

The Glory

by Harold J. Chadwick

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, **for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (2 Thessalonians 13-14)

While studying Romans 3, I ran across this verse that gives the reason for our salvation — “the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 3:23 says, “. . . for all have sinned and **fall short of the glory of God,** . . .” The Greek word for “**fall short**” is the same word Jesus used in **Luke 15:14**: ““But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began **to be in want.**” So “fall short’ is essentially the same as “fallen short” (used in some versions), “come short” (KJV), and “be in want” or “lack.”

So . . . we are in want of the glory of God, we fall short of it, we lack it.

Question. What does Paul mean by this — an amazing statement? “. . . **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Sin has caused us to fall short, to lack, to be in want of the glory of God. What does this mean?

As with most questions raised by Scriptures, it’s best to find the answer in the Scriptures themselves. So let’s look at other statements of the same kind.

“. . . eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good **seek for glory,** honor, and immortality; . . . **but glory,** honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (**Romans 2:7, 10**)

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and **rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**” (**Romans 5:1-2**)

Romans 8:18 — “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared **with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**”

Romans 8:21 (NASB) — “that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of **the glory of the children of God.**”

Romans 8:30 — “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, **these He also glorified.**” (Note the present tense in this verse.)

Romans 9:23 — “and that He might make known **the riches of His glory** on the vessels of mercy, which **He had prepared beforehand for glory.**”

Question. What does Paul mean by all these? And what does he mean in **2 Corinthians 3:18** — “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed into the same image from glory to glory,** just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Note the above verse along with **1 John 3:1-2** — “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Note especially the reason why we shall see—**that is, be able to see**—Christ “as He is.” Because “we shall be like Him.” In other words, if we were not like Him, we would not be able to see Him as He is. We could not stand in His glory if we did not ourselves have that glory — just as you could only stand in the presence of the sun, enter within it, if you were of the same substance and temperature of the sun.

Question. And what does Paul mean in **2 Corinthians 4:6** — “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Question. What does Paul mean when he says in **2 Corinthians 4:17** — “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us **a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, . . .**”

Question. What did the Lord mean in **John 17:22** — ““And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.”

Question. So what does this mean in **Romans 3.23** — “. . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, . . .”

The only adequate interpretation of these great statements is that it means three things:

1. To behold the glory of God.
2. To rejoice in the glory of God.

3. To partake—to have planted in us—something, a measure, of the glory of God—to share in it.

See what it says about the **born-again** believer in **2 Corinthians 4:6** — “For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give **the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.**”

But look at what it says about the unbeliever in **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** — “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that **they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God.”

The unbeliever does not know about the glory. He is a God hater. He is blind. He sits in darkness without God and without hope. He cannot see the glory and turns his back on God.

(How unfortunate that there are also many believers who do not know about the glory, not because they could not see it, could not know it, but because they have little to no knowledge of the Word of God. How true is **Hosea 4:6** — “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” And why do they lack it? God says in that same verse that they “have rejected knowledge.” How tragic that the Word of God means so little to so many of God’s children!)

But God has revealed His glory to every born-again Christian. Even without knowledge every born-again Christian knows something about it, though he or she may not know what it is they know.

To a knowledgeable born-again Christian, however, the glory is everything — it is the most glorious thing of all!

When Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the great English Bible expositor, was in his late sixties and had been deeply ill for several months, his children wanted to pray for his healing, but he said to them, “No, do not hold me back from the glory.”

Now there was a Christian who knew what the glory was all about!

But it isn’t only to know about the glory of God — some of the verses we’ve looked at tell us that we will share in the glory.

2 Corinthians 3:18 — “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” (AMP: “in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another.”)

To see an example of this, look at **Exodus 33:20-23** — “But He said, “You cannot see My face; for **no man shall see Me, and live.**” And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while **My glory passes by**, that **I will put you in the cleft of the rock**, and **will cover you with My hand** while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and **you shall see My back**; but **My face (i.e. glory) shall not be seen.**”

Notice the safety measures that were taken to shield Moses from the glory. And keep in mind that this was only an angel manifesting some degree of the glory of God.

Note the similarity in the statement about Christ in **2 Corinthians 4:6** — the Light of the knowledge of **the glory of God in the face of Christ.**

Look now at **Exodus 34:29-30** — “It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him. So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.”

And at **Exodus 34:33-35** — “But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded, the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him.”

Question. What was that?

It was the glory of God shining—reflecting—from the face of Moses. And something like that gradually happens to everyone who is a true Christian; i.e., a born-again Christian—not just in words, but in truth.

This is not true of the unbeliever. They fall short of the glory of God. They do not see it, they do not partake of it.

But to the born-again Christian, this is a glorious fact—a glorious truth!

Perhaps in no other verse has the apostle Paul exposed the ravages of sin more clearly and concisely or in a more astonishing manner than in **Romans 3:23** — “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

Sin not only makes a person unrighteous, it robs him of the glory of God!

If we understand what all these Scriptures are saying, and what Paul says in his statement in **Romans 3:23**, we should realize how futile it is for anyone to think that by works or activities they can make themselves fit to stand in the presence of God.

Before we can truly know God, before we have true communion with Him, let alone stand in the presence of His glory, we must have something of that glory ourselves.

However good we might try to be, however moral, we never can and never shall develop a divine glory! And without that glory we can never see God and never stand in His presence.

For that reason, the Christian is a partaker of God's divine nature, as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 1:4** — “For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” (Note that it is by the “promises” in the Word of God that the divine nature comes to us, which probably explains why those who ignore, even negate, the Word of God so lack that sense, that spark, of the presence of God in their lives.)

“Partakers of the divine nature!” Is that true of you and me? **It is!** It doesn't mean it's visible and evident to everyone. Even the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ was not visible to everyone in His day.

His glory was veiled by His flesh, and only the eyes of faith could see it. “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**

The glory is in us in a measure, though it is not always visible.

Perhaps the world should see it in us to some degree, and we should certainly see it in each other exceedingly far more than we do. But it is still there, veiled by our flesh.

Romans 8:30 — “and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, **He also glorified.**”

2 Corinthians 3:18 — “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Philippians 3:21 — “who will **transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to** (be like) **His glorious body**, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

1 John 3:2 — “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

In other words, we shall see Him in all His glory, and we shall be able to see Him as He is BECAUSE we ourselves will be partakers—sharers—of the glory. Without the glory we would not be able to see Him as He is.

Jude 24 — “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and **to make you stand in the presence of His glory** blameless with great joy, . . .”

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 — “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

(Note, however, that although there is a change in our substance, there is no change in our character. The character we leave here with is the character with which we shall enter heaven. Nothing justifies the somewhat common belief that our Christian character will be changed when we enter heaven, and we will become in character all that we should be here in our relationship to God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, to the Word of God, to spiritual matters. If we are unspiritual Christians when we die, Christians who are not interested in the Word of God or the things or ways of God, that’s what we will be like when we enter heaven. And our rewards in heaven will be accordingly.)

The “gospel of God” not only gives us forgiveness and righteousness, it also gives us the glory! We shall be glorious in spirit, glorious in body, completely and totally glorified! And it starts even while we are here on the earth in these weak bodies of flesh!

Back where we started, **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14** — “. . . God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, **for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

WHAT A WONDERFUL, MARVELOUS, AND AMAZING SALVATION THIS IS!