

The Hope of Glory

Colossians 1:27-29

November 21st, 2004

❖ Introduction

❖ Exposition

Colossians 1:27 - ²⁷To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.[NKJV]

- ◆ The context of this verse is the mystery of God's intention to create one new man by uniting both Jew and Gentile. This plan of God was largely missed by the Jews and was at the heart of much of the controversies that the early church dealt with. One of the aspects of this mystery that was unforeseen was how God would dwell with His people in a new way—the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, aka, the Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:9, 1 Peter 1:11)
- ◆ It was to His Saints that God determined He would make known the mystery of His will. He is the one who revealed it to us, it was not us who “did the math” and figured out all that was to come. The things of God are deep and many things are secret. We rest in His kindness and His grace knowing that He has not yet revealed all things to us.
- ◆ Now God would dwell with His people a new way; instead of descending on temples of stone, the temple would be made of His children and he would inhabit each one. This giving of the Spirit would be a deposit ensuring our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14). God continues His covenantal promise of dwelling with His people but now it would be in a new, fuller more intimate manner. Romans 8:9-11
- ◆ This deposit of Christ in us, is our hope of glory. It is the down payment of future glory. Our hope is not built on something in our flesh but rather is built on the atonement of Christ alone. Christ is our glory, our hope and our promise.

Colossians 1:28 - ²⁸Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.[NKJV]

- ◆ Notice that this Christ is a preached or proclaimed Christ. He is not just a story passed down through the ages. He is not just an influential character in history to be studied in school along with others. He is to be proclaimed, declared or preached. He is to be taught with authority by those who are called by God to teach.
- ◆ The gospel of Christ is declared to all the nations. But we have turned the tables around by muddling the gospel into a self help teaching. Our modern emphasis is focused on man and his needs. Whether it be improving our lives or solving difficulties in life, our gospel is really no gospel at all. This emphasis is the byproduct of consumerism infiltrating the pulpits and the church taking her eye off what her calling is.
- ◆ The purpose of the church is to make disciples through proclaiming of the gospel of Christ. This good news is only good when set in contrast to the bad news. All of us are by nature objects of wrath and have fallen short of the glory of God. Proclaiming Christ must be a two part message. There must be a warning that accompanies the message of glory. If we remove this bad news from the context of the Gospel, we no longer see how good, the good news really is.
- ◆ In some churches, the emphasis on Sunday mornings is to declare the gospel. The problem can be that we teach the people how to be born again and then next week we teach them how to again be born again and then the next week... It is not that we are moving beyond the gospel—clearly it is the basis for all that we learn. But generally speaking, the church is to be about birth and growth. See Colossians 2:6-7; Matthew 28
- ◆ There are elementary principles of Christ (Hebrews 6:1; 1 Cor. 15:3). These are the first lessons we learn as new Christians and we never tire of hearing them proclaimed. But preaching Christ goes beyond these first principles because the church is also about growth—making disciples and then teaching them to obey everything that Christ commanded. Are we preaching Christ in sermons on membership? Yes, we are learning one way in which we love one another in the body of Christ. How about sermons on church government?

Yes we are learning about the gifts that God gave to the church, the body of Christ, to bring her along in sanctification. This is what it means that we teach every man in all wisdom. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

- ◆ Paul states the purpose is to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. There is a sense in which our sanctification is an event where we were marked out through election to God's children. There is another sense in which sanctification is a process whereby we are being conformed to the image of Christ. Romans 8:28-30

Colossians 1:29 - ²⁹To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.[NKJV]

- ◆ The word Paul uses for labor is not used of casual work but rather wearisome toil. It can also have an allusion to the sporting arena reflecting strenuous exertion. Paul's mission of both preaching the gospel but also of participating in the sanctification of men was something to which Paul gave all of himself.
- ◆ Paul understands that this was the purpose to which he was called. All of things which God had brought him through culminated in this purpose of taking the good news to the gentiles. He labored for this goal through tremendous hardship and threats upon his life. But note that Paul didn't think that the perfection of man was being accomplished by his labor. Rather it was God working through Him mightily that was accomplishing the perfection of men. (Phil 2:12-13)
- ◆ This wonderful verse is an excellent example of the sovereignty of God existing along side the responsibility of man. Coming to an understanding of the sovereignty of God does not mean that we stop working—instead it is the very basis for it.

❖ Conclusion

As surely as God has foreknown those whom He would elect, He has also called them with a holy calling in accordance with that election. As surely as we have been called and foreknown, we have also been predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son so that we might look like Him. Both in how we live our lives but also in our resurrection. We will look like Christ in resurrection so that it will be that Christ is the first fruits of many brethren. What's more, those whom He predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ, He has also called us into a holy relationship with Him. These called ones, who were once enemies of God and alienated from Him, without any hope of reconciliation, these He justified. This justification is a declaration of pardon or a declaration that they no longer stand condemned by the law because the righteous requirements of the law have been fulfilled in Christ and His obedience has been imputed to us by the grace of God through faith. And finally those whom God has justified these He has both glorified and promised to glorify. It is Christ who dwells in us that is the evidence or the proof of this promise being for us. Now give thanks and rejoice for the kindness and love of God is yours.

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