

2. THE RICHES OF CHRIST

Paul's passion was to *gain* Christ, to be *found in* Christ, to *know* Christ and to be *complete* in Christ. There was no other life for Paul but the life of Christ.

It is interesting that when He walked this earth, Jesus told His disciples to follow Him. They were commanded to literally follow their Master as He walked this earth. But what does this mean to us today? Are we to follow Christ? How do we follow Jesus who, by His spirit, has taken up residence in us? I submit that we do not follow the Lord in this day. We allow Him, by His spirit, to lead us, which is an entirely different matter. Think about this: When we follow someone, all that we see is the person's backside; we do not see the person's face. We are not called into seeing His backside. We are called into a very personal relationship with Christ, a heart to heart or spirit to spirit relationship.

Paul is our example and he was not following the Lord; in spirit he was seeing Him face to face. He was alive *in* the Lord and the Lord was alive *in* him, and believers are to be in the same relationship.

You see, through Paul the evangel of Christ rises to the height of glory. Those who believe in this wicked eon are a new creation *in* Christ and, as such, they have a new life in them that leads them by the spirit. For us who believe, we do not follow this life; we allow this life to lead us as we live by this life. We are to walk in this life. As Paul wrote: *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him* (Colossians 2.6 NASB).

Now, there is another aspect of this life as revealed to us through Paul. It is what Paul called the riches of Christ. Today, many people, including believers, are in hot pursuit of riches, the wealth of the world. But those who have been called and chosen to be among the celestials have been brought into all the riches of Christ. We could say that believers are the richest people in the entire universe.

The untraceable riches of Christ.

To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: **to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations**, and to enlighten all as to what is **the administration of the secret**, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, **the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord**; in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, through His faith. (Ephesians 3.8-12 cv)

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Paul called his evangel the untraceable riches of Christ. Some translations use the word *unsearchable* in the place of *untraceable*. *Unsearchable* implies that the riches cannot be searched out or discovered, but Paul discovered these riches so they cannot be thought of as unsearchable to the believer today. Some commentators see the word *unsearchable* as meaning that the riches of Christ are so vast that we will be forever searching out and discovering these riches. Without a doubt, we will be forever discovering more and more of our Lord Jesus; so in this regard, I agree.

However, the word *untraceable* gives us another dimension that refers to the evangel Paul was given to dispense to the nations. It most likely means that the riches of Christ cannot be traced to the Hebrew prophets; that is, they cannot be discovered in Hebrew Scripture. This makes Paul's evangel quite unique and special for those called into it.

If we remain within the context of the above verses, we will see how unique his evangel truly is. I have gone over this ground many times in other writings, but as Paul wrote, it is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you (Philippians 3.1).

I am reminded of the time that I spoke on Ephesians at a conference in Ghana, after which I received a written question: "Why are you telling us these things? We only want to worship God." The answer is simple. When we see the riches of Christ, lavish worship springs forth from our heart.

Paul, the least of the saints, was given grace to dispense this evangel. The risen and glorified Jesus appeared to him on multiple occasions and revealed the riches of Christ contained in the evangel to the nations. It was a secret that was hidden from the eons. This in itself gives us the explanation for the word *untraceable*. No one could trace it throughout all the eons that have preceded our current one. Not even the angels or any of God's created beings among the celestials were ever made privy to this secret. It was revealed to Paul alone. What grace we see in the revelation of this secret through Paul!

Just think about this: In the vastness of God's universe there was only one man chosen to reveal God's secret, and he had persecuted Jesus, the Son of God.

The major part of the secret revealed to Paul and dispensed to us is about Christ and the ecclesia, which is His body, in relation to all God's created beings among the celestials. Through the ecclesia, God's multifarious wisdom is to be made manifest or made known, which means that all the created celestial beings, most notably the angels, are to see the riches of Christ displayed in the body of Christ. We are to display the riches of Christ for the entire universe to see. Another way to state this is that we are to be the manifestation of the riches of Christ.

Like Paul, all of us should be so humbled that through us, the least of all God's creatures, is God's grace in Christ Jesus displayed. Oh, the riches of Christ! This

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is all in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord, *in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, through His faith.*

The purpose of the eons, especially of the eons of the eons, is to display the riches of Christ, and a people have been chosen before the disruption of the world to display these riches to reveal the multifarious wisdom of God.

