



Christ in You

[1:24-29]

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“... to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory...” (1:24-29).

One cannot read Colossians 1 without being filled with the tremendous joy of being a Christian! Remembering we are weak and sinful men and women, we rejoice that through the blood of Jesus we are qualified for redemption, and that this Jesus who both created and sustains the universe has given us the hope of heaven and now indwells us. These truths not only are unbelievable and amazing, but they overwhelm us with thanksgiving for the relationship we have with Jesus.

In 1:24-29 Paul pointed toward two facts: He was willing to suffer for the church, and he was a steward of the mystery. Paul had suffered and would suffer. Paul's suffering, however, does not indicate an inadequacy in Christ's offering. Those who live the Christian life will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12).

God's commission to Paul was for him to present the Word of God in its fullness. He did not guarantee success! Countless preachers in the past have faithfully proclaimed the Word without much success. If the gospel is faithfully presented, God's will has been done. God encouraged Isaiah with the words “So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter

for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). God's Word is not restricted by our weakness!

Paul also spoke of the “mystery.” This word is used twenty-one times, I am told, in the writings of Paul, three times in the Gospels, and four times in Revelation. A mystery is something that cannot be known except by revelation. This mystery had been kept hidden for ages; now it was revealed to the saints. The revelation of the mystery extends even to all saints today.

The false teachers were evidently making much to do about some great mystery they thought they possessed. It was a counterfeit by comparison. What was this mystery that Paul said was revealed to all saints? “Christ in you, the hope of glory”! The great mystery of the ages is God in us! How could a holy God take up residence in sinful Jews and Gentiles like you and me? Is it possible? Yes! That is the mystery of ages!

Burton Coffman lists eight expressions of this mystery in the Bible.¹

1. “Christ in you” (1:27; Romans 8:10; Ephesians 3:17).
2. “You are in Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:17).
3. “God is in you” (2 Corinthians 5:17).
4. “You are in God” (1 John 4:11-16).
5. “The Holy Spirit is in you” (1 Corinthians 3:16).
6. “You are in the Holy Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

¹James Burton Coffman, *Commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* (Austin, Tex.: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1977), 367.

7. "The mind of Christ is in you" (Philippians 2:5).
8. "The Word of Christ is in you" (3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:16).

All of these expressions communicate the idea that Paul has expressed in a few words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Notice three areas of this great mystery.

THE PERSON: "CHRIST"

The central theme of Colossians is Jesus. Regardless of what Paul discussed, he always returned to Jesus. Whether he addressed the Christian life, his sufferings, or the love and faith of the Colossians, he centered his discussion around Jesus.

When Paul spoke of Christ, he spoke of the incomparable Christ! It is a great mystery that Christ came! God was clothed in flesh. Jesus walked this earth with all the fullness of God dwelling in Him! He has delivered us from the power of darkness. In Him, we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. He created the worlds and sustains them by the power of His word. He is the preeminent One. He has reconciled us. This incomparable One dwells in us!

Think of the great truths concerning Jesus! He has been proven to be the Son of God by His claims, works, and resurrection. He is the One who is coming again! He is coming personally: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . ." (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Over three hundred times in the New Testament that promise is made. At His coming He will judge the world.

. . . He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man (John 5:26, 27).

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day (John 12:48).

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, . . . (2 Corinthians 5:10).

He is the one who is willing to share with you His glory! He is now reigning, seated at the right hand of God. He will return, personally and visibly. But, more importantly, He now lives in us!

THE POSSESSION: "IN YOU"

How marvelous to think that Christ lives in you and me.

And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness (Romans 8:10).

To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (1:27).

Christ is real and lives in Christians! Paul wrote, "However, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you . . ." (Romans 8:9). How easy it is for us to think that Christ is someone far removed, someone who lived two thousand years ago, to whom our actions are unimportant. "Surely, He is not concerned about us!" we think. But we are never separated from Him. He is with us always "even to the end of the age." What we do either glorifies Him or brings shame to Him.

THE PROMISE: "THE HOPE OF GLORY"

"The hope of glory." Of all people on earth, why me? Why you? How can a holy God live in such a weak and sinful man like me?

Christ is *our only hope of glory*. Remember that our whole purpose in life is to bring glory to God and His Son. This is done by complete obedience to His will. We honor God and Christ by the way we live. If Christ does not dwell in us, no hope exists for our souls (Romans 8:9). The promise of the ages is that Christ or God would dwell with us and be our God. We do not understand it all, but we do glory in the fact.

Second, Christ dwelling in us is *the only hope for the world*. The only way Jesus has for others to know about His gospel is through us. What are others learning about Jesus from beholding us daily? Remember the ancient picture of Atlas with the world upon his shoulders? You and I have the salvation of the world on our shoulders, in a sense.

CONCLUSION

Why does Christ dwell in us? He dwells in us so that all men can read the epistle of our lives and find salvation. He dwells in us to save us and radiate through us to others.