

UPWARD CALL

I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God IN KING JESUS. (Philippians 3:14)

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Expectation of Glory—What Bliss!

The mystery (secret) which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations, but now is revealed (made manifest) to His saints, to whom God wills to make known the riches of the glory of ***this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you, the expectation (hope) of glory.*** (Colossians 1:26-27 compilation)

With a new year, many people are hoping for a better year without any knowledge or expectation that better things will come. Instead, their hope is like wishful thinking—hoping for good things without any assurance they will actually come. Today, many are lining up for a new-age vaccine, with no knowledge of the risks. They are willing to go along with what they are told to do, hoping it will lead them back to a normal life, with little assurance it will. This is the world's hope.

The good news is that, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—the King of Glory—we have a hope that is nothing like the world's many hopes. In the ages leading up to Paul's day, there was a mystery or secret hidden from the nations of the world, and this beloved apostle was called of God to declare this hope for all given the faith to believe on God's Son. The hope began with Christ coming to presence Himself in a people called out from among the nations (ecclesia)—*Christ in you* was the mystery Paul was charged to unveil to the nations from which the ecclesia grew. This mystery was something unheard of in the history of world religions, one that even the ancient sons of Israel failed to see, although their prophets intimated it. Instead of a religion of outward form and expression, *Christ in you* is all about the spirit of the Lord, which Jesus also called the *spirit of truth*, taking up residence within people, forming a relational union, not a new religion. Jesus declared: I AM *the Truth (Reality)*; so we can see that He presences Himself within His people as truth (among other things). Unfortunately, this truth has reverted back to a mystery in some quarters of the public church; or it has become merely a slogan, without revelation of the depth of its meaning. Simply, it has no power in the lives of some who claim the name of Jesus.

But there was more to the mystery unveiled by Paul. There was a hope cojoined with Christ in you—the *hope of glory*. In other words, when Christ takes up residence in a person, He comes, not only with a life to live in the now but also a hope for the future, described as glory. Naturally, we must understand what glory is in order to grasp the greatness of this hope, but first let's stick with the concept of hope.

The Concordant Literal Version (CLV) uses the word *expectation* in place of the word *hope*. Expectation is probably the more accurate rendering, for within this word is the concept of hope with the added dimension of certainty that what is not seen will most definitely come to pass. To repeat, in the world, the word *hope* does not always convey the thought of certainty. Many people hope for things that they never receive. In this regard, it is more like a wish or wishful thinking than a sure thing. The good news is that the hope of the believer will not disappoint (Romans 5:5); it cannot, for it has no uncertainty in it. Consequently, expectation more appropriately describes our hope. We need to indelibly write this on our heart—the hope of Christ in you is guaranteed by God Himself. It is a promise that cannot be broken and that will manifest at the appointed time of God.

We discover a corollary to this hope as Paul tells us that God's spirit within us is a pledge or down payment of something glorious that God guarantees will come to its fullest measure—namely, new bodies.

While we live in these earthly bodies, **we groan and sigh**, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our **new bodies** so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. And He who formed us with this very end in view is **God, who has given us His Spirit as a pledge (guarantee, down payment, first installment) and foretaste of that bliss.** (2 Corinthians 5:4-5 NLT/Weymouth [bold added])

Christ in you is a guarantee of glory, and this glory will manifest as immortal life in a new body. Although the word *bliss* does not appear in the original Greek of the above; nevertheless, it describes the putting off of our earthly tents that give us many *groans* and sighs and the putting on of our dwelling reserved for us by God, secured in His realm, awaiting the day in which our mortal life is swallowed up by immortal life, resulting in pure bliss (i.e., supreme happiness, utter *joy* or contentment). As stressed many times, it is not about dying and going to heaven, especially in this hour so close to the Presence of the Lord. It is about our Savior, our Rescuer, coming from heaven to change us into His image—the image of the *Pattern Son*.

For our realm (citizenship, realm of a free city; political realm) is inherent in the heavens, **out of which we are awaiting a Savior also, the Lord, Jesus Christ**, Who will **transfigure** [refashion, remodel] **the body** of our humiliation, **to conform it to the body of His glory** [same form together with His body], in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself." (Philippians 3:20-21 CLV [JM-NT] bold added)

If you've noticed, I refer to this verse quite often and for good reason—we are fast approaching the day. Some say that Paul's hope was deferred, but I am not so sure it was, and I'll leave it at this for you to ponder. The point that needs to be underlined is that the word *awaiting* in the Greek means to "expect fully", and this leads us back to the expectation of glory. The Lord's arrival from heaven (God's realm) has a clear purpose and that involves transfiguring the body of Christ on earth by conforming it to the body of His glory. Stated another way: in a personal way, since Christ is in you, when He comes out of God's dimension manifesting Himself in our dimension, the very Christ in you will rise up in glory and manifest as a spirit-animated body changed into His likeness.

Dear saints, this is our hope or expectation. The world can not give us this hope nor guarantee it to us, but God can and does. This expectation has been sealed by the blood of the Lamb, and no one on earth can or ever will destroy or take away this seal. We have been imprinted with this seal, and soon the Father's appointed time will arrive to make good on His promise.

Now, there is one remaining issue: *What is glory?* In some respects, this a challenge to answer. Lord willing, I will offer some thoughts about it later; however, at this point, I would say that glory is something that must be seen and experienced more than something to describe intellectually or through some scriptural dissertation.

As I meditated on this question, an image emerged of pure light, so pure that there is no imperfection whatsoever in this light, and when we walk into this light, we become one with it, meaning we are changed into absolute perfection. Paul tells us that Jesus will *present to Himself the ecclesia (His body) in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless* (Ephesians 5:27). I've often wondered if *saints in light* (Paul's expression) conveys this image. Can you imagine having a spirit-animated body that radiates pure light or, we could say, God's pure, creative, radiant energy—like our Lord Jesus, yet distinctly and individually unique as each one of us? **What bliss!**