

The Glory of God in the Face of Christ (2 Cor 4:3-6)

By Jay Wegter

True religion is above the natural powers of man. Through the last 2000 years of history the church has often forgotten that truth. Thus, the gospel has been pushed down from its biblical description as “the power of God” (Rom 1:16-17)—and turned into something men are capable of performing. The scriptural reality is that a mighty working of God’s sovereign power is needed in order for a person to become saved.

250 years ago, Jonathan Edwards had this same concern in connection with the conversion statistics of a revival known as the “Great Awakening.” Edwards penned his concerns in his magnum opus, *The Religious Affections*. His book is a masterful exposition of the marks of true salvation with particular emphasis placed upon the supreme mark of salvation known as the **religious affections**.

Edwards argued that true salvation must have a foundation that goes deeper than self-interest. Genuine salvation is characterized by a Spirit-engendered sight and savor of God’s glory. Hypocrites and false religionists lack this mark of salvation. Edwards presses his case stating that the truly converted man has seen Christ spiritually whereas the world has not seen Christ in this way. Explaining further, he notes that the religious affections are the fruit of a new heart and that these affections are what moves the Christian life. Satan cannot counterfeit this sentiment—no natural man sees God’s glory and the creature’s happiness woven together in Christ. **Our Sermon Proposition: To see God’s glory in the face of Christ is to be a saved person who actively continues beholding that glory (2 Cor 3:18).**

What is this Glory of God which unsaved men cannot see? That glory is the outshining of the divine perfections and excellence made sensible to us in Christ—or spiritually discernable in Christ unto the ravishment and satisfaction of our souls—a saving knowledge of God (Jn 1:14, 18). This glory is a *savor* that satisfies the soul. But spiritually blind persons do not experience what Edwards describes as, “The true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word of God and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising.” Thus, in the unregenerate person there is no perception of the spiritual beauty, treasure, and supremacy of Christ—no true comprehension of His fitted-ness to save, to bring us to God, and to make us like Himself. **Four points concerning the sight of God’s glory:**

ONE: This glory is hidden from the unbeliever (vv. 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” (2 Cor 4:3-4).

The gospel is glorious, but its glory is hidden from the lost. The gospel’s true character and excellence as the revelation of God is not apprehended. Unbelievers cannot perceive or rejoice in the splendor of the gospel. The reason is because of the character of those who reject the gospel. Scripture says that they are foolish (1 Cor 1:18) and ‘dead’ to the things of God (Eph

2:1-3). They are still aware of God, but they are blind or ‘veiled’ to His glory (2 Cor 3:14), thus the precious things of God are not viewed or considered as being of immeasurably valuable.

Our first parents’ Fall into sin was a forfeiture of God’s glory (Rom 3:23). It was a three-fold forfeiture: 1) It was the loss of our ability to **reflect** God’s glory (*depravity*); 2) the loss of our **spiritual sight** of God’s glory (*spiritual blindness*); 3) and the loss of our **passion** to see that glory and live for God’s glory (*idolatry instead of the worship of God*). ***In order for salvation to restore us to God—it must be able to reverse this three-fold forfeiture of God’s glory.***

Our text states that Satan is behind this concealment of God’s glory. The god of this world has ‘*blinded the minds of the unbelieving*’. The gospel is *veiled to those who are perishing* (4:4). Satan is the *blinder*, the *destroyer*, the *murderer of souls* (Jn 8:44). Blinding the minds of unbelievers is Satan’s full-time business. He works within the natural man’s love of darkness and within man’s religious nature as he seeks to prevent men from seeing the glory of Christ.

