

**Christ Glorified In His
All-Sufficiency**

EXALTING CHRIST PUBLISHING

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EXALTING CHRIST IN HIS DELIVERING AND TRANSFORMING POWER – 2 Corinthians 2:14–4:7

INTRODUCTION

Around 200 A.D. Tertullian made an intriguing statement about the growth of the church in the Roman Empire, a world at least as evil and anti-Christian as ours. His words are a response to Celsus, a Roman philosopher and satirist, who scorned Christianity. He wrote,

Celsus, exaggerating this fact, and ignoring the many exceptions, scoffingly remarked, that "weavers, cobblers, and fullers, the most illiterate persons" preached the "irrational faith," and knew how to commend it especially "to women and children." ... All your ingenious cruelties can accomplish nothing; they are only a lure to this sect. Our number increases the more you destroy us. The blood of the Christians is their seed ... and yet we have filled every place belonging to you – cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum! We leave you your temples only. We can count your armies; our numbers in a single province will be greater.

Schaff's Church History, Vol. II, pp. 14-15

Tertullian declared that in spite of a hostile world – a world where believers suffered “ingenious cruelties” for Christ’s sake – the gospel advanced. How? How does the church advance in an evil, anti-Christian world? In a culture that detests Christianity, how are men and women delivered and transformed? In 2 Corinthians 2:14-4:7, Paul gives us the answer. He declares that it is Christ Himself who builds the church and advances the gospel. He does so by the exercise of His infinite power through the Word and the Spirit. Paul begins this section with this grand opening statement,

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place (2 Corinthians 2:14).

This is a statement of Paul’s great confidence in the infinite power of Christ. Paul declares that "God ... always leads us in triumph in Christ." We must not miss Paul’s bold statement, he says, there is “always ... triumph in Christ.” Ultimately nothing can stand before Christ. But, how does Christ triumph in the world? In this section of 2 Corinthians, Paul declares that it is the all-sufficiency of Christ, working by the Spirit of God through the word of God that guarantees the gospel’s success. In the final verse of the section, Paul states that the gospel’s triumph is because of the operation of "the

surpassing greatness of the power.” Paul writes, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not of ourselves” (2 Corinthians 4:7). So we see that the section begins and ends, as it were, with bookend statements of Christ’s sufficiency. First, the beginning statement about “triumph in Christ” and then it ends with the statement of the “surpassing greatness of the power.” In between he explains that everything is a result of the glorious all-sufficiency of Christ. My aim in this study is to set forth that the glory of Christ’s all-sufficiency is the heart of the gospel. Paul calls it, “the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:4). As a corollary to that, my aim is to show that Christ’s all-sufficiency is the basis of our confidence in the spread of the gospel. Therefore, our ministries and our preaching must exalt Christ’s glorious all-sufficiency in His delivering and transforming power. This is when the Spirit works mightily in the world. We will begin by pointing out three things about Christ and the advance of the gospel from 2 Corinthians 2:14 – 4:7.

A. First, It Is By The Exercise Of Christ’s Own Power, Through The Word And The Spirit, In The New Covenant That The Gospel Is Advanced In An Evil World.

Paul points out at least six things that Christ does by the exercise of His power to advance the gospel in the world. He connects all of them to Christ’s great delivering and transforming work in the new covenant (3:5-6).

1. **He triumphs (2:14).** *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.*
2. **He renews the heart (3:3).** *Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*
3. **He liberates (3:17).** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*
4. **He transforms (3:18).** *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as the Lord, the Spirit.*

5. He shines upon the darkened heart (4:6). *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

6. He exhibits a surpassing greatness of power (4:7). *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not of ourselves.*

These texts bring home one thing: Christ, by the Word of God and the Spirit of God releases an almighty power that renews, liberates and transforms helpless enslaved sinners. He fulfills His promise of John 8:32 and 36 where he said,

32) And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. 36) So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:32, 36).

B. Second, The Effect Of The Advance Of The Gospel In The New Covenant Is That Christ Is Exalted And Glorified.

Paul centers the glory of the sufficiency of Christ around the work that Christ accomplishes on the heart in the new covenant. In verse 3 he mentions the heart change,

Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (3:3).

Then in verse 6 he connects it with the new covenant,

Who also has made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (3:6).

It is the liberation and transformation of the heart that demonstrates the manifest power of Christ in the gospel through the new covenant. This is turn exalts and glorifies Christ. The writer to the Hebrews, quoting Jeremiah 31, announces the new covenant, saying:

8) *For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; 9) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. 10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11) And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'know the Lord,' for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. 12) For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more"* (Hebrews 8:8-12).

There are two main components of the new covenant, both exalt and glorify Christ. First, there is the forgiveness of sins which he describes as "I will remember their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12). This component relates to justification. The second component is regeneration and transformation which is found in the words, "I will write them on their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10). Paul refers to this component in 2 Corinthians 3:3, when he says, "Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" In 2 Corinthians 2:14-4:7, Paul presupposes the justification and forgiveness element of the new covenant in 2 Corinthians 3. He focuses instead on the regenerating, liberating, and transforming work of the new covenant. I will quote three verses which have to do with regeneration or the writing on the heart. As we go on we will see that they all glorify and exalt Christ.

He renews and writes on the heart, ... *being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (3:3)*

He liberates, *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (3:17)*

He transforms, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (3:18)*

We see that Paul is exulting in the great regenerating, liberating and transforming work of Christ. It is a work accomplished through the Spirit and the Word in the new covenant. He exults because it is when

Christ liberates men by writing God's "laws ... on their hearts" it exalts and magnifies His glory! We see this because Paul mentions three things about the glory of Christ that is manifested in the New Covenant.

- 1. In verse 9, he says it abounds in glory.** *For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory (3:9).*
- 2. Next, in verse 10, he says it is a surpassing glory.** *For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it (3:10).*
- 3. Finally, in verse 11, he says it is an enduring glory.** *For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory (3:11).*

Christ, in His great work of the new covenant, manifests an abounding, surpassing, and enduring glory. Chapter 4, verse 4, explains why. It is because Christ possesses all the infinite attributes and glory of God. But it is not merely that Christ possesses the infinite glory of God, the wonder of the gospel is that His glory is seen by believers in conversion. Paul writes:

3) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

He is the exact image of the eternal, infinite God. We "see ... the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Paul goes on to say:

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Throughout the passage Paul refers to glory fifteen times. It is the glory of Christ displayed in the deliverance, liberation, and transformation of sinners. This is why Paul says, "the gospel of the glory of Christ," in chapter 4, verse 4.

C. Third, The End And Design Of The New Covenant And The Gospel Is To Display And Exalt The Glory Of Christ's All-Sufficiency.

Paul's ultimate aim is not merely to glorify Christ in a general way. It is to exalt the glory of Christ's all-sufficiency. Christ, as the exact image of the infinite God, is an infinite being. He is all-sufficient and able to renew, liberate, and transform anyone from any bondage or misery. This, in Paul's mind, is the essence and center of the glory of Christ. Strip Christ of His sufficiency and you strip Him of His glory. This can be seen by taking a closer look at the passage.

1. First, there are direct references to Christ's sufficiency in the passage.

The references to Christ's sufficiency begin in 2:16b where he says,

And who is adequate for these things? Then it occurs again in 3:4-6 where he says, Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5) Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6) who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

In the NASB the word translated 'adequate' in 2:16 and 3:5 is more properly translated 'sufficient' in the ESV. Paul says in verse 4, "such confidence we have through Christ toward God." He had just said, "not that we are adequate in ourselves." Then he makes the statement of his confidence in Christ. In other words, Christ alone is sufficient to renew, liberate and transform sinners.

