated as “riches” is *not* a plural word. It is singular. It means “wealth, fulness, plenitude, abundance”.** To translate it as “riches” seems to indicate a *plurality of things*, instead of an *abundance or overflowing capacity of something*. It also tends to focus our attention on money, or material assets, when it could be referring to something that is non-material.

What is that “wealth” or “abundance” is referring to? *It depends on the context.*

In Romans 9:23, it is the abundance of the glory of God.

In Ephesians 1:18, it is the fulness of the glory of His inheritance (allotted portion) in the saints.

In Ephesians 3:8, it refers to the unfathomable supply or abundance of what is in Christ.

In Ephesians 3:16, the focus is again on the abundant supply of the glory of God the Father, by means of which He could strengthen us in power through His Spirit.

In Colossians 1, there was a “mystery”, some truth that had been hidden from view, but which God has now determined to make known. In vs. 27, Paul wrote that “God willed to make known the abundance of the glory of this mystery among the nations, ...which is ‘Christ in y’all’, the hope of the glory.”

You will notice a word that occurs in most of these passages, ...”glory”. *What is “glory”?*

The word, “glory”, in both Hebrew and Greek, *literally* referred to “*radiance, splendor, brightness, a manifestation of light, majesty, brilliance, grandeur, the appearance of God’s Presence, shining, emanation, or out-shining*”. It was used to translate the Shekinah glory (*kabōd*) of God in the OT (Ex. 24:17; 40:34,35; cf. Rev. 15:8). It referred to “brightness, magnificence and power”. God’s Presence was both bright and “weighty” as in awe-inspiring.

Examples of the *literal* usage of “glory” in this way include:

How the earth, sun, moon and stars have different kinds of *brightness*, in 1 Cor. 15:40-43.

The “*brightness*” of the light that shone around Paul on the Damascus road – Acts 22:11.

The “*glory* of the Lord” that shone around the shepherds” in Lk. 2:9.

The brilliant appearance of an angel in Rev. 18:1; cf. Matt. 28:2,3; Acts 1:10; 12:7; 2 Cor. 11:14.

The luminescent *glow* of Moses’ face in 2 Cor. 3:7; cf. Ex. 34:29-32.

The radiant appearance of Moses, Elijah and Christ at His transfiguration on the mountain in Lk. 9:31,32.

The brightness of Jesus’ splendor when He will return to the earth in glory in Matt. 24:30; 25:31; Mk. 13:26.

Or, the radiance of the glory of God that will illuminate and fill the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21:11,23.

From this perspective, to “glorify” someone would be to “fill them with radiance or splendor”.

While the *literal* meaning may mean “brightness, or out-shining”, it could *metaphorically* refer to the splendor and majesty of wealth, power or beauty. (For example, Jesus referred to “Solomon in all his *glory*” in Matt. 6:29; or, Satan showed Jesus “all the kingdoms in the world, and their *splendor*” in Matt. 4:8).

The word also came to be used to offer honor, praise or recognition to a person of greatness, ...to “give glory” to someone. For example, in Lk. 14:10, Jesus encouraged people to sit at the lower place at a banquet, so that when the host came and saw them sitting at a place of insignificance that he might say, “Friend, move up higher”. Jesus then said, “Then there will be to you *glory* (or honor) in the sight of everyone at the table.” In Hebrews 3:3, “glory” and “honor” are used in parallel. In 2 Corinthians 6:8, “glory” and “dishonor” are contrasted. Several times in the gospel of John, Jesus referred to people who sought “glory” from men, rather than from God (5:41,44; 7:18; 8:54; 12:43; 1 Thess. 2:6). **From this usage of the word, to “glorify” someone would be to “give them honor or praise”.** Of course, we ought to ascribe greatness, honor, and glory to God (Lk. 17:18; Rom. 4:20; Rev. 4:9; 11:13; 14:7; 19:7). We not only give Him glory by words, but also by actions that honor Him (e.g., Rom. 15:7; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 8:19).

