

**LIVING AND SERVING ACCORDING TO  
GOD’S ECONOMY CONCERNING THE CHURCH**  
(Thursday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

**The Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God**

MC Hymns: 925

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:11; Acts 7:2, 55; 2 Cor. 4:3-4, 6; John 12:31

- 1 Tim 1:11 According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.
- Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,
- Acts 7:55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he looked intently into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;
- 2 Cor 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those who are perishing,
- 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
- 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

**I. Glory is an attribute of God; glory is the expression of God, God expressed in splendor—Exo. 40:34; Acts 7:55; 2 Pet. 1:3; Rev. 21:11.**

- Exo 40:34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle.
- Acts 7:55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he looked intently into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;
- 2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

**II. The glory of God is intrinsically related to the economy of God—Eph. 1:6, 10, 12, 14; 3:21; 5:27:**

- Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 1:12 That we would be to the praise of His glory who have first hoped in Christ,
- Eph 1:14 Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory.
- Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.
- Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

**A. The Triune God is a God of glory—Acts 7:2; Eph. 1:17; 3:14, 16; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Pet. 4:14.**

- Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,
- Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,
- Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,
- Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- 1 Cor 2:8 Which none of the rulers of this age have known; for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;
- 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

- 1 Pet 4:14 If you are reproached in the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.
- B. Man was created by God in His image in order that man would express Him in glory—Gen. 1:26; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6.
- Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
- Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
- 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
- 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- C. God created us as vessels unto honor, prepared unto glory; we were predestinated in His sovereignty to be His vessels to express what He is in glory—Rom. 9:21, 23.
- Rom 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?
- Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
- D. Through the gospel of the glory of Christ, God has called us by and into His eternal glory—2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11; 1 Thes. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3.
- 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
- 1 Tim 1:11 According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.
- 1 Thes 2:12 So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
- 1 Pet 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.
- 2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,

### **III. “The god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them”—2 Cor. 4:4:**

- A. The god of this age is Satan, the deceiver, the ruler of the present age—John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2:
- John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.
- John 14:30 I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing;
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
- Eph 2:2 In which you once walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit which is now operating in the sons of disobedience;
1. In addition to his kingdom, Satan, the devil, has his own religion; he is not merely the ruler of this world but also the god of this age—Matt. 12:26; John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4.
- Matt 12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?
- John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.
- 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.

2. *The ruler of this world* refers to Satan's rule over people; *the god of this age* refers to the worship that he receives from people today—John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4.
    - John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.
    - 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
  3. Nearly all people today, whether primitive or highly cultured, have been blinded by the god of this age—v. 4.
    - 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
- B. If we drop our concepts and turn our heart to the Lord, the veils will be taken away, the god of this age will have no ground in our being, and the gospel of the glory of God will shine in our hearts—vv. 4, 6.
- 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
  - 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

#### **IV. The glory of God is involved with Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and coming again:**

- A. The Word became flesh, and the glory of His divinity was concealed within the shell of His humanity, yet the disciples beheld His glory—John 1:14; Matt. 17:2.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
  - Matt 17:2 And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as the light.
- B. In His life and work the Lord Jesus did not seek His own glory but the glory of the One who sent Him—John 7:18; 8:50, 54.
- John 7:18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.
  - John 8:50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks glory for Me and judges.
  - John 8:54 Jesus answered, If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say that He is your God.
- C. The glory of Christ's divinity was released through the breaking of the shell of His humanity by His death—12:23-24.
- John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
  - John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- D. Christ was glorified by His resurrection—Luke 24:26; John 7:39; 17:5; Acts 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:21.
- Luke 24:26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into His glory?
  - John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
  - John 17:5 And now, glorify Me along with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.
  - Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.
  - 1 Pet 1:21 Who through Him believe into God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