2. It is the sight of the glory of Christ's sufficiency that is seen in conversion (4:4, 6).

The sufficiency of Christ is indicated again by implication in chapter 4, verse 4. It is implied because Paul has referred to Christ's sufficiency and glory earlier in 2:16 and 3:5-6. Therefore,

it seems likely that the spiritual sight of the glory of Christ in verse 4 is the sight of the glory of His sufficiency, which Paul has already said is able to renew, liberate, and transform all who believe. Referring to the spiritual sight of Christ's glory Paul says,

3) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God ... 6) For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who had shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 6).

Notice that in verse 3 what the nonbeliever does not see is "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." But Paul says believers do see Christ's glory. It occurs when God shines on their heart. They see "the light of ... glory of Christ." This seems clear in context to be the sufficiency of Christ to liberate (3:17) and transform (3:18), from the bondage and power of sin. Edwards states it as no one else,

The change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in conversion would be much greater, and more remarkable every way than if a man born blind should have the sense of seeing imparted to him at once, in the midst of the clear light of the sun discovering a world of visible objects. For though sight be more noble than any of the other external senses yet this spiritual sense is infinitely more noble and the object infinitely more important.

Jonathan Edwards, *Vol. II*, pp. 276-277

3. The glory of Christ's sufficiency mentioned by Paul is the same glory referred to in John's gospel, where John says, we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (1:14b).

a. The essence of Christ's glory is what John calls His fullness.

John, like Paul, ties Christ's glory to His sufficiency. However, He calls it His "fullness." John says in verse 16, "For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon

grace." Christ's fulness in this text are the attributes and perfections of grace and truth. John says we saw His "glory ... full of grace and truth." What John calls the glory of Christ's fulness, is what Paul refers to as Christ's sufficiency in 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, 4:3-6. Both passages point to one quality: the essence of the glory of Christ is His infinite, all-sufficiency, what John calls His fulness. He is a being who possesses a fulness so that He is able to free and deliver any embondaged sinner from any enslaving power. To help understand how Christ's sufficiency relates to His glory, we will look at glory in its broad significance. There are at least four realities that characterize the glory of God. **First**, it consists of an inclusiveness. That is, the Godhead possesses all the perfections and attributes that a being can possess, so that there is nothing lacking in their being and nature (Isaiah 40:13-14). Moreover, they also possess all the perfections in a perfect balance and proportion. **Second**, their attributes and perfections are infinite. They are limitless or without measure. This is another way of saying they possess an all-sufficiency. In John's words, there is a fulness in God's attributes. **Third**, their attributes are immutable and unchangeable, not capable of being diminished or increased. **Fourth** and finally, they are incomparable. The fact that God possesses the full spectrum of infinite, and immutable perfections, constitutes the being of God utterly incomparable. This is why God, over and over, declares of Himself that nothing can be compared to Him. He states in Isaiah 40:25, *To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal? Says the Holy One.*

- b. The prominent component of Christ's glory according to John is the infinite fulness of His grace and truth.

Christ is Himself God (John 1:1), therefore He possesses all the infinite fulness of the immutable perfections of God. This is what constitutes His glory. John indicates this when he says, "we saw His glory." Then he specifies in verse 14b that a prominent characteristic of His glory is that He is "full of grace and truth." He emphasizes on Christ's fulness. John mentions His fulness again in verse 16 when

he says. "For of His fulness we have received." Grace and truth are, as are all Christ's attributes, without limit or degree. Therefore He possesses in Himself an all-sufficiency for anything a sinner would need. His sufficiency is what exalts Him supremely and infinitely glorious above all creation. Unlike creation, Christ has no limitation or need. In short, to deny or diminish Christ's glory is to assault the glory of His essential being. So we can conclude that John is referring to the same thing as the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians, but in a different way. Paul, instead of using the word fulness speaks of sufficiency. Paul's basic assertion is that Christ possesses in Himself the sufficiency (adequacy) to renew, deliver, and transform anyone from any bondage. This is His glory and by it He is supremely exalted.

4. The essence of conversion and ongoing transformation is the sight and experience of the sufficiency of Christ's glory.

As mentioned earlier, the sight of Christ's glorious all-sufficiency is seen in a true conversion. This is what lays hold of a person in the words of Paul in Philippians 3:12. The sight of the glory of Christ comes in two phases. **First**, as we said, there is the initial sight of Christ's glory at conversion. Paul declares,

... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God ... For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (4:4, 6).

Notice conversion in verse 4 occurs when a people "see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." In verse 6 it is to have spiritual light "shone in our hearts to give the light ... of the glory of God in the face of Christ." To put in plain terms, in a true conversion people "see the light ... of the glory of Christ."

Second, there is the continual, ongoing, sight of Christ's glory in sanctification.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Paul says, “we all ... beholding ... the glory of the Lord, are being transformed.” This is the ongoing sight of Christ in the Word of God that is experienced in sanctification. The term transformed is from the word μεταμορφάω which indicates a deep, soul-healing, soul-altering transformation. The root word, ‘morphe’ (which is used of Christ being in the form of God) refers to the core, inner being of a person. It brings home Paul's main point, that, by beholding Christ's glorious all-sufficiency in the Word of God, all believers, without exception, are by the Spirit being transformed in varying degrees, in the deepest part of their being. There is no scar, no devastating experience, no soul-healing, Christ can't accomplish (Psalm 147:4). The great need therefore is for people to see more of Christ. It is not principles and steps that transform people. It is a renewed and continual sight of the sufficiency of the glory of Christ's person and work. John says it this way, “For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace” (John 1:16). It is renewed and continual spiritual sight of Christ's sufficiency that calms the heart, heals the soul, gives strength and sustains in trouble and affliction. It is Christ, Himself, and no one else, who is able to do this mighty work. When He does it He alone is exalted and glorified. The Word and the Spirit are simply His means. The author of Hebrews writes of this when he says,

1) Therefore, since we have so a great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside very encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2a) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2a).

This is what historically has been called Sola Scriptura and Sola Christos. That is, Scripture alone and Christ alone. It declares that in Christ and the Scripture we have all we need. This has been the evangelical distinctive since the reformation. We have, to a great degree, lost this in the church. Christ has been diminished, replaced, and dethroned by man-centered psychological theories, self-help philosophies, and trite feel good sermons. The glory has

left. The church, like Israel is building cisterns that hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13). Charles Spurgeon understood and preached an all-sufficient Christ. He says,

Paul knew not merely God, but God in Christ Jesus; not merely "the glory of God," but "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The knowledge dealt with God, but it was Christward knowledge. He pined not for a Christless Theism, but the God in Christ. This, beloved, is the one thing which you and I should aim to know. There are parts of the divine glory which will never be seen by us in this life, speculate as we may. Mysticism would fain pry into the unknowable; you and I may leave dreamers and their dreams, and follow the clear light which shines from the face of Jesus. What of God it is needful and beneficial for us to know he has revealed in Christ, and whatsoever is not there, we may rest assured it is unfit and unnecessary for us to know. Truly the revelation is by no means scant, for there is vastly more revealed in the person of Christ than we shall be likely to learn in this mortal life, and even eternity will not be too long for the discovery of all the glory of God which shines forth in the person of the word made flesh. Those who would supplement Christianity had better first add to the brilliance of the sun or the fulness of the sea. As for us, we are more than satisfied with the revelation of God in the person of our Lord Jesus, and we are persuaded of the truth of His words "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*,
Vol. XXV, p. 205

Hope not, my brethren, that the preacher can grapple with such a subject. I am overcome by it. In my meditations I have felt lost in its lengths and breadths. My joy is great in my theme, and yet I am conscious of a pressure upon my brain and heart, for I am as a little child wandering among the mountains, or as a lone spirit which has lost its way among the stars. I stumble among sublimities, I sink amid glories. I can only point with my finger to that which I see, but cannot describe. May the Holy Spirit himself take of the things of Christ and show them unto you.

Spurgeon, *Vol. XXV*, p. 506

D. The Chief Object Of Satan's Strategy Is To Deny Or Diminish Christ's Glory (2 Corinthians 4:3).

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing ... so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-4b).