Perhaps some of this is too much to grasp with our limited minds, but through the faith of the Son of God, we can glory in Christ and approach our Father in heaven with boldness and confidence, not shrinking away out of fear. Through faith we can approach God because He has not only made us a part of the purpose of the eons *in* Christ, but He is using us to display His purpose through His Son.

Dear brethren, if God could choose one like Paul to reveal such glory, do you not think that He will eventually save all mankind? If God's grace could take the least of all men and entrust His most hidden secret to him, do you not think that He can and will save every creature that He has brought forth to His glory? If God could take us, that is, you and me, who are so unworthy, and, by His grace, use us to display His wisdom and the purpose of the eons in His Son to all His creatures throughout His universe, do you not think that even the vilest of sinners, one day, will be saved? This is what the riches of Christ are all about.

When he was writing his epistle to the Romans, Paul could hardly contain himself as he contemplated what God has done for mankind in Christ.

The riches, wisdom and knowledge of God.

For God locks up **all together** in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all. O, the depth of **the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!** How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Romans 11.32-36 cv)

The depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God speaks of the mercy of God shown to *all* His creation, none excepted. This little word *all* should be indelibly written on our heart. All are locked up in stubbornness so that *all* shall be saved, for God is the Savior of *all* mankind, especially of believers. Who can trace His ways? Who can take any credit for His ways? Not a single creature in the entire universe! It is all God's doing.

Where do we discover the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God? We discover them in Christ, *in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed* (Colossians 2.3 cv). Where do we discover the depth of the riches of God? We discover them in the riches of Christ. The Son of God could be likened to the bank, the banker and the treasurer of the entire universe. Of course, this

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does not refer to material wealth but to the very life of God in His Son, who is the wisdom and knowledge of God in Whom are all the riches of God.

Oh, let us not lust after the fleeting riches of the world! Let us passionately desire the riches of God in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

How do we receive these riches? By the riches of His grace!

The riches of His grace.

Grace is one of the most powerful words in Scripture. Grace tells us that we can do nothing to receive the riches of Christ. We do not work for them; we do not earn them; we do not deserve them. We simply *receive* them *in* Christ. These riches are received by the riches of His grace. The emphasis of this phrase is on His grace, and the riches, simply quantify and qualify grace. After all, when we think of one with great riches we think of the quantity of their wealth and the fine quality of their possessions. In other words, the riches mean that His grace is abundant, even extravagant, or as Paul wrote, lavish, and His grace produces a result of the highest quality. Thus, the riches of His grace speak of how lavishly and freely God has bestowed favor on a people with the purpose of bringing them into the greatest destiny that has ever been or will be known in the history of mankind, and possibly the entire universe. This is in accord with the purpose of the eons.

We see most clearly the riches of His grace in Paul's epistle titled *Ephesians*.

For **in grace, through faith, are you saved**, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting.
(Ephesians 2.8-9 cv)

Our salvation is the starting point of grace. We are saved by grace through faith and even the faith is not ours but a gift of God. Our works do not, cannot and will not enter into salvation. The Son of God has done all the work to save us and to keep us saved forever. This is the mighty riches of grace that should cause us to boast only *in* Christ. We have no boast in our own works. The fact of the matter is that no one will ever be able to make his own boast in regard to salvation, and eventually all mankind will make their boast *in* Christ when He has accomplished His mission of heading up all in Himself.

Today, God's present approach to salvation is by grace. His approach will undoubtedly change for mankind that will face the great white throne judgment. Then it will be mercy of the highest order. The second death will be their way to salvation at the consummation of the eons. We are living in the day of grace, and by grace God is saving those that He has called and chosen. However, being saved by grace through faith is only the starting point of our understanding of the riches of His grace. In these riches, we discover the depth of our salvation, past, present

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and future. In the first fourteen verses of the Ephesians epistle, Paul began to unveil the depth of these riches.

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved: in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of His grace, which He lavishes on us; in all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth—in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ. In Whom you also—on hearing the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation—in Whom on believing also, you are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured) for the laud of His glory! (Ephesians 1.2-14 cv)

Paul's writing can be difficult to follow since he uses such long sentences filled with so much meat that we have a hard time swallowing it. To make it a little easier to follow his thoughts and digest them, let us look at one thought at a time.

1. Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ.