The glory of Christ is the sum of all His divine and human excellence. These perfections, centered in His Person, make Him the radiant point of the universe—the clearest manifestation of God to the creature—the object of supreme adoration, admiration, and love. To see His glory is to be saved, for we are thereby transformed from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18). The gospel, as the revelation of the glory of Christ, is the source of the illumination. Satan tries his best to block the illumination of men’s minds. Through the evil one’s lie, the unbeliever is incapacitated from gazing upon the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

This spiritual darkness began with the Lie when our first parents sinned in the Garden of Eden. Original sin extinguished the relational knowledge of God. Spiritual darkness quenched the light of the knowledge of God in the soul. This darkness is characterized by ignorance, fear, enslavement, corrupted affections, estrangement, and rebellion (Heb 2:14-15). Like a sooty veil, the darkness blocks the natural man’s comprehension of God’s wonderfulness, perfections, excellence, beauty and desirability.

Satan’s original lie drove a wedge into the mind of man. A dichotomy or deep gash within man’s heart was formed in the process. Our first parents, once having acted upon the devil’s lie in partaking of the forbidden fruit, thereafter regarded God’s glory and man’s good to be at odds. ‘Logically’ the lie was used to justify human self-determination.

Once Lucifer’s lie about God’s goodness was believed and acted upon, it cut off man from the life of God, and the knowledge of God. The original lie in the Garden of Eden scribes the very outline, shape, and contours if you will, of the spiritual darkness that rules every unregenerate soul down to the present age day (Eph 2:1-3).

We see in Genesis 3 that Lucifer’s lie uttered in Eden has three basic parts: 1.) *God is not good and loving.* God is withholding your highest good. He is even threatened by your human potential. He is severe and unloving. This became an excuse to think *negatively* about God. **2.) *God is not truthful.*** “You shall not die.” Doubt leads to denial. The lie cast doubt upon the authority, authenticity, reliability, and truthfulness of God’s Word. This became an excuse to think *skeptically (suspiciously)* about God. **3.) *God is not righteous and just.*** God is not going to comprehensively punish sin. His threats of punishment for wrong-doing are idle threats. He is not to be feared; His dictates are not really commands, but only bits of moral advice. This became an excuse to think *irreverently* about God. Since God is not good, truthful, and righteous, you can be your own god, your own ultimate reference point (*autonomy*).

Experiment, liberate yourself, determine truth, reality, and right and wrong for yourself. This became an excuse to think *independently* from God, and an excuse to worship created things.

(V. 4) By energizing spiritual darkness through his lie, Satan became the ‘default god’ of this world. Why is Satan the ‘default god’ of the unbeliever? Simply put, it is because the lost follow his worldview. Thus, to be under the sway of the enemy’s lie is, according to Scripture, to walk according to the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2). Jesus describes this as having the devil as one’s spiritual father (Jn 8:44).

You have heard it said, “the most important thing about you is how you think about God.” For, each one, every man, woman, and child bears a relationship to God of either alienation, or reconciliation; there is no status or standing in between.

The thinking mind is where Satan has his influence. He blinds the mind to divine glory by *mainstreaming* his lie. This satanically induced blindness leaves every natural person with darkened understanding (Eph 4:17-20). At a coffee shop in San Luis Obispo, I began to share the gospel with a Cal Poly university professor. Five minutes into our discussion, he scrunched up his face and uttered: “What Christians call the Trinity is actually the three chakras of the body.” I immediately thought, ‘the love of darkness’ Jesus spoke of characterizes the blindness of the unbelieving mind.

We may recall some of the greatest natural minds in history and their philosophical achievements: Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Confucius, Baruch Spinoza, John Stuart Mill—perhaps their achievements are as high as the fallen intellect can go. Yet, they never arrived at the saving knowledge of their Creator. God tells us why: “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor 1:21). No man reasons his way to God.

TWO: The glory of God can only be known by Christ Jesus as He is revealed in the gospel (v. 5). “For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor 4:5). The only way that sinful man can love a holy God is to be *justified* in the sight of his holy Creator (to be justified is to be *set right* with God’s holiness, justice, and righteousness through a declaration by God the Father) (Rom 3:24-26). Apart from the redemption that is in Christ, which is the ground of justification, God’s holiness repels, terrifies, and justly argues for our eternal punishment. Man’s response to God’s rule, commands, and justice is enmity and hostility (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21).