Satan's chief object and driving obsession is to diminish or deny the glory of Christ. Specifically the glory of the sufficiency of Christ. Satan will do all he can to cause people to think little of Christ, to think Christ is less than He actually is. He will cause them first, to think that Christ is not enough for their acceptance with God and second, for their troubles and problems as a Christian. Satan blinds men to the supreme glory of the person of Christ. He does all he does in order to dethrone Him from His rightful place of supremacy. The strategy behind all of Satan's workings is to demean the glory of the sufficiency of the person of Christ. Calvin points out why this is so,

When supplementary aid is sought ... no more honor is paid to Christ than Cyprian or Cyricius ... In all these things, have we not ... blasphemies by which the glory of Christ is rent, and torn to shreds? For, being in a great measure despoiled of his honour he retains the name, while he wants the power ... when in fine, we saw him so deformed by false and profane opinions, that he had more resemblance to an unsubstantiated phantom than to himself, did it behoove us to bear it calmly? O, accursed patience, if, when the honour of God is impaired, not to say prostrated, we are so slightly affected, that we can wink and pass on!

John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 74

As was said, the glory of Christ consists primarily in His sufficiency; a sufficiency to renew, deliver, and transform. This is the essence of His glory. If He is deficient or not adequate in any area, to that degree He is less glorious. But He is not deficient. He is gloriously sufficient (adequate 3:5-6) to renew, liberate and transform any person. No ministry will prosper that even implies that Christ alone can't fully deliver sinners – any and all sinners – from whatever enslaves and holds them captive.

ILL. A man's reputation is not based on what he begins, but what he completes. For example, athletes, generals, builders, or mountain climbers, etc. are judged by how they perform at the end. Can they get it done, are they able and sufficient to finish the task? So it is with Christ. His glory consists in His sufficiency – His limitless ability to deliver help, to restore and set free. Christ is able, He can do His great delivering work with anyone!

I. THE SPIRITUAL SIGHT OF CHRIST'S GLORIOUS ALL-SUFFICIENCY IS THE PECULIAR AND UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF A BELIEVER: IT DISTINGUISHES THE TRUE BELIEVER (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

3) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

The central primary thing 'seen' in the gospel is Christ's glory in all its fulness and perfection (4:4). This is evident by the following things:

A. We 'See' The Light Of The Gospel Of The Glory Of Christ Who Is The Image Of God (v.4).

1. We see an object that stuns us with unspeakable beauty and glory.

The Greek word for 'see' is rare. It isn't the normal word for seeing. It refers to a sudden radiant light, a brightness that appears. It is the word 'augasai' which comes from 'auge', which refers to a bright light especially of the sun (it refers to daybreak in Acts 20:11). It refers to a radiance, hence, it is used of the rays and beams of the sun, or any gleam on the surface of a bright object.

Liddell & Scott, *Greek Lexicon*

Edwards describes the initial "sight" of Christ in conversion as follows:

The change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in conversion would be much greater, and more remarkable every way than if a man born blind should have the sense of seeing imparted to him at once, in the midst of the clear light of the sun discovering a world of visible objects. For though sight be more noble than any of the other external senses yet this spiritual sense is infinitely more noble and the object infinitely more important.

Jonathan Edwards, Vol II, pp.276-277

All true Christians see Christ's glory. All are to some degree captivated by His beauty and loveliness, or they aren't saved. Growth and maturity involves seeing more and more of His glory. Inherent to His glory is His absolute and total sufficiency. Christ is seen to be glorious for in His person is a limitless supply for all we need. As Satan works prior to conversion to deny and demean Christ's glory, now he works in the believer's life to diminish His glory! Satan incessantly works to convince believer's that Christ's person and provisions are not adequate and that He must be supplemented! This, in the end, diminishes His glory and honor!

Herein, then, is the Lord Christ exceedingly glorious. Those who cannot behold this glory of his ... know him not ... He that discerns not the representation of the glory of God in the person of Christ unto the souls of men, is an unbeliever ... The essence of faith consists in a due ascription of glory to God, Rom.iv. 20. This we cannot attain unto without the manifestation of those divine excellencies wherein he is glorious. This is done in Christ alone ... He who discerns not the glory of divine wisdom, power, goodness, love, and grace, in the person and office of Christ ... is an unbeliever.

John Owen

2. God has shone in our hearts ... the glory of God in the face of Christ (v.6).

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

- a. The word 'shone' indicates a shining; something brilliant, clear, transparent or splendid. It is used of the brilliant

glistening, whiteness of Christ's transfiguration when, "His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light" (Matthew 17:2).

- b. The word 'light' means to 'lighten up' as the stars (Job 3:9).
- c. It is a sovereign act of God doing what we can't do because we are blind.

The blind (v. 3) can't make themselves see. Nor can the dead make themselves alive. This is Paul's explanation of how people are saved. God freely and sovereignly gives light – just as He did in the original creation of the universe (v. 6a).

3. Salvation is commonly described in Scripture as 'seeing' Christ.

- a. We've 'seen Him.' "No one who abides in Him sins, no one who sins has seen Him or known Him" (1 John 3:6).
- b. We behold and believe in Him. "Everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him has eternal life" (John 6:40).

The term, 'behold' means to view attentively, to take view of; to survey. "It was used primarily, not of an indifferent spectator, but of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose. For example, a general viewing an army with the careful observation of details."

Trench

4. The sight of Christ's glory captivates the one who beholds Him. It captivates for the following reasons: (see also Philippians 3:12; Revelation 2:4; 2 Corinthians 5:14).

- a. He has an excellency and beauty that exists independent of any perceived or personal benefit.

False believers only see in Christ the benefits that they think they can receive from Him. This is evident in the fact that trials, adversities, and even pleasures can turn them away from following Christ. He, in Himself alone, in their eyes, isn't their greatest delight and joy (Luke 8:4-18). However, to the true believer, He is such a great treasure that all else doesn't compare to Him. To them, His glory, His beauty, joy and delight is greater than all their afflictions, troubles, or pleasures combined.

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field (Matthew 13:44).

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

They first see that God is lovely and that Christ is excellent and glorious; their hearts are first captivated with this view and the exercises of their love are wont from time to time to begin here and to arise primarily from these views; and then consequentially they see God's love and great favor to them ... The first foundation of the delight he has in Christ is His own beauty: he appears in Himself the chief among ten thousand: altogether lovely ... they first have their hearts filled with sweetness, from the view of Christ's excellency, the excellency, of His grace and the beauty of salvation by Him; and then they have a secondary joy, in that, so excellent a Savior and such excellent grace is theirs.

Jonathan Edwards, *Vol. II*, pp. 276-277

- b. The sufficiency of His infinitely glorious person is what makes His cross and redemptive work effectual. The all-sufficiency of Christ to deliver and transform is the chief thing "seen" in a true conversion.

By this sense of the moral beauty of divine things, is known the sufficiency of Christ as a Mediator ... it is only by the knowledge of the excellency of Christ's person, that any know His sufficiency as a Mediator ... It is by seeing the excellency of Christ's person that saints are made sensible of the preciousness

of His blood, and its sufficiency to atone for sin for therein consists the preciousness of Christ's blood, that it is the blood of

so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of His obedience, the sufficiency and prevalence of His intercession.

Jonathan Edwards, *Vol II*, pp. 283-284

NOTE: The false Christian does not see the glory of Christ in His infinite sufficiency. He is not captivated. He is taken up in experiences, not Christ (Colossians 2:18). In the end, trials and sufferings turn the false believer away. There is not a captivation of the heart that is greater than the pain of suffering (see, 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 9-10).