I want to suggest that the focus of these passages that speak of the “wealth of God’s glory” are *not* about some rich and magnificent material blessing, ...or even about getting or giving praise. I think **God is referring to an inward impartation of the Holy Spirit that is meant to be visibly expressed through our lives, so that people can see God at work in us.** God desires to fill us with the outshining light of His life and character. **We are to be like Jesus Himself had been, in His earthly body.** He was being the “out-shining of the Father’s glory and the exact representation of His nature” (Heb. 1:3). When He came among us, He was obligated to be fully human, yet without sin (Heb. 2:17; 4:15,16). He is our best example of what a human life was meant to be. **Though He was in human flesh, the glory of God dwelt within Him, and was able to be seen through the things He said and did** (Jn. 1:14).

I believe this was part of the original creation of humanity. **We were made to be “glorious”, in that we were made in His image and His likeness. We were meant to express and demonstrate His moral character in a way that other created things and animals were not designed to do.** We do not have specific details about what our state was like before the fall. What is clear, is that our first parents enjoyed unhindered fellowship with God. They were free and full of joy in His presence. **When Adam and Eve sinned, however, they became aware of their nakedness. They felt empty and ashamed.** Since that time, all human beings were born with this nakedness, this emptiness, and a propensity to sin. **We try to “fill the emptiness” by seeking pleasure, excitement, recognition, or escape through secondary means** (Eph. 4:17-19; Gal. 5:19-21; Hab. 2:4-13). We are trying to “get life” to make up for the Life Source that was lost as a result of the fall.

Interestingly, the apostle Paul wrote, in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and they lack (or, are in need of) the glory of God.” (The word, often translated as “fall short of” is the Greek word “hustereō”, which most often means “to lack, or be in need of” -- e.g., Matt. 19:20; Lk. 15:14; 22:35; Jn. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:17; 12:24). **Interesting, too, is Paul’s statement in Romans 5:1,2.** Not only do we have peace with God, as a result of our salvation, but we have access to grace, and **“we rejoice upon hope of the glory of God.”** And, in vs. 5, **“the hope is not put to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”** We have *the hope*, and *the means!* Later (8:30), Paul says that **“those whom [God] justified, He also glorified.” We have been given the glory!**

Isn’t this the “mystery” that Paul was referring to in Colossians 1:27? **“Christ-in-you” is “the hope of the glory”.** Why is it referred to as a “hope”? **Because it is a possibility to be experienced and developed!** We have “Christ-in-us”, ...we *have* the Holy Spirit, the “Spirit of glory” upon us (1 Pet. 4:14). That is the *source*, the *means*, by which the glory is introduced into our lives. **But we must walk in agreement with Him, in order for the inward leading of the Spirit to become expressed through our lives.** In 2 Corinthians 2 and 3, Paul describes how God has made us to reveal the life of Christ, by virtue of the working of the Holy Spirit within us. **We spread abroad the “fragrance of Christ”** (2:14-16). **How? “Who can do such a thing?”** he asks. This is more than just a *hope*. It is an *expectation*, a “*confidence* we have through Christ toward God” (3:4). **It is the Spirit who makes us alive, and makes it possible for us to do this** (3:6). He went on to compare the ministry of the Spirit with the ministry under the law of Moses. The old covenant had a level of glory, as seen by the glow of Moses’ face. But, Paul insists that the glory of the new covenant is much greater. The glory of Moses was only skin-deep, and would fade away, while **the glory of the ministry of the Spirit transforms us from the inside-out, from one degree of glory to another. It happens, though, as we “contemplate the glory of the Lord”** (3:18), **and respond to the leading of the Spirit.**

God wants us to know what we are called to. He wants us to understand what He has made available to us, so that we would pursue it, and walk in it. So many do not even *begin* to perceive these things. Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that they would know and seek the life of the Spirit. There is “unfathomable abundance in Christ”, meant for us to experience and express (3:8). **We are to be like Jesus. He came in human flesh, so that we could see His glory, glory as of a unique child of the Father, full of grace and truth** (Jn. 1:14). **He was like a tent with a lantern inside. That is what we are also to be.** The mystery that has been revealed is this: Christ-in-you is the hope of the radiant outshining of God’s Spirit in *you*. THAT is what Paul preached, admonishing and reminding everyone in order that he could move them on into maturity. **The supply of God’s glory is rich, abundant, full. He wants you to walk in it!**