Many people seek for blessings that have to do with the things of this world and the satisfying of fleshly needs. Their heart attitude is: "Bless me with this thing and that thing." But the blessings from the Father that are *in* Christ are both spiritual and among the celestials, which means they transcend the material world and even time and space. The celestial realm is a spiritual realm, for God is spirit. One day we will occupy spiritual bodies that will be able to live in the celestial realm, as well as in the earthly or physical realm. In that day, the things of this earth that were so important to our flesh will be so no more. Paul referred to these spiritual blessings as a present spiritual reality.

Because we are *in* Christ *today* and because He is seated among the celestials *today*, we can experience these spiritual blessings *in* Christ *today*. What are these blessings? They are the riches of Christ, which pertain to all that He has saved us into and all that He is and all that He will be to us for the eons and beyond. In other words, we taste these spiritual blessings as we taste and see that the Lord is

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good and as we look out to our glorious future *in* Christ. What follows are some of these blessings.

2. According as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world.

Paul referred to God's will in choosing a people *in* Christ. Many people believe in free will in regard to salvation, meaning that man must make the choice to believe or not to believe. Man is described as a free moral agent that makes all his own choices in life. But the facts do not support such a conclusion. Did any of us have a choice in becoming sinners? Because of Adam's sin, death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned (Romans 5.12 cv). Where is the choice in this? There is none! So how can we declare that we are free moral agents when we are constituted this way as soon as we are conceived? So why do we presume that we have a free will that can trump the will of God? For example, Paul declared that our God wills that *all* mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth (1 Timothy 2.4 cv). It is God's will, not man's will. Another example is Israel. God has caused a partial hardening to come upon Israel until the fullness of the nations has come in, and then He will save *all* Israel (Romans 11.25). Yet, another example is discovered in Paul's Roman epistle.

You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? **Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?** What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (Romans 9.19-24 NASB)

The key to understanding the will of God verses the will of man is that there are vessels of mercy that God prepared beforehand for glory. God is the One who prepares and calls according to His will, not our will.

According to Paul, if we are privileged to be among the ranks of the believers, then we are there because God chose us to be there, and He made this determination before the disruption of the world. In other words, we had no choice in the matter. By God's grace you have been chosen *in* Christ, and this was determined before mankind was ever formed from the soil of this earth. If you believe, this is something to greatly rejoice over and to glory *in* Christ. Our boast is *in* Christ and God's will, not in our self or our own will.

To some, this all might seem unfair to those who are not saved in this eon. Is it really unfair? Eventually, in God's mercy, all mankind will be saved. In God's

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wisdom, not all mankind will be saved in the same eon and some must wait until the consummation of the eons. Who is capable of questioning God's wisdom?

3. We to be holy and flawless in His sight.

Rejoice in the fact that you have been chosen *in* Christ and that it is God's full intention to see you through to His end that you will be holy and flawless in His sight. This is possible because we will be conformed to the image of Christ, and the Father will see His Son in us when He looks upon us. We will be like Him because we will be transfigured and conformed to Him and the glory of His body. No one can stand before God without being consumed unless he is like the Son of God. God could have just saved us and left us to our own devices to become like His Son or to figure out how to become holy in His sight, but we would have failed miserably. Consequently, in choosing and saving us, the Father has declared that we *will be* holy and flawless by His grace. This speaks of the highest quality of character produced by grace. Oh, the riches of His grace!

4. In love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus.

Out of His love, God desires to have sons, not just children. He needs sons to fulfill His purpose and to express His love. God is after sons that are like the Son of His love, and He has designated beforehand, before the disruption of the world, those who will be placed as sons in His kingdom. *Sonship* refers to *reigning*. In other words, God has chosen beforehand those who will reign in His kingdom. But notice that sonship comes *through* Christ Jesus. We become sons through the riches of His grace *in* Christ. Reigning in a kingdom of righteousness requires righteous character, and grace produces this in the sons of God. It is the very righteousness of Christ.

5. In accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved.

This is all in accord with the delight of the will of God. It is God's delight to do this for His Son and for us. The Father did not purpose this grudgingly, as if He was forced or as if He had no choice in the matter. No; He delights in doing this. It is for the laud or praise of the glory of His grace, and this grace is graced to us in His Son.

We see the glory of His grace in Paul's testimony of being blinded by Christ. Paul had no choice in the matter. It was the will of God, even the delight of His will, to take the least of the saints and put him into service. It is to the laud of the glory of His grace, which graced Paul in the Beloved. The word *glory* can refer to something highly esteemed or favorable. Thus, the glory of His grace speaks of the quality of His grace. The highly esteemed and favorable grace of God has graced us or has been given to us as a gift in the Beloved. Because of Christ alone, we receive the riches of His grace.