Their minds are taken up about their own experiences; and not the glory of God, or the beauty of Christ. They keep thinking, within themselves, what a good experience is this! What a great discovery is this! What wonderful things have I met with! And so they put their experiences in the place of Christ, his beauty and fulness. Instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable experiences ... The object that fixes their contemplation, is their experience ... They take more comfort in their discoveries than in Christ discovered. The true saint ... is ready to speak much of God, His glorious perfections and works, the beauty and amiableness of Christ, and the glorious things of the gospel; but hypocrites, in their high affections, talk more of the discovery than of the thing discovered. A true saint ... has his mind too much captivated and engaged ... to view himself, and his own attainments. It would be a loss which he could not bear, to have his eye be taken off from the ravishing object of his contemplation, in order to survey his own experience, and to spend time in thinking with himself. What a high attainment this is, and what a good story I now have to tell others!

Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, Vol I, p. 278

B. We See In Christ The Comprehensive Full-Orbed Beauty, Excellency And Glory Of The Nature Of God. The Glory Of Christ Who Is The Image Of God (4:4).

Christ is the image of God. He is the exact representation of His nature, the radiance of His full glory (2 Corinthians 4:4; Hebrews 1:2-3). We see this glory in conversion.

1. The supremacy of Christ's glory is seen in the fact He is the image and exact representation of God (Hebrews 1:3).

Christ is the image of God which means He possesses, reflects, and reveals the full glory of the nature and being of God. Image involves the following:

- a. It always assumes a prototype. A prototype is not that to which something merely has a resemblance. It is that from which something exactly corresponds.
- b. It is more than similarity and likeness; hence, the term, *ομοιοσ* (*similarity*), has been condemned by the Church. Christ has the same nature as the Father, He is not merely like the Father.
- c. The Scriptural understanding of Christ being the 'image' of God is that He is a complete and exact representation of the being and nature of God, possessing and exhibiting all God's attributes and perfections (John 14:6; Hebrews 1:3).

2. The significance and meaning of glory in general.

Glory, in the Hebrew (*κavod*), comes from a word which refers to something heavy as opposed to light. It refers to heaviness or greatness (Proverbs 27:3). It refers to something of magnitude and density; from which comes its weight - "A thick cloud" (Exodus 19:16); "A great army" (2 Kings 6:14). The opposite is to be light, to be worthless, contemptible, or trivial. This is seen in the following verses: "Weighed on the scales and found deficient [light]" (Daniel 5:27). "Why did you treat us with contempt [lightly]" (2 Samuel 19:43).

To be glorious is to be of such a magnitude in beauty or greatness so as to be worthy of great regard. Christ's glory involves the following aspects, as is indicated by the association of glory with other specific realities: (1) **He is supremely honorable:** "Counted

worthy of more glory than Moses; as the builder of the house is more honorable than the house” (Hebrews 3:6). (2) **He is supremely beautiful:** “You shall make garments for Aaron your brother for glory and for beauty” (Exodus 28:2, 40). (3) **He is supremely great and majestic:** “And you said, behold the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire” (Deuteronomy 5:24). (4) **He is supremely rich and abundant:** “Be not afraid when one is made rich when the glory of His house is increased” (Psalm 49:16-17). “You shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt” (Genesis 45:13).

Glory is a comprehensive term that refers to the sum total of the supremacy and greatness of all the attributes and perfections of His nature. His glory is what makes Him infinitely worthy of regard. The core elements of His glory are His self-existence and all-sufficiency (Exodus 3:14; Romans 11:33-36).

3. The glory of Christ consists of the fact that every attribute and perfection of God is in Christ in its fulness. Moreover, He possesses them in a perfect and wondrous blending.

Christ possesses natural attributes: Power, wisdom, omniscience, immutability. He also possesses moral attributes: Infinite love, perfect patience, great mercy, abounding goodness, and perfect holiness.

- a. So, we can say He possesses a perfect symmetry and proportion of attributes.
- b. In addition, He possesses each attribute to an infinite degree.
- c. Each attribute is unchangeable and immutable. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8) This infinite, immutable, complete, and perfect proportion of attributes constitutes His glory and His beauty!

In our Lord Jesus we see the glory of God in the wondrous blending of the attributes. Behold his mercy as he dies for

sinners; but see his justice, for he sits as judge of quick and dead. Observe his immutability, for he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and see his power, for his voice shakes not only the earth but also the heavens. See how infinite is his love, for he espouses his chosen; but how terrible his wrath, for he consumes his adversaries. All the attributes of Deity are in him: power that can lull the tempest, and tenderness that can embrace little children. The character of Christ is a wonderful combination of all perfections making up one perfection; and so we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, for this is God's glory, that in him nothing is excessive and nothing is deficient. He is all that is good and great: in him is light, and no darkness at all. Say, is it not so seen in Jesus our Lord?

Spurgeon, Vol. 25, p. 510

The glory of Christ consists in His all-sufficiency by which He possesses every attribute to an infinite degree, so that, as a result, He is perfectly able to meet all our needs. In John's words, He is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

- d. His love: *Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love (Micah 7:18).*
- e. His power: *Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert O Israel, My way is hidden from the LORD ... Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable (Isaiah 40:27a-28).*
- f. His wisdom: *34) For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35) Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? (Romans 11:34-35).*

II. THE SPIRITUAL SIGHT OF CHRIST IN CONVERSION IS A SIGHT OF THE GLORY OF HIS ALL-SUFFICIENCY TO RENEW, LIBERATE, AND TRANSFORM REGARDLESS OF A PERSON'S BONDAGE, DEFICIENCIES, AND NEEDS (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

A. The People Who Have Seen And Experienced The Glory Of Christ's All-Sufficiency Are All True Believers. We All, With Unveiled Face, Beholding.

- 1. All believers have seen His glory unveiled and have had a sight of His sufficiency in contrast to the Old Covenant when Moses alone saw His glory.**
- 2. Believers are those who, by the sight of Christ's glory, experience a liberation that comes from a renewal and transformation of the heart (vv. 6, 17).**

B. There Is Throughout The Believer's Life A Continual, Ongoing Sight Of The Glory Of Christ's Sufficiency. We All, With Unveiled Face, Beholding As In A Mirror.

- 1. The beholding is complete and continuous as indicated by the perfect tense of "unveiled".**

The term indicates more than a mere 'not veiled'; it indicates the removal of a former blindness. Moreover, (the beholding) is further indicated as ongoing and continuous by the present tense of "beholding."

- 2. We are continuously beholding His glory in its fulness in the Word of God, where Christ is set forth in all His perfections. 'Glory' is emphatic, we are 'glory beholding' continuously.**

C. The Person Of Christ Is Continuously And Increasingly Seen, Through His Word By The Spirit, To Be Sufficient For His People's Needs. We All ... Beholding As In A Mirror The Glory Of The Lord ... Just As From The Lord, The Spirit.

- 1. We behold "the glory of the Lord" in the mirror of the Word by the illuminating, Christ-glorifying work of the Spirit.**
- 2. The Spirit changes us as He shows us Christ in the Word.**

Specifically Christ in the glory of the sufficiency of His infinite perfections as each particular attribute applies to our specific needs. It is clearly implied that without this Christ-beholding reality, there is no true transformation.

D. The Promise Of A Deep, Inner Transformation Of All Believers Is A Result Of Beholding The Glory Of Christ's Sufficiency. We All ... Are Being Transformed.

- 1. The word 'transformed' indicates an internal essential core change that penetrates the deep inner man, not a change of mere surface issues and problems.**

The Greek word, "transformed" (μεταμορφω) emphasizes the inner and internal. It means to change to another form, to transfigure. It is an internal and essential change as opposed to a mere outward and external change (2 Corinthians 11:15). It includes the external, but the external is always a manifestation of an essential, internal reality. It is used of Christ, "being in the form of God," then, "taking the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:5-7). Christ did not merely possess the nature of God in a surface manner. In His essential core being, He existed in and possessed the essential nature of God. Therefore, Christ's transformation of His people is in their deepest nature and being.