- E. Christ was glorified in His ascension; the Lord Jesus is a model of a person who has “crossed the river” and entered into God’s glory, where He is crowned with glory and honor—Heb. 2:9-10; 6:19-20; 9:24.
- Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.
- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Heb 6:19 Which we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and firm and which enters within the veil,
- Heb 6:20 Where the Forerunner, Jesus, has entered for us, having become forever a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedec.
- Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter into a holy place made by hands, a figure of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us;
- F. The Lord as the Son of Man will come in the glory of the Father—Matt. 16:27; Luke 21:27.
- Matt 16:27 For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.
- Luke 21:27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
- G. In the New Jerusalem for eternity, Christ, the Lamb as the lamp, will shine with God as the light to illuminate the New Jerusalem with the glory of God, which glory is the expression of the divine light—Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5.
- Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
- Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
- Rev 22:5 And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

**V. Christ is the image of God and the effulgence of His glory; hence, the gospel of Christ is the gospel of His glory that illuminates and shines forth—Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Rev. 6:2:**

- Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
- Heb 1:3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
- 2 Cor 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those who are perishing,
- 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
- Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he who sits on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.
- A. The gospel of the glory of Christ is the gospel of the glory of the blessed God—1 Tim. 1:11:
- 1 Tim 1:11 According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.
1. The expression *the gospel of the glory of the blessed God* refers to God’s economy in 1 Timothy 1:4.
 

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
  2. The gospel with which the apostle Paul was entrusted is the effulgence of the glory of the blessed God—Heb. 1:3; Rom. 1:25; 9:5.
 

Heb 1:3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Rom 1:25 Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Rom 9:5 Whose are the fathers, and out of whom, as regards what is according to flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

3. By dispensing God's life and nature in Christ into God's chosen people, this gospel shines forth God's glory, in which God is blessed among His people—2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3, 6, 12, 14.
  - 2 Cor 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort,
  - Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,
  - Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
  - Eph 1:12 That we would be to the praise of His glory who have first hoped in Christ,
  - Eph 1:14 Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory.
- B. The gospel is the gospel of the glory of Christ, which illuminates, radiates, and shines in our hearts—2 Cor. 4:4, 6:
  - 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
  - 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
  1. God's shining in our hearts results in the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that is, in the enlightenment that causes us to know the glory of God in the gospel of Christ—vv. 4, 6.
    - 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
    - 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
  2. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 *God, image, Christ, glory, gospel, and illumination* are all in apposition, referring to the same wonderful person; God is the image, the image is Christ, Christ is the glory, the glory is the gospel, and the gospel is the illumination.
  3. The illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ; this means that the gospel of the glory of Christ is a lovely person in whose face we can see the glory of God—vv. 4, 6; Matt. 17:2.
    - 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.
    - 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
    - Matt 17:2 And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as the light.
  4. The glory of God manifested in the face of Jesus Christ is the God of glory expressed through Jesus Christ, who is the effulgence of the glory of God; to know Him is to know the God of glory—Acts 7:2; Heb. 1:3.
    - Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,
    - Heb 1:3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

**VI. God shines in our hearts that we may shine on others so that they may have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—the knowledge of Christ, who expresses and declares God—Phil. 2:15; John 1:18:**

Phil 2:15 That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world,

- John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.
- A. The gospel of the glory of Christ shines into us, and then it shines out from within us—Matt. 5:16.  
 Matt 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.
- B. In our preaching of the gospel, there should be an illumination; we need to shine forth the gospel of the glory of Christ from within us—Phil. 2:15.  
 Phil 2:15 That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world,
- C. In proclaiming the gospel of the glory of Christ, we should not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, who is the content of the gospel—2 Cor. 4:5.  
 2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.
- D. Those who receive the gospel of the glory of Christ through our shining will have Christ as the precious treasure dispensed into them; then, like us, they will be earthen vessels containing this priceless treasure—vv. 4, 6-7.  
 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.  
 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.  
 2 Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### The Shining of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ

#### *Their Gospel Veiled in the Perishing Ones*

In 2 Corinthians 4:3 Paul goes on to say, “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those who are perishing.” In some the gospel is veiled by old concepts, especially the concept concerning the law (3:14-15). In principle, anything such as philosophy, religion, or cultural traditions that hinders people from apprehending the gospel of Christ is a veil. Hence, the preaching of Christ must unveil them, just as in photography the cover is removed from the lens in order to take a picture.