So great is the darkness of the heart that a fiat act of divine creation is necessary in order for us to perceive the character and radiance of God’s glory. As a grade school child, my father took me to Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico. Once deep in the bowels of the cave, the ranger warned us not move from the trail, “All the lights will be turned out for two minutes.” My father said to me, “Don’t let go of my hand!” I had never been in absolute darkness before.

Just as man cannot look up at the noon day sun with unaided eyes, so also man cannot behold God’s awful moral majesty unless it is reflected in the face of our merciful Redeemer. The glory of Christ, who is the image of God, is the light of the gospel. When we are confronted with Christ’s glory, we are confronted with the true likeness of God (Heb 1:1-3). God is infinite—His glory boundless. *Our minds can hardly conceive of a structure like the*

Sombrero Galaxy which has 50 billion suns. It is 50,000 light years diameter—that's 30% of Milky Way Galaxy. How great a task to contemplate God! Galaxies are but the finger work of God (Ps 8:3). Countless people have but a 'God concept' and not the true knowledge of Him.

Christ our Redeemer is the image of God and of man at the same time. This is God's mystery, that the second Person of the Godhead should be man in His true essence and stature according to the purposes of the Creator. Christ as the *Logos* (the Word) emanates the brightness of the Father's glory. Christ is equal with God, yet clothed in our nature (Phil 2:6). The incarnation is the great secret that was held in the bosom of God until the proper time (Rom 16:25-26; Gal 4:4-5; 2 Tim 1:8-11).

In Christ the divine and the human meet, and are reconciled (Ps 85:8-11). Christ is eternal Son and an exalted man. Through His redemptive work and exaltation, He will ultimately take believers from dust to glory. He is our man in glory (Heb 6:19-20). Because of Christ's exaltation, someday the world will be ruled by glorified men, not angels (Heb 2:5-8).

We can only behold God's attributes from the vantage point of safety and refuge in the new covenant inaugurated by Christ's blood (1 Cor 11:25). Before our salvation, while subject to divine wrath due to the guilt of our sin, we cannot know God (we retain our enmity, we seek to hide from our Creator; and/or, seek to manufacture a benign, domesticated god).

Since Christ's incarnation 2000 years ago, no one has ever come to terms with who God is apart from Christ. One cannot know the God of glory independent of God's redemptive design in Christ. How does a sinner gain the knowledge of God? He must believe the Father's testimony about the Person and work of Christ on behalf of sinners (Jn 1:12-13). As a result, he comes to know himself to be the object of Christ's redemptive work.

While evangelizing at a secular university, I met a man who claimed to be researching the religions of the world in order to 'find the truth'. When I told him that it is impossible to know God if one has not been forgiven through Christ, he was momentarily speechless. Obviously startled by my statement, he nervously blurted out, "Oh no! I have gone about this all wrong."

The events of the gospel are meant to reveal the glory of Christ. The revelation of the glory of Christ is not some abstract mystical divine light, nor is it a warming in the bosom. The revelation of the glory of God in the face of Christ is anchored in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as prophesied and recorded in Holy Scripture (1 Cor 15:1-4).

Thus, the saving 'sight' of this glory, apprehended through faith, is inseparable from the historic gospel events. When we preach the gospel, we are not only proclaiming what happened historically, we are proclaiming God's testimony of what Christ did at the cross. "For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Pet 1:23). "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (1 Pet 2:24). God has born witness concerning the cross work of His Son (2 Cor 5:18-21).

Now let's examine why the saving 'sight' and knowledge of God's glory is compared to light flooding into absolute darkness at the command of God Almighty.

THREE: The saving sight of the glory of God requires a sovereign revelation of God (v. 6). *We preach--knowing that no one can say "Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3).* "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” (2 Cor 4:6).