- 2. We are changed into the same image as Christ Himself. The core person is transformed. This, of course, glorifies and exalts Christ who alone can do this.**

CHRIST'S INFINITE FULNESS, Part 1 – John 1:14-18

INTRODUCTION

There are three great declarations about Christ in John 1:14-18.

- A. His Supremacy: Above All As The Eternal Creator Of All Things (vv. 14a-15).**
- B. His Sufficiency: For All The Needs Of A Fallen Sinner (vv. 14b, 16).**
- C. His Self-Revelation: To All Of The Glory And Nature Of God (v. 18).**

John says of Christ, *No man has seen God ... He has declared Him* (v. 18). Christ is the full revelation of the unseen God. Christ is the exact representation of God's nature (Hebrews 1:3). As equal with the Father, He revealed the fulness of the nature of God (Colossians 2:9). All of God's attributes: His wisdom, His love to sinners, His incomprehensible holiness, and all of the others, were revealed by Christ in their fulness. John understood and was gripped by the fact that Christ was an eternal, infinitely majestic person. The Scriptures referred to above say of Christ:

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things in the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3a).

For in Him all the fulness of deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete (Colossians 2:9-10a).

Therefore, it is impossible to speak or think too highly of Him. Our calling is to do all we can to honor and exalt Him. When we are gripped by the glory of Christ, it compels us with a greater sense of urgency to proclaim Him to the world. We will look at two great realities of Christ: The supremacy of His person over all, and the sufficiency of His person for all. These are two great realities that must grip us if we are to have an impact for Christ's glory and His Kingdom.

I. THE SUPREMACY OF HIS PERSON OVER ALL (vv. 14a-15). JOHN TESTIFIED ABOUT HIM AND CRIED OUT, SAYING ... HE WHO COMES AFTER ME HAS A HIGHER RANK THAN I, FOR HE EXISTED BEFORE ME (v. 15).

A. The Proclamation Of Christ's Supremacy Was John The Baptist's Focused Purpose And It Must Be Ours As Well.

1. Christ's supreme glory was the central and continuous theme of John's preaching.

a. He continuously testified of Christ's glory. Testified is a present or continuous tense.

b. He cried out: (κεκραγε). Cried out means to cry with a loud voice, it is an earnest, open cry. It is a perfect tense which emphasizes that once he began, he did not stop.

2. Christ's supreme glory compelled and gripped John and his preaching.

Throughout his ministry, John was continually proclaiming Christ's greatness and supremacy, both in His nature and in His dignity. John's constant refrain was that Christ is "higher than I." Christ's supremacy and not himself was John's passion. From this we see that preaching must be compelled by a consciousness and personal apprehension of the supreme glory of Christ.

B. The Preexistent And Eternal Glory Of Christ That Gripped John The Baptist.

1. Christ's position and dignity was infinitely above John's.

John said of Christ, *He has a higher rank than I* (John 1:15). It is also a perfect tense which emphasizes that Christ in the past and always will have the higher rank.

2. Christ preexisted as the glorious Creator before John, who was a mere fallen sinner.

Next John says, *For He existed before me* (John 1:15b). The term 'before' (πρотоσ) refers to that which is prior in time. (For example, *It has hated me before it hated you* John 15:18). Furthermore, John says Christ "existed before me" which literally is "was" before me. This is a continuous tense. Christ existed before John continuously, without beginning. John is not stressing Christ's supreme honor, per se, but His prior, continuous eternal existence. John says that Christ existed before him, even though John was born physically before Christ.

- a. His preexistence was declared earlier by John the Apostle (John 1:1-3).
- b. His preexistence was declared by Christ Himself (John 8:58).

In addition to His statement in John 8:58 Christ's description of the origin of His mission elsewhere also affirms His eternal preexistence. He says He was sent into the world (John 12:45-47; 3:17) and that He came into the world (John 6:38).

C. The Preeminent Glory Of The Person Of Christ Is Seen By The Believer Through The Spirit's Work In Conversion (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF HIS PERSON FOR ALL THAT A SINNER NOW OR EVER WILL NEED. WE SAW HIS GLORY ... FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. FOR OF HIS FULNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED, AND GRACE UPON GRACE (vv. 14b, 16).

A. There Is A Plentiful, Infinite Abundance In Christ.

The term "full" (v.14) or "fulness" (v.16) is used of that which is completely filled up, as opposed to empty. For example; "twelve baskets full" (Matthew 14:20). It is used of Jesus being "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1), which is completely full since God gives to Christ the Spirit "without measure" (John 3:34). Since Christ is an infinite being, fulness here refers to the fact that Christ Himself possesses all the infinite, measureless perfections and attributes of the divine nature.

J.C. Ryle comments:

It is written that, 'of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.' There is an infinite fulness in Jesus Christ. As St. Paul says, 'It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.' 'In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' (Colossians i.19; ii.3) There is laid up in Him, as in a treasury, a boundless supply of all that any sinner can need, either in time or eternity. The Spirit of Life is His special gift to the Church, and conveys from Him, as from a great root, sap and vigour to all the believing branches. He is rich in mercy, grace, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Out of Christ's fulness, all believers in every age of the world have been supplied.

J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John*, p. 35

Sins are cast in the depths of the sea, a sea which the depths have never been plumbed.

ILL: A rock dropped in a bathtub overflows it. The sunken ships in the ocean have no effect on its level.

B. The Primary Aspects Of His Infinite Fulness As The Savior Of Sinners Are Grace And Truth.

John intentionally selects two of the divine attributes found in Christ in fulness. These attributes were prominently displayed by Christ in the world. They were prominent because they were what a fallen, sinful world needed and still needs. They were prominent because Christ came to save the world, not to judge it (John 3:17).

1. There is infinite grace.

Grace is kindness toward the ill-deserving. It is a disposition, an attitude of God, to exercise unmerited kindness and favor towards sinners. It is displayed to those who are not merely undeserving, but ill-deserving.

2. There is infinite truth.

Truth is opposed to falsehood. It is light as opposed to darkness and error. It is all man needs to know to deliver him from the misery of darkness brought on by sin. Without Christ, men have no truth about God, life, the afterlife, sin, judgment, etc.

What of God it is needful and beneficial for us to know he has revealed in Christ, and whatsoever is not there, we may rest assured it is unfit and unnecessary for us to know. Truly the revelation is by no means scant, for there is vastly more revealed in the person of Christ than we shall be likely to learn in this mortal life, and even eternity will not be too long for the discovery of all the glory of God which shines forth in the person of the word made flesh. Those who would supplement Christianity had better first add to the brilliance of the sun or the fulness of the sea. As for us, we are more than satisfied with the revelation of God in the person of our Lord Jesus, and we are persuaded of the truth if his words 'he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'

Charles H. Spurgeon, *MTP Vol 1*, p. 506

These attributes towards sinners are infinite in their fulness. They are also unchanging and immutable. They can neither be diminished nor changed. John says this is the glory he saw in Christ!

CHRIST'S INFINITE FULNESS, Part 2 – John 1:14-16

INTRODUCTION

It is always important to focus on the main thing. Non-essentials that do not mean that much can side-track us and even sometimes cause us harm. For example, the main thing in driving a car is keeping your eyes on the road. You can accelerate just right, and steer the car perfectly, but if you do not keep your eyes on the road you could very possibly be killed. The main thing in Christianity is the person and work of Christ. The identity of the person of Christ is at the center of everything. If we lose sight of this it can bring spiritual havoc. It is who Christ is that makes everything about the gospel significant. For example, many men were crucified by the Romans. Therefore, even the crucifixion and death of Christ is significant only because of who Christ is. It is the astounding reality that the eternal infinite Son of God, Himself fully God, is the one who died, that gives His crucifixion its great significance.