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6. In Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of His grace, which He lavishes on us.

Because of the blood of Christ, the riches of His grace are lavished upon us. The word *lavish* refers to something extravagant or more than enough. Because of the blood, grace is extravagantly available to us. There is so much grace that it is lavish grace; it is inexhaustible grace. Thus, the quantity and quality of grace is inexhaustible and beyond comparison. No matter the situation, the failure, even the sin, grace is lavishly available to deliver us safely into His celestial kingdom. When we see reference to forgiveness of offenses, it generally refers to entrance into the kingdom. However, our salvation is far greater than this, for lavish grace also justifies, just as if we had never sinned.

7. In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth.

The riches of His grace bring us into the very secret of God's will that is purposed *in* His Son. It is by this lavish grace that the eyes of our heart are enlightened to see what few men today see and what the prophets of old saw dimly. It is God's delight to reveal His purpose and plan that had been concealed from all the previous generations and eons. The plan (administration) that God will fully accomplish in the fullness of the times is to head up all in the Christ, that in the heavens and on the earth. This is the purpose of the eons. By the riches of His grace, your eyes have been opened to the secret of God's will. It is time to rejoice in the Lord!

8. In Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, that we should be for the laud of His glory.

Paul brought believers into the very purpose of God *in* Christ. By grace, our lot has been cast with Christ, which means that whatever He does to fulfill God's purpose we have been made a part of as well. He is to head up all, and we have been joined with Him in the heading up of all. We have no choice in the matter. Praise God! Our lot was cast beforehand, before the disruption of the world. This is all in accord with the purpose of God, the One who operates all in accord with the counsel of His will. It is God's will that our lot has been cast with Christ. No wonder it is to the laud of His glory! Our lot speaks of the riches of His grace.

9. Who are pre-expectant in the Christ.

Paul included this strange statement about being *pre-expectant* in the Christ. This refers to having an expectation that Christ is coming for us before the wrath

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of God is poured out on this world in judgment before the King of kings literally steps foot on this earth. Believers in this eon are not destined for wrath (Romans 8.1; 1 Thessalonians 1.10). We are expecting to rise in the air before the final indignation that ends this present wicked eon; to be delivered into the presence of the Lord. This is confirmed in the next verse.

10. You are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured) for the laud of His glory!

As if being *in* Christ were not enough, we are told through Paul that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. This is the seal of God, God's promise to us. According to Paul, we know that we have been given the Holy Spirit (Romans 5.5; 1 Thessalonians 4.8; 2 Timothy 1.14). But being sealed is an assurance from the Father that nothing can or will change our being *in* Christ and coming into all the riches of His grace. Later in his letter, Paul wrote: *And do not be causing sorrow to the holy spirit of God by which you are sealed for the day of deliverance* (Ephesians 4.30 cv). The sealing is our assurance that we will be delivered *into* the enjoyment of our allotment in the celestial kingdom when we take on spiritual bodies in the image of the Celestial or Heavenly One. The Holy Spirit of promise has sealed us *in* Christ as a pledge or earnest that one day we will receive an allotment or inheritance in the kingdom of God, and this promise is for the praise of His glory and for our enjoyment. Do you see how marvelous are the riches of His grace? Who of us deserves such a glorious destiny?

As we continue in the Ephesians letter, we see that Paul unveiled so many riches that it is almost too much to take in. This is why Paul had to stop and mention his prayer for the recipients of his letter. He prayed that *the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all* (Ephesians 1.17-23 cv).

This is another long sentence, filled with the riches of His grace. Paul prayed that the saints would perceive the expectation or the hope of His calling. This refers to our destiny in Christ. It is God's calling of us unto glory, the glory of His Son. The saints are to know the greatness of the power of God, the very same power that was operative in Christ when He was roused from among the dead. Today, He is seated at the right hand of His Father among the celestials. He is over all levels of rulership in God's universe and has a name that cannot and will not be matched

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in this eon or the eons to come. The Father has subjected all under His feet and has made Him Head of the universe.