Paul’s word in 4:3 implies that the gospel preached by the apostles should not be veiled. There is no reason for it to be veiled. But if it is veiled, it is veiled in those who are perishing, that is, in those for whom the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ is out of death unto death.

In verse 4 Paul continues, “In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.” The god of this age is Satan, the deceiver, the ruler of this present age. He dominates today’s world and hunts for man’s worship by blinding his mind and his thoughts. In this verse *blinded* means to veil a person’s understanding. Furthermore, *the thoughts* here denote “the understanding” or “the mind.”

Christ as the image of God is the effulgence of His glory (Heb. 1:3). Hence, the gospel of Christ is the gospel of His glory that illuminates and shines forth. Satan, the god of this age, has blinded the thoughts and the minds of the unbelievers so that the illumination of the gospel of Christ’s glory might not shine into their hearts. This is similar to covering the lens of a camera so that the light cannot shine into the camera.

What Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 4:4 is a kind of spiritual photography. We are like cameras with a lens and a shutter. When the shutter is pressed, there is a way for the light with the object, the

figure, the image, to shine into the camera and be impressed on the film. The light brings the figure to the film and forms an image on it. However, if the lens of the camera is covered, there is no way for the light to shine into the camera. Sometimes when we preach the gospel to others, they are like a camera with the lens covered. The light cannot shine into them. Praise the Lord that, by His mercy and grace, the satanic cover has been removed from our minds! We have not only an unveiled face but also an uncovered mind.

The unveiled face in 3:18 is the uncovered mind in chapter 4. According to Paul's concept, these two things are one. To have an unveiled face, therefore, is to have an uncovered mind. It is to be like a camera open to the shining of light.

As light shines into us, it brings in the image of Christ. This illumination shines into our spirit through our mind. Our spirit can be compared to the film. When the shining comes into us through our open mind, it reaches our spirit and brings the figure of Christ, the image of God, into us. In the church we are practicing such a spiritual and heavenly photography.

Literally, the Greek word translated "shine" in verse 4 first means "to see distinctly, to discern"; second, it means "to shine." Hence, the translation of the second part of this verse may read, "That they should not see the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Since the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, they cannot see the illumination of the gospel's glory, just as a blind man, or a man with his eyes veiled, cannot see the light of the sun.

#### ***Not Preaching Themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord***

Verse 5 says, "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake." *For* explains why the apostles' gospel, which is the gospel of the glory of Christ, should not have been veiled, for they do not preach, exalt, themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord of all, and they conducted themselves as the believers' slaves for Jesus' sake.

Christ Jesus as Lord comprises Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever (Rom. 9:5), the eternal Word incarnated to be a man (John 1:14), Jesus crucified as a man to be our Savior (Acts 4:10-12) and resurrected to be the Son of God (13:33), and Christ exalted to be the Lord (2:36), even the Lord of all men (10:36; Rom. 10:12; John 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:3), who is the image of God, the effulgence of God's glory (Heb. 1:3). This is the very content of the gospel. Hence, the gospel is the gospel of the glory of Christ, which illuminates, radiates, and shines in the heart of man. If man's heart is not veiled with anything or blinded by Satan, the god of this age, man can see the illumination of the gospel.

The word *slaves* in 2 Corinthians 4:5 is in contrast with *Lord*. The apostles exalted Christ as Lord but considered themselves merely slaves to serve the believers. They were slaves not only to Christ but to the believers as well.