In the previous study we saw that John, in chapter one verses 14-16, was gripped with three great realities about the person of Christ. As the eternal Son of God, He is supreme over all, He is sufficient for all, and He is the complete self-revelation of God to all. We will now look in more detail at the all-sufficiency of Christ. Specifically, the all-sufficiency of Christ for the needs of fallen, ruined sinners. Christ's all-sufficiency is described by John in these verses by the term "fulness."

There are three things which John emphasizes about the glorious sufficiency of Christ.

- I. CHRIST, WHO EXISTED ETERNALLY WITHOUT BEGINNING AND BECAME A MAN IN ORDER THAT, WHILE REMAINING FULLY GOD, THE INFINITE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF HIS PERSON WOULD BE IN HUMAN FORM. THE WORD BECAME FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US (John 1:14a).**

A. The Phrase "The Word Became Flesh" States That The Person Of Christ Was At The Same Time Both God And Man.

1. "The Word" refers back to His identity as God declared in verse one.

The English term 'word' is 'λογος' in the original Greek. The term in general indicates an expression of thought. It indicates here Christ's role as the person of the Trinity who gives the self-revelation and disclosure of the eternal Godhead. He Himself, being fully God, gives a complete revelation of the nature, will and works of God. His revelation of God exceeds all prior revelations combined (cp. Hebrews 1:1-3).

His identity is "the Word" who "was in the beginning with God" (vv.1-2). This is a direct statement of His essential oneness of nature and co-eternality with the Father. He "was" continuously with the Father in the beginning. When the beginning began, He already continuously was. So He Himself had no beginning. John repeats this for emphasis. First he says in verse one, "In the beginning was the Word" then he repeats it in verse two, "He was in the beginning." This is the strongest expression possible that He Himself always existed and is one in essence and co-eternal with the Father.

2. "Became flesh" refers to the incarnation of His eternal, self-existent person in human form.

The eternal, self-existent, glorious person of the Son became a man, or as John says, "became flesh." "Flesh" is a precise term that emphasizes the union of Christ's divine eternal person with a human nature. It eliminates the idea of a seeming incarnation or a mere appearance of humanity in Christ. He did not just appear to be a human. Nor is it stating that His divine person simply came upon an already existing human person by the name of Jesus, as if there were two persons. It refers to the fact that a single person, the eternal Son of God, took on human form so that while remaining fully God, He became at the same time fully and

completely a man. It is the same eternal person in a new form—the form of a man (Philippians 2:5-8).

As one writer states it, *The flesh of Jesus Christ is the new localization of God on earth* (Linguistic key of the New Testament).

The writer to the Hebrews states it concisely: *Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me* (Hebrews 10:5).

B. The Phrase "Dwelt Among Us" Is Taken From Well-Known Old Testament Descriptions Of God.

1. The meaning of the term "dwelt" emphasizes a personal dwelling in close proximity to something.

John uses the Greek word "σκειν" when he says that Christ "dwelt" among us. In its noun form it refers to a tent - a tabernacle. It was used of dwelling in tents (Hebrews 11:9). It is also used of the eternal dwelling of God among men (Revelation 21:3). It means to fix ones tabernacle, to abide, to settle or dwell. Christ truly dwelt among men. He was not aloof and distant from men.

2. The Old Testament descriptions of God dwelling among His people is the basis of John's description that Christ "dwelt among us."

a. John uses a Greek term for "dwelt," which anyone familiar with the Old Testament knew was the word used in the Septuagint (LXX) of God dwelling among Israel. John's intentional description of Christ dwelling among men is a clear reference to the presence of God dwelling in the Jewish temple. It is used of the cloud of God's presence in the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11). In fact, the Hebrew word translated by skene (in the LXX Greek translation) is residence or presence.

- b. John's phrase "dwelt among us" clearly alludes as well to God dwelling in the tabernacle. It was the same term used of God dwelling in the tabernacle that John uses here. God instructed Moses, *Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them* (Exodus 25:8).
- c. John's point is clear. Jesus is God Himself, manifesting God's presence by dwelling among men. He is Jehovah God, Who came as a man to dwell among men. In other words, the Old Testament descriptions of God dwelling among His people have their final fulfillment in Christ. Christ is God among His people. This is the specific thing John emphasizes by his use of this term. The close parallel to the Old Testament cannot be mistaken.

II. CHRIST WAS MANIFESTED IN THE WORLD AS A MAN IN ORDER THAT THE INFINITE, ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF HIS PERSON COULD BE SEEN BY FALLEN AND NEEDY MEN. AND WE SAW HIS GLORY (John 1:14b).

John next says that he saw Christ's glory. This is John's summary statement of his own experience of the three-plus years he spent with Christ. He simply says he, "saw His glory."

A. He Was Seen And Looked Upon As A Wonder And Marvel.

1. He was seen with the eyes:

John makes two statements about seeing Christ. Each has its own emphasis. In verse eighteen, the word "seen" in the phrase *no one has seen God at any time* often refers to seeing with the eyes and then to discern what is seen. These are examples: *They shall see God* (Matthew 5:8); *Seen my face* (Colossians 2:1); *Do not see Him now, but believe* (1 Peter 1:8); John emphasizes this when he writes, *We have seen with our eyes ... and touched with our hands* (1 John 1:1). The emphasis is on seeing something personally with your own eyes so that you become a witness, a message-bearer. John makes

that connection between seeing and witness-bearing when he says, *what we have seen and testify and proclaim to you* (1 John 1:3). So in verse 18, John simply declares that no one has seen God with his eyes.

2. He was seen with wonder:

John, in verse 14, states that when he saw Christ he saw God, not in His unveiled majesty, but in human form. Furthermore, when he saw Christ, who was God in human form, what he saw was "glory." The term "saw" in verse 14 (τηξαομαι) is different than the word in verse 18. It means to see with wonderment. It means to watch with your own eyes and observe what you are watching with wonder and awe. It is from the word "τηαυμα," which is the word for a wonder or a marvel. Here are two examples: *No wonder for Satan disguises himself* (2 Corinthians 11:14) and *When I saw her, I wondered at her* (Revelation 17:6). Its root word is the word that comes into English as the word theatre, which is a place where people go to gaze at an event or spectacle. John uses the verb form of this word to emphasize that what he saw, over 3½ years, continually caused great marvel and wonder.

B. He Was Seen To Be Glorious In His Nature.

As was said above, glory is John's summary description of what he saw when he saw Christ. But John goes further. He specifies exactly what made Christ glorious. Glory is a composite general word for the sum total of all the perfections that make Christ supremely glorious. Therefore, Christ's glory consists of specific perfections and attributes. John states that two perfections were dominantly displayed by Christ while He was in the world: Grace and truth. Seeing Christ's glory in this passage involves at least two things:

1. They saw the visible manifestations of the perfections of Christ's infinite divine nature and being.

Christ is God in human form. Therefore, He revealed the perfections of the nature of God to the fullest degree. Peter refers to Christ's infinite attributes and perfections when he says, *That*

you may proclaim the excellencies of Him (1 Peter 2:9). The perfections and attributes of God's being, which were seen in Christ, are characterized by at least four things:

- a. **First, they are inclusive.** That is, the nature and being of God includes within it every attribute or perfection that a perfect being can possess. God cannot lack any attribute and be an infinite, self-sufficient being. Therefore, He possesses all the perfections that it is possible for a being to possess. Moreover, there is a perfect balance and proportion in these attributes. That is, He possesses all His attributes and excellencies in a perfect symmetry and proportion. He does not have any defect nor does He lack anything. In short, all the attributes that can exist in a being exist in God's nature, and He possesses them all in a perfect balance, proportion and beauty. He possesses what we can call natural attributes, such as power and knowledge. Both of these are infinite and are always exercised with perfect wisdom. He also possesses moral attributes such as holiness (including wrath), truth (which includes faithfulness), goodness, and His love (which includes mercy and grace).
- b. **Second, they are infinite.** Not only does God possess all attributes and perfections, but He possesses each one to an infinite degree. That is, each one has no limit and is beyond measure and degree. For example, His love and mercy are infinite, as are also His holiness, justice, power and wisdom.
- c. **Third, they are immutable.** But beyond all this, each of His perfections are immutable and unchanging. This means that none of His attributes and perfections can either be increased or diminished. The exercise of any attribute doesn't lessen the degree that God possesses that attribute. For example, if He chooses to love infinitely, nothing the object of His love does can change the degree of His love. It is an unchanging love (Micah 7:18). Nor can it be increased. The same is true of His power and knowledge. When He exercises His power, He never loses or diminishes His power. Neither can He learn or increase in knowledge. Paul says this in Romans 11:34-36,

For who has known the mind of the Lord, and who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Infinite perfection cannot, by definition, be increased or diminished (Isaiah 40:28; Micah 7:18; 1 Timothy 1:16-17). So we conclude that God's perfections are not only inclusive and infinite, but they are also unchangeable and immutable as well!