11. And gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all.

It is in this grand view of Christ that Paul brought the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, under the Head of the universe and declared that this body is the complement of the Head who will head up all until He is all in all. Is it any wonder that Paul had to pray that they would perceive the glory of this secret that was revealed to him for the nations? Do you realize that as a believer you are a member of Christ's body and that all the members of His body are His complement and will be displayed as such throughout the universe and among the celestials for the eons to come? Do you realize that the body of Christ is the fullness of Christ or the exact image of the Head of all? The body also is destined to become His complement for the eons by being roused from among the dead by the same transcendent greatness of His power that roused Christ and seated Him among the celestials! This is the riches of His grace. Who of us deserves such glory? It is all by the lavish grace of God.

We can only imagine that as he was dictating this letter, Paul's thoughts were racing a mile a minute as he contemplated the riches that he sought to convey in words.

And you, being dead to your offenses and sins, **in which once you walked, in accord with the eon of this world, in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air**, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness (among whom we also all behaved ourselves once in the lusts of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the comprehension, and were, in our nature, children of indignation, even as the rest), **yet God**, being rich in mercy, because of His vast love with which He loves us (we also being dead to the offenses and the lusts), vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2.1-7 cv)

Before we were placed *in* Christ, we were walking in accord with the eon of this world. We live in the eon that Paul described as the present wicked eon. We were once part of this world system as sons of stubbornness, worthy only of indignation. Oh, but thank God for His vast love with which He loves us, even when we were dead in our offenses and lusts. It was while we were in this dire condition that God's love for us was most clearly manifested. His love is a vast love; it is like the deepest of oceans and the highest of mountains.

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12. His vast love vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus.

It is God's love for us that gives us life *in* His Son. To remind us of the riches of His grace, Paul declared that in grace you are saved. Not only have we been given life, but in God's view, we have already been raised up together and seated together among the celestials in Christ Jesus. Today, in spirit, we are seated among the celestials; spiritually speaking, we have arrived at our destiny, and now we wait for our Rescuer to come from heaven and transport us there to be among the celestials, not only in spirit, but also conformed to the body of His glory. In His vast love, we are to be seated with the Head of the universe, just as the Son of God is now seated with the God and Father of the universe. Can you imagine a destiny more glorious than this one? Marvelous grace!

13. That, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Paul was so struck by His grace that the word *riches* was not enough; he had to add the word *transcendent*, which means "surpass or exceed, as something extraordinary," to quantify the riches further. Paul pointed to the oncoming eons, the eons of the eons, or the Lord's day, in which God will be displaying the surpassing, the excellent and the extraordinary riches of His grace to us *in* His Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord. The riches of His grace transcend all the riches imaginable.

We do not know the full depths of these extraordinary riches. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM" (1 Corinthians 2.9 NASB). By the spirit of God, we taste these riches today, but a day is coming when we will be so bathed in them that we will be the display of these transcendent riches, in His Son, throughout the entire universe to the glory of God. Oh, the kindness of God!

14. For His achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them. (Ephesians 2.10 CV)

By the riches of His grace, we are His achievement or, as other translations state, we are His workmanship *in* Christ Jesus. Note the present tense that not only are we His achievement, but we are being created *in* Christ Jesus for a very special purpose, for good works that God made ready for us beforehand. Paul declared that all these riches were established before the disruption of the world, just so that we could walk in them. We do not have to search for good works; we just have to be led by the spirit of God and walk in them. Although there are good

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works for us in this life, given Paul's vision of our destiny, it is just as likely that these good works are the works that we will be walking in during the oncoming eons to the laud of His glory.

I trust these fourteen points will whet your appetite to search out the transcendent riches of His grace in Christ Jesus. There are many other aspects of these riches, such as being a one new humanity; fellow citizens of the saints; God's dwelling place, in spirit; and joint enjoyers of an allotment, a joint body and joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus (see Ephesians 2.15-16, 19-22; 3.6). You are encouraged to search Paul's epistles and mine for these riches. May the eyes of your heart be enlightened to see more clearly!

The riches of His glory.

Now, let us look at the other aspect of the riches of Christ, and that is the riches of His glory. As with grace, this speaks of the quantity and quality of glory. Also, grace and glory are almost inseparable. We could say that grace leads to glory, or grace is the pathway to glory.

God moves upon the lives of His people with the purpose of bringing them into the riches of His glory in the oncoming eons. Through the riches of His grace in Christ poured out on His people, God is preparing them for the coming riches of His glory in Christ.