#### ***God Shining in Their Hearts***

Verse 6 says, "Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This explains what is mentioned in the preceding verse. The apostles preached Christ as Lord and themselves as the believers' slaves, because the very God who commanded light to shine out of darkness had shined in their hearts. His shining in the universe produced the old creation. Now His shining in their hearts made them a new creation. Therefore, in their preaching they were able to exalt Christ as the Lord, and in their ministry, to conduct themselves as slaves of the believers. What they did for Christ and what they were to the believers were the issue of God's shining. God's shining produces the new covenant ministers and their ministry.

In our hearts is much deeper than on the skin of Moses' face (3:7; Exo. 34:29-30). This presents a comparison between the glory of the apostolic ministry of the gospel and that of the Mosaic ministry of the law. In the heart is related to the inner life, whereas on the skin of the face has nothing to do with the inner life. The glory of the old covenant is on the surface, but the glory of the new covenant has great depth.

*Our hearts* in 2 Corinthians 4:6 denotes the hearts of the apostles. They represent all the believers of the new covenant.

The illumination here, which refers to the shining of God's light on others out from those whose hearts have been enlightened by God, corresponds with the manifestation in verse 2 and is the same as the shining in Matthew 5:16 and Philippians 2:15. God shines in our hearts that we may shine on others so that they may have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that is, the knowledge of Christ, who expresses and declares God (John 1:18).

The face of Jesus Christ is in comparison with the face of Moses (2 Cor. 3:7). The glory of the gospel in the face of Jesus Christ is much superior to the glory of the law in the face of Moses. The glory of the gospel shines in the face of One through whom grace and reality came, issuing in righteousness and life (vv. 8-9). The glory of the law shone in the face of one through whom the law was given (John 1:17), resulting in condemnation and death (2 Cor. 3:7, 9). The shining of God in our hearts is to illumine us that we may know not the glory on Moses' face but the glory in Christ's face. It is to enlighten us so that we may know not the law of Moses of the old covenant but the gospel of Christ of the new covenant. The glory of God manifested in the face of Jesus Christ is the God of glory expressed through Jesus Christ, and it is Jesus Christ who is the effulgence of the glory of God (Heb. 1:3). To know Him is to know the God of glory.

God has had two creations: the old creation and the new creation. The old creation came through God's outward shining in the darkness. The new creation is accomplished through God's inward shining in our hearts. By God's shining in our hearts we have become a new creation. This shining is in the face of Christ. To experience it, we need to have direct, personal, and intimate contact with Christ. This contact will cause the shining of God in our heart. God may shine upon us, but if we want Him to shine in us, we need to have direct, intimate contact with Him. This is the reason we call on Him and say, "O Lord Jesus." Even Saul of Tarsus was saved by calling on the name of the Lord. By calling on the Lord he was brought into face-to-face contact with Him. When Saul said, "Who are You, Lord?" the Lord immediately replied, "I am Jesus." This answer was intimate and personal. It was not a long-distance call; it was a face-to-face conversation. Saul of Tarsus experienced God's shining in his heart.

Suppose you are preaching the gospel to an unbeliever. He nods and says that he believes in the Lord Jesus and receives Him as Savior. Do not assume that he has truly been saved. You need to ask if he has called on the Lord, thereby having direct contact with Him. If such an unbeliever would call on the name of the Lord Jesus, he would be brought to the face of Jesus Christ and immediately have personal contact with Him.

Only when we have such direct, personal, and intimate contact with the Lord do we have the inner shining. This is just as true of us as it is of an unbeliever coming to the Lord for the first time. If we would have the Lord's shining once again, we need to have intimate contact with the Lord. Whenever we call on the Lord in a dear, intimate way, we are before His face, and the shining of God is in our heart. In this way the apostles received the inner shining. Then they shined out what they had received. This was their way of conducting themselves for the shining of the glory of the gospel of Christ. The power for this shining is that spoken of in 2 Corinthians 4:7. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, second edition, pp. 77-82)