- d. **Fourth, they are incomparable.** Finally, God is entirely other. He cannot be compared to anyone. This is the core meaning of His holiness. He is separate, above, and apart from everything else; As such He is incomparable. This is what God says in Isaiah,

To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal? Says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, 'my way is hidden from the Lord, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God?' Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable (Isaiah 40:25-28).

God says He is the Holy One, because no one can be likened to Him. Truly this is an unspeakably glorious being. And this is John's point about Christ. Christ, Himself, possesses all the glory and beauty of the divine being. Furthermore, Christ possesses the divine glory in fulness, without limits or degree. Christ, therefore, possesses an infinite all-sufficient fulness. It is an all-sufficiency that by definition has no limitation or lack. Consequently, He is sufficient for all the needs of fallen and ruined sinners. So this is John's point: Christ, because He is infinite and eternal, possesses all a fallen sinner could need. He is "full of grace and truth."

2. They saw the glory of God that was seen by Moses on the mountain when he asked God to, "Show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:18-22).

When John says of Christ that he "saw His glory" he is clearly making a reference to the incident on the mountain in Exodus 33, where Moses asked for and saw God's glory. The passage reads,

Then Moses said, 'I pray You, show me Your glory.' And He said, 'I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.' But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" Then the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by" (Exodus 33:18-22).

In Exodus 33:23, God continues speaking to Moses and says, *Then I will take My hand away and **you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.***

John, fully aware of the passage in Exodus where Moses makes the request "show me Your glory" is clearly applying the passage to Christ. The further words by God to Moses in Exodus 34:6 clinch it. There it says,

*Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and **abounding in loving kindness and truth.**"*

The parallel between John's description of Christ and the account of God with Moses on the mountain cannot be missed. Notice the parallels. First, John says that he and the other apostles "saw His glory." This is parallel to Moses request when he asked God, "show me Your glory" and God told Him, "you shall see." Second, John says that the sight of Christ's glory primarily consisted in the fact that they beheld Him to be "full of grace and truth." This is parallel to what God declared to Moses when He said that He is "abounding [full] of lovingkindness [grace] and truth." The

parallel made by John would be immediately recognized. What John asserts is clear: Christ is the God that Moses saw on the mountain.

C. He Was Seen To Be Infinitely Full Of Grace And Truth.

John says that the specific and prominent aspect of the glory of God exhibited and displayed by Christ was the glory of the fulness of grace and truth.

1. They saw in Christ an infinite fulness of grace and truth.

Christ's glory consists in the possession of an infinite fulness of grace and truth toward sinners who deserve none. As noted earlier, this parallels what Moses beheld when he saw God's glory, and God revealed to Moses that He is "abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). This was God's self-revelation to Moses in response to, and in spite of, Israel's idolatrous worship of the golden calf. Parallel to this, John says that the glory of Christ, which was manifested to a sinful undeserving world, (which, like Israel is idolatrous) is an infinite fulness of grace and truth. In other words, just as the primary display of God's glory to Moses amidst the rebellion of the people of Israel was that God is "abounding in loving kindness and truth," so also the primary glory of Christ revealed in the gospel and seen today by believing sinners is that Christ is full of grace and truth. This is the glory "seen" in a true conversion. Paul writes,

*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not **see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God** (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).*

Believing sinners at conversion are enabled "to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." They see in Christ the sight of glory; the glory of an all-sufficient Savior. A Savior who, John says, is infinitely full of grace and truth for all the needs of fallen, enslaved, and ruined sinners. (See also John 3:6; 6:40).

Moses was told that God's glory consists primarily in goodness, (Exodus 33:19). Furthermore, Moses was told that God's glory consists in the fact that God abounds in loving-kindness and truth (Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 25:10, 57:10, 61:7, 115:1, 117:1-2). The elements of God's glory emphasized to Moses were exactly suited to Israel's sin and rebellion. Without these attributes, Israel would have been destroyed. Likewise the elements of Christ's glory emphasized to John were grace and truth. These were suited perfectly for man's darkness and sin. Without these attributes we would be destroyed as well.

2. They saw in the glory of Christ the image of God.

Paul says that it is in the face of Christ that we see God's full glory and divine nature. He declares, *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ* (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Paul declares, *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is made known in the face of Christ*. In other words, Christ is supremely and infinitely glorious because He, Himself, possesses in His being the fulness of all the divine attributes. In the words of the author of Hebrews, *He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature* (Hebrews 1:3). He is fully and completely God. But this is the marvel: To fallen sinners who deserve nothing, to sinners in infinite need, the prominent attributes revealed in the gospel consist in, to use John's word, a "fulness" of grace and truth. In other words, Christ is gloriously all-sufficient specifically for sinners, who in themselves are bankrupt with no means of recovery. John emphasizes two infinite perfections. First, He is full of grace. Grace is God's disposition and nature to lavish unmerited favor to sinners. It is for man's moral corruption and misery. Second, He is full of truth. Truth is the revelation of unknowable truth for those in darkness. It is for man's spiritual and intellectual darkness. These two, grace and truth, are the dominant aspects of God's glory manifested and provided in Christ. Furthermore, they are unlimited in abundance. Fulness refers to a full plentiful abundance. It refers to something full as opposed to empty. For example, it is used of twelve baskets full, of abounding in good works, or of a full reward. Finally it is used of Jesus being full of

the Holy Spirit without measure (Luke 4:1; Acts 9:39). It is an overflowing fulness, an infinite, measureless all-sufficient fulness, that is suited for the redemption, full pardon, deliverance, and transformation of helpless sinners.

III. CHRIST IS EXPERIENCED IN HIS INFINITE ALL-SUFFICIENCY WHEN HE IS RECEIVED AS LORD AND SAVIOR. FOR OF HIS FULNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED, AND GRACE UPON GRACE (John 1:16).

John then goes on in verse 16 to say, *of His fulness we have all received*. This speaks of the universal experience of all believers. They all know by experience that Jesus is sufficient. Ryle states, *all we who believe on Jesus, have received an abundant supply of all that our souls need, out of the full store that resides in Him for His people*.

A. The Reception Of Christ's Grace Is The Universal Experience Of All Believers:

Christ's fullness is for all who receive Him. Each and every Christian has experienced and has at his disposal Christ's limitless all-sufficiency for all they need. He is an infinite provision for all they need to be healed and delivered from all the emotional and spiritual consequences of sin.

B. The Reception Of Grace Is Also A Continual Supply To All Believers:

"GRACE UPON GRACE" emphasizes that there is a constant and fresh supply of grace from Christ. He continually fills up and resupplies all that we find ourselves in need of in this fallen, sinful world. In other words, the grace of God does not merely justify a sinner. It sustains and empowers. It heals, restores and transforms (2 Corinthians 3:18). The experience of the true Christian will be the ongoing replenishing, renewing, and soul-healing of the all-sufficiency of Christ.