Now, if God, wanting to display His indignation and to make His powerful doings known, carries, with much patience, the vessels of indignation, adapted for destruction, it is that **He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy**, which He makes ready before for glory—us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also. (Romans 9.22-24 cv)

In His mercy, God has called unto Himself a people who deserve His indignation or wrath. Instead of receiving wrath, they are called to enter into glory that He prepared them for beforehand. What mercy! To these vessels of mercy, a people to come out from among the Jews and the nations to come into glory in the oncoming eons, He makes known the riches of His glory that He has prepared for them. God calls from glory unto glory. He wants us to know that in His mercy, He has called us into the glory of Christ.

In the Philippians letter, Paul revealed that the riches in glory *in* Christ Jesus meet us in our everyday life and the needs of life. Glory has a very practical application to us while we live on earth. This was Paul's prayer for the saints in this regard. Notice how Paul took the practical and pointed to the future glory for the eons of the eons.

THE RICHES OF CHRIST

Now my God shall be filling your every need **in accord with His riches in glory in Christ Jesus**. Now to our God and Father be glory for the eons of the eons! Amen! (Philippians 4.19-20 cv)

Dear brethren, when He fills our every need, God is doing so in accord with the destiny that is ours in Christ. He moves upon our lives with the riches of His glory in view. We see this same thought every place that Paul used the expression *the riches of His glory*.

On this behalf am I bowing my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, after Whom every kindred in the heavens and on earth is being named, that He may be giving you, in accord with the riches of His glory, to be made staunch with power, through His spirit, in the man within, **Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith**, that you, having been rooted and grounded in love, should be strong to grasp, together with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height—**to know the love of Christ as well which transcends knowledge**—that you may be completed for the entire complement of God. (Ephesians 3.14-19 cv)

Christ is to dwell richly in our hearts for the purpose of us being so rooted and grounded in His love that together with all the saints we will know the full measure of the love of Christ. This love transcends knowledge. We can talk about love and intellectualize love all we want, but it will be of no value to us unless we are growing up in Christ in love. We are to be a complete or mature man in Christ so that we can truly be the complement of the One completing the all in all. This is in accord with the riches of His glory, which means that the very purpose of love is to bring us into the glory of God in Christ. It is the love of Christ that will complete us to be His complement, and this is in accord with the riches of His glory. Consequently, love leads to glory, into the riches of His glory.

The riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment.

Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be **giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive.... what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints....** (Ephesians 1.15-18 cv)

Paul prayed for the saints that the secret that he was given to dispense to the nations would be realized. This was, and still is, a formidable task that is only possible by the spirit of God. Nevertheless, Paul prayed that the eyes of their heart would see the riches of God's glory in the coming eons.

Glory can refer to happiness. When God is happy, glory bursts forth. Notice that the allotment (or inheritance) is His allotment. It is the enjoyment of His

THE PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE EONS

allotment among the saints. This must refer to the inheritance that Christ will receive. *Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as Your allotment, and as Your holding, the limits of the earth* (Psalm 2.8 cv). Surely, in that day, the Son will enter into the joy of His heart, the joy that was set before Him as He was led to the cross. This is in accord with the riches of His glory.

The glorious riches of this secret.

Finally, we conclude with another word from Paul that sums up the secret of His evangel for the nations.

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the word of God—**the secret which has been concealed from the eons and from the generations**, yet now was made manifest to His saints, to whom God wills to make known what are the glorious riches of this secret among the nations, which is: **Christ among you, the expectation of glory**—Whom we are announcing, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we should be **presenting every man mature in Christ Jesus**; for which I am toiling also, struggling in accord with His operation, which is operating in me with power. (Colossians 1.24-29 cv)

The secret was concealed from the eons and the generations, yet, praise God, it is now manifested to the saints. God has willed to make known what are the glorious riches of this secret among the nations. The secret is Christ among the nations, the expectation of glory. By His spirit, Christ walks among us now to lead us into His eonian glory.

This is why Paul admonished all and taught all the wisdom of God. He saw the destiny for those who love God. He struggled and toiled for every man, not only for the ecclesia but for every man, that all should be presented mature *in* Christ Jesus.

This is my prayer for all who are reading this material. It is not about facts and figures. It is about us seeing the purpose of the eons in such a way that it leads us to become mature *in* Christ and not to be led astray by the many deceptions of our wicked day. As we see God's purpose *in* Christ, it is to bring about change in our lives leading us toward the perfection that is a mature man *in* Christ as we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

By the riches of His grace, glory will come. This is the promise of Christ. May Christ dwell richly in your heart and may you pursue Christ and all His riches!

We pray that soon we will enter into all the riches of His glory among the celestials.