Paul declares that the Apostles do not preach to attract the admiration of men, for that is to “make the cross of Christ void” (1 Cor 1:17). The Apostles preached always with the awareness that a work of the Holy Spirit is required to cause a man to recognize Christ as Messiah, supreme Lord of heaven and earth (Acts 16:14). Mere human personality and eloquence in preaching can’t, and won’t do that. When a man is brought to recognize Christ, he will love and worship Him, and in so doing, he will ultimately be made like Him (2 Cor 3:18).

The glory of God is spiritual; it is spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:6-16). The knowledge of God in Christ is not a mere matter of intellectual apprehension; it is a matter of spiritual discernment to be derived from the Spirit of God only. The spiritually dead sinner cannot generate his own light, there is no innate spark which may be fanned into a flame—giving the ability to apprehend God’s glory.

In order for the apprehension of God’s glory to take place, God must shine in the heart to give the knowledge of His glory (Matt 16:17; Gal 1:17; 1 Cor 2:10; 14). Spiritual discernment is imparted by the Holy Spirit. This discernment is necessary to comprehend the glory of God. This is not the case of ‘natural glory’ found in the creation. Spiritual discernment is not necessary to appreciate the grandeur of the Teton Mountains, a thunderstorm, or a coral reef.

How important is the glory of God in the face of Christ? **1)** By the first sight of that glory, God initially saves the soul (v. 6). **2)** By the ongoing beholding of that glory God progressively sanctifies the soul (2 Cor 3:18). **3)** By the direct sight of that glory at Christ’s return the Lord instantly perfects and glorifies the child of God (1 Jn 3:2).

As Christian leaders, our work is setting God’s revelation of Christ before men’s eyes. Our task is to display Christ as ‘friend of sinners’—exhibiting man’s need of Him, and Christ’s sufficiency, graciousness, and willingness to save. We are to preach Christ’s offer of Himself as Savior to all who truly turn to Him in submission to His rightful rule (Rom 10:9-10).

Our text informs us that salvation is by divine revelation; it is not simply the acceptance of the recorded facts of Jesus’ life, and work, and message. Men of God of two and three centuries past (such as Edwards) saw the ‘religious’ unsaved as those who had *converted to Christianity but not to Christ*. Though outwardly moral and verbally orthodox, the false professor is *without personal knowledge of Christ*. This subject of being a stranger to Christ was the touchstone that permeated the messages of divines like Edwards when they addressed nominal Christianity. Remember, they preached for the most part to the ‘churched’!

Regarding the need for the work of grace in the conscience, J. C. Philpot observes: “Pulling down of all man’s false refuges, stripping him of every lying hope, and thrusting him down into self-abasement and self-aborrence, is indispensable to a true reception of Christ. No matter how informed his judgment is he will never receive Christ ***spiritually into his heart*** and affections, until he has been broken down by the hand of God in his soul to be a ruined wretch” (J. C. Philpot, *The Heavenly Birth and its Earthly Counterfeit*, Chapel Library, p. 4).

In part, our text is addressing this issue: Does salvation come solely by accepting the historical facts of Jesus’ life, OR by trust in “Christ the Son of the living God who accomplished these redemptive facts?” If eternal life were based solely on assent to

the historical facts of Christmas and Easter, then massive numbers of those in Christendom would be saved apart from the new birth. In Matthew 16:17 the Lord told Peter that his response, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” (his grasp of Christ’s glorious identity) did not find its source in flesh and blood but was the result of the Father’s revelation.

“Peter had not arrived at his belief by mere reason: *flesh and blood* had not worked out the problem; there had been a revelation to him from the Father who is in heaven. To know the Lord in mere doctrinal statement, no such divine teaching is required, but Peter’s full assurance of his Lord’s nature and mission was no theory in the head: the truth had been written on his heart by the heavenly Spirit. This is the only knowledge worth having as to the Person of our Lord” (**Charles H. Spurgeon**, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Revell, p. 224).

The Apostle Paul’s own testimony of personal salvation also includes the *revelation of Christ*. “But when it pleased Him, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, in order that I might preach His Gospel among the Gentiles. . .” (Gal 1:15-16a).

V. 6. Our text asserts that spiritual eyes must be opened by a sovereign, fiat command of God, “Let there be light!” Blinded persons might consider the facts of the gospel, but they do not see its compelling spiritual beauty. The beauty of God’s glory is beyond the powers of natural sight and sense. A new faculty of soul is needed; what Christ Jesus referred to as ‘spiritual eyes and ears’ (Mt 13:16).

“Many today believe in the historical Jesus who are ignorant of the character of God. The power of the gospel is to give the knowledge of the glory of God.” God’s true character is known only in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:6). “Many trust in Christ precisely as the Jews did in Moses. This is another gospel; an historic Jesus [only], not the glory of God in the face of Christ. Those who hold to this gospel are strangers to the truth and are still in love with the world” (**James Haldane**, *Revelation of God’s Righteousness*, Chapel Library, p. 27) (died 1851).

Only with the planting of a new faculty (a new capacity) will there be a savor for the glory of God—a savor the makes a man willing to ‘sell all’ for Christ’s sake. Only regenerate individuals have the Spirit-enabled savor of divine glory. The sight of this glory kills the love of the world, and it slays the sinner’s idolatrous addiction to idols (1 Jn 3:8).

“Nature may have a superficial knowledge and illumination of the Savior. The natural man may be active and do something for Him. But to love the cross, to suffer with Him, to follow Him through the streets of Jerusalem to Golgotha as He stoops dumb before His shearers so that your spirit feeds on His flesh and blood and humiliation *is a work of God’s Spirit in you*. The natural man may have His emotions stirred by Christ’s passion, but only the true saint is acquainted with Christ in his spirit so as to *feed* upon his Substitute” (Edward Morgan, *The Life and Times of Howell Harris*, p. 239).

“The most important question that could ever be asked is: Do you know in reality the living Christ? Do you know Christ by personal revelation? The question is not: Do you read the Bible? Are you religious? The question is: Have you ever seen yourself a lost, vile sinner before a holy God? Have you ever been stripped of your self-righteousness and laid low in the dust of humility? Have you ever viewed by faith the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, all because of a direct and personal revelation to you of God the Holy Spirit? (**W. F. Bell**, “*Do you know Christ by personal revelation?*” -- Chapel Library).

“If you only know Jesus by no more than the world knows, than the learned among men know, you have not the real blessing. If you only know the Lord of Glory by what you have found out yourself, in reading or in talking to others, unaided by the Father’s drawing power, you are not blessed with true salvation. The true children of God have been made humble. They confess their total dependence upon the grace and mercy of Christ, and place their entire confidence and faith in His meritorious righteousness and shed blood” (Ibid.).

“Is Christ your Surety, your Substitute, your Sacrifice, and your Savior? Do you believe in Jesus by an inward discernment of Him? Do you clearly see Him as the Son of man and the Son of God? Do you see Him as your propitiation (your soul’s acceptance) before God? If you know Him in this way, it has not been learned from the instruction of men; you have had a direct revelation made to you by the Father concerning who Jesus Christ really is” (Gal 1:16) (Ibid.).

Thomas Boston indicates that the man or woman called of God cries out in his soul, “Give me Christ or I die.” “I am willing to sell all to have Him” (Matt 13:44-46). And once you have Him as Savior, you are convinced of your special interest in Him and His righteousness. None truly believe until by the Spirit it is plain to them and are thus persuaded by inward illumination.

It is possible to be a “secure” sinner in the gospel offer, but to not discern Christ’s voice in the gospel offer (Jn 10:4, 27). They hear it (the gospel), but not as the Word of the Lord Himself. They hear it merely as it is broadcast (generally) to all men; THUS, it has no authority in their consciences. But when the sinner first hears Christ’s voice in offering eternal life; he concludes it is to others but not to him. He can’t believe it is to him.

But, where saving faith is working, the Holy Spirit applies the gospel offer to the soul in particular—with power as the Word of the Lord Himself. Then, the man applies it to himself by believing (1 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 2:13). Without this there is no receiving of Christ. Otherwise the soul can see no foundation of faith for itself. There is no receiving aright unless the sinner regards the offer to be to him in particular. This is the quickening word (Jn 6:63; 1 Pet 1:23). The sinner must receive the word of the gospel as the very word of Christ to him in particular. You concluded the law of God was condemning you in particular—to believe savingly, you must conclude that Christ’s word in the gospel is to you in particular (**Thomas Boston, *The Beauties of Thomas Boston*, pp. 593-596).**

We have been laboring to establish the reality of what our text is teaching—that God’s ‘shining into the heart’ is an act of Sovereign Mercy. Our text alludes to the original darkness of creation week (4:6). The primordial darkness described in Genesis 1:2-3 could not make its own light—it had no properties which could be developed into light. No luminaries yet existed. If there were to be light, there must be an external source to shine upon the newly created world. God, by a fiat act (*fiat* – by divine order of decree), said, “Let there be light.”

So also, the darkened soul of man has no properties that can be developed into light. The sinner needs an external source of light. God alone can provide that light (Ps 36:9). In creation week, by divine *fiat* God spoke light into existence (*fiat* – by order or decree). So also, when God shines into the heart of a man, it is by means of His power through the gospel that He does so (Jas 1:18). God’s activity of shining dispels the darkness in the heart and removes the sinner’s enmity and hostility (Col 1:20-22). In Genesis, God said, “Let there be light.” In the new covenant, God became light for us (the Living Word was made flesh on earth – Heb 1:2).

By this gospel light the mind and heart are illumined to the reality of the guilt transfer at Calvary so that the guilt exchange at the cross is spiritually discerned. When the awakened sinner sees by faith the second Person of the Godhead pumping out His heart's blood for the likes of him—it evicts the ancient lie, removes enmity from the heart (Col 1:21-23). Salvation is called, 'receiving the love of the truth' (2 Thess 2:10). **This is not merely mental assent, but the ravishing sight of glory whereby the sinner 'closes with Christ'.** At the moment of conversion, God floods the heart with light (2 Cor 4:6). The reality of the sovereignly induced shining into the heart guarantees man is nothing less than a new creature (2 Cor 5:17).

The result of the light shining is *gnosis*—the saving knowledge of God. God's shining in the heart is the revelation of the Father *in the Son*; the image of the invisible transcendent God—in whom are hidden all the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3).

The light of God shining into the heart and mind lifts the veil, removes the satanically induced blindness and brings the knowledge of God. This begins the knowledge of God in Christ that is advances from glory to glory, and is completed at Christ's appearing (1 Jn 3:2).

Salvation is a matter of *revelation* (Matt 11:25-30). God's shining into our hearts at the moment of salvation is the exercise of divine infinite power (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18; 2:5; Eph 1:19; 2 Pet 1:3). The gospel comes bringing the power to 'close' with Christ (receive Him).

FOUR: The perception of this glory fits us for service and worship, and ultimately for life in God's presence. Christ is God's 'Light'; the redeemed have seen the glory of God in the face of Christ—and they continue to seek to behold it (2 Cor 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" (2 Cor 3:18). We have seen that the glory of God in the gospel is hidden from one class of men, yet God opens the eyes of others to see His glory. God's glory is divine majesty and excellence, the object of our admiration and adoration. It is only seen by faith in the face of Jesus by the illumination of the Spirit.

God becomes in Christ the object of knowledge—the clearest revelation of God. "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). Those who refuse to see God in Christ are estranged from all true knowledge of God (Jn 1:18; Matt 11:27; 1 Jn 2:23; 2 Jn 9; Jn 15:23). Salvation comes by the revelation of Christ (Gal 1:15-16). Christ came to '*explain the Father*'—Jesus brought '*truth and grace*' and '*grace upon grace*' in so doing (Jn 1:16-18).

In Christ God provides a place for us to be washed, hidden, accepted, and adopted. It is a place of favor, status, sonship, and right-standing—all graciously given. In Christ, we see God's mighty attributes exercised in order to bring us to glory. We cannot see His glory without a profound spiritual change (Jn 3:7). God's almighty power enables us to see what He wants us to see—the infinite value and divine excellence of these things. To see God's glory in the face of Christ is to repent in sorrow over sin for having preferred idols to true treasure.

In the Person of Christ, we see God's perfect attributes in our own human nature. We see Christ as Mediator, we see His perfect suitability to be our Savior (Heb 7:24-28). God's glory is revealed within the specifics of God's plan, a plan referred to as *God's mystery*, or, *the mystery Christ*. It is the plan that the Son of God should become incarnate in human history in order to redeem the sinners given to Him by His Father (Jn 6:39; 17:2; Eph 1:9; 3:3; Col 1:26, 27; 2:2).

Christ took upon Himself all our unfitness, our demerit, our curse, our separation from God, our guilt, and liability to judgment. To see Christ as our suffering Substitute has the net effect of purging the soul of enmity, hostility, fear, and suspicion.

(EX. *Like a prism bending light so that we see each of its beautiful spectral colors, Christ was bent in the crucifixion so that the light of the glory of God might be seen in all of its variegated colors 'all the perfections of God'. For in the Person and work of Christ; all of the attributes of God were put on display for the first time in human history.*) A 'spectrum of glory' is revealed from His humiliation suffering to His ascension as King and Lord of the cosmos.

To see Christ as your own Redeemer is to see God in His glory. For, there is but one safe place, but one vantage point to behold God's glory—it is only found in Christ who was prefigured as the cleft Rock which hid Moses (Ex 33:12-23). God's plan to show you His glory is bound up in His purpose of hiding you in Christ (Jn 17:1-5, 24). Christ is our refuge, and He is the focal point of divine glory. He is our 'observatory' from which we view God's glory.

God communicates Himself to you in Christ. To know God in Christ is to be a saved person (Jn 17:3). Christ came to bring us back to God (Jn 10:10). As we keep looking to, and beholding Christ and contemplating all that God is toward us in Christ, we are transformed, we are liberated from the residual effects of the Edenic lie (Eph 4:23).

Being in Christ forever changes our relationship to God's glory.

When the light of God's glory in the face of Christ shines into the heart, the sinner is *awakened* to God. The saved man or woman becomes an "*unveiled one*"—a beholder of glory (3:14-18). By His own glory God is taking His redeemed ones from *dust to glory*. By faith in Christ the believing sinner understands that God's glory is inseparably joined to our highest good. For God has made the rescue of sinners to be the chief instrument for the display of His glory. Thus, to see the glory of God in the face of Christ brings us into total sympathy with God's plan to glorify Himself. Our forfeiture of glory by reason of sin is reversed in salvation. As we keep beholding the glory of the Lord, we are transformed—we are sanctified—we are incrementally changed into Christ's moral likeness.

This is all to fit us to bear the inconceivable weight of glory to come (2 Cor 4:17; 2 Thess 2:13-14). On the last day when Christ the Lord invades human history and splits the heavens open at His glorious return every eye will see Him (Rev 1:7). Then the sight of God in human flesh will cause the believer to marvel (2 Thess 1:10). *No one told me the weight of the glory to come!* But, this sight will cause the reprobate and hypocrite to shudder in terror (Rev 6:15-17). "How dreadful is the vengeance of God" said Calvin.

Both the saved and the lost will be aghast—they had no tangible concept of what it would be like to see the self-existent God glorified in human nature. Then the reality will hit in an instant: *I will exist as long as God does—the relationship I bear to Him now is permanent. I had no idea of the sheer weight of His glory.* God be eternally praised, for those who have had the glory of God in the face of Christ will eternally marvel at the wonder and beauty of their Savior. ". . .when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed" (2 Thess 1:10).