1. There is justifying grace.

First, there is justifying grace which is based entirely on the full atonement made by Christ's propitiation (Romans 3:24-26) on the cross. His death is a sacrifice that removed and put away sin (Hebrews 9:26). God now can be just, and justify a sinner who rests and trusts in Christ alone (Romans 3:26). Based solely on Christ's blood and imputed righteousness, there is a full, free, and final justifying grace (Romans 4:4-6, 5:1).

2. There is a sanctifying, transforming grace.

Secondly, there is sanctifying, transforming and empowering grace. Christ transforms the deepest part of our fallen nature. In other words, there is the initial renewing that occurs at conversion then there is an ongoing transformation (2 Corinthians 3:18). Christ, in His initial work, breaks the power and bondage of indwelling sin. But then by His ongoing continual work in us, He brings about an ever-increasing, transformation of the inner man. The change and restoration brought about by Christ's transforming grace knows no bounds. It reaches the innermost part of our being. The root term for transformation in 2 Corinthians 3:18 is "μορπηε." This refers to the deep inward reality of something. Therefore it is an essential core change that reaches the whole person. It is contrasted with an external surface change in Romans 12:2. Christ transforms in the deepest part of man. This is the grace all of us receive in a supply of *grace upon grace*.

Finally, Paul says that all of His people are objects of this soul-deep transformation. He says, *all as we behold ... are being transformed*. In Christ, He is able, by His glorious sufficiency, to work in all His people irregardless of their brokenness and need.

THE GLORIOUS, ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

– 2 Peter 1:3-4

INTRODUCTION

We must be certain about the main thing and not focus on non-essentials. For example, in driving a car, as important as steering and accelerating are, etc, they are not the main thing. The main thing is keeping your eyes on the road. Peter redirects these people that were side-tracked by false teachers back to Christ – the main thing.

HE ASSERTS CHRIST'S SUFFICIENCY (vv. 2-3).

- A. He Is Dealing With People Who Are Influenced By False Teachers Who Minimized Christ's Person And Work (2 Peter 2:1, 3:4).**
- B. He Describes Who Christ Is In Verse One, (Our God And Savior) And What He Has Done In Verses 2-4.**
- C. He Declares That Christ Is An Eternal, Infinite, All-Sufficient, Majestic And Glorious Person.**

In verse one, Christ is called "our God and Savior Jesus Christ." Therefore, because He is an infinite, limitless person, we have everything we need in Him for life and godliness. In context life and godliness is practical, personal daily living (vv. 5-7).

- D. His Design Is To Encourage Believers, Especially Those In Trials, By Pointing Them To Christ As Their All-Sufficient Savior.**

HE POINTS OUT FOUR THINGS ABOUT CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY:

I. FIRST, CHRIST POSSESSES IN HIMSELF AN INFINITE ALL-SUFFICIENCY THAT IS ABLE TO SUSTAIN HIS PEOPLE, SEEING THAT.

A. He Multiplies His Grace And Peace To Whatever Degree Is Necessary To Sustain Us.

When Peter says, "seeing that" or "as" he is referring back to his statement in verse two where he says Christ is able to multiply His sustaining grace and peace to His people to whatever degree they need (see 2 Corinthians 12:8-9). The word multiply is, πληθυνω (πληθυνθειη aor opt pass). It refers to something richly allotted, abundantly increased (Hebrews 6:14; Genesis 22:17; Matthew 24:12; Acts 6:1-7, 7:17, 9:31, 12:24; Daniel 6:25). It is used of something greatly increased. "The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly" (Acts 6:7). It is used of an abundant increase: Israel in Egypt, the early church, God's blessing on Abraham. "I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore" (Genesis 22:17; Hebrews 6:14). It is connected to liberality (2 Corinthians 9:10). "He ... will supply and multiply your seed for sowing ...you will be enriched in everything for all liberality" (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).

B. He Is A Man Who is Also God In Human Form: He Is Our Lord (v. 2b) And Also Our God And Savior (v.1).

The phrase, "Our God and Savior" is not two persons. It is two descriptions of one person, the same as in verse 11. He is the eternal Son is God, therefore He possesses, in Himself, all the infinite and limitless attributes that belong to the nature of God.

C. He Makes Himself Accessible By A Knowledge Of Himself In The Gospel. Through The True Knowledge Of Him (v. 3), In The True Knowledge Of Our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 8).

1. There is an objective knowledge of Christ:

So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1).

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord (2 Corinthians 4:5).

2. There is subjective, experiential knowledge, (Philippians 3:10).

Knowing Christ, in this context, is to know Him as the glorious all-sufficient Savior, who can multiply His grace and peace so that He is glorified in and through all that God sends our way.

II. SECOND, CHRIST HAS MADE PROVISION AT CONVERSION SO THAT HIS PEOPLE WILL HAVE IN HIS ALL-SUFFICIENCY ALL THEY WILL NEED FOR ANY PROBLEM AND CIRCUMSTANCE. SEEING THAT HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GRANTED TO US EVERYTHING (v. 3).

A. He Entered The World To Do For Us What We Could Not Do For Ourselves. His Divine Power Has Granted To Us Everything.

1. We didn't have the power, so that we were in need of His saving, sustaining grace.

We were powerless and we deserved to be left in our state! We were totally unable to deliver ourselves.

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another: But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 3:1-6).

2. He acted with divine, supernatural power to deliver and renew us, so that we become godly people, people who live liberated God-glorifying lives.

The divine power referred to is Christ's who was just stated to be God in verse 2! He did that which is beyond the ability of natural power. He made us new creatures (1:3). He recreated us in His image (Ephesians 4:24). He set us free (John 8:32-34; Romans 6:14; Galatians 1:4).

B. He Endowed Us With Everything We Need For Life And Godliness. Has Granted To Us Everything Pertaining To Life And Godliness.

Everything that we need for godliness was granted to us in the past at conversion and remains ours. This is the emphasis of the perfect tense of granted. Furthermore, it was freely given. It was given without cause or reason in us as is indicated by the Greek word δωρεα. It is a completed provision so that nothing is lacking that could ever be necessary for a fulfilled, joyful, godly life. It is the same provision given to all believers for all the difficulties, problems, and issues that will come into their lives. Godliness in this context refers to practical daily living, to a God-centered, God-glorifying life. Peter describes a godly life in verses 5-8, which clearly has a practical emphasis.

Herein chiefly appears the power of true godliness, viz. in its being effectual in practice. And the efficacy of godliness in this respect, is what the apostle respects, when he speaks of the power of godliness, 2 Tim. 3:5, for he there is particularly declaring, how some professors of religion would notoriously fail in the practice of it, and then the 5th verse observes, that in being thus of an unholy practice, they deny the power of godliness, though they have the form of it. Indeed the power of godliness is exerted in the first place within the soul; in the sensible, lively exercise of gracious affections there. Yet the principal evidence of this power is in those exercises of holy affections that are practical; conquering the will, the lusts, and corruptions of men, and carrying them on in the way of holiness, through all temptation, difficult, and opposition.

Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, section XII, p. 317

1. He cleansed our conscience by justifying us and pardoning us from all sin (Hebrews 10:22, also 9:26, 10:10, 12, 14).

He has freed us from an evil conscience. A conscience that justly accused us of sin and guilt. This is the starting point, the foundation that underlies a God-centered life.

2. He called us and renewed our nature so that we are set free from sin's power - from the futile way of life (1 Peter 1:3, 18, 22-23).

He decisively, gloriously, and effectually called us out of our sin-enslaved lives so that we were released from the bondage and power that held us. By our calling and new birth by which we are "partakers of the divine nature," we have "escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Peter 1:22-23).

For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. (Titus 3:3).

We were slaves to sin, hateful, hating one another. This is not what we did; it was what we were. Everything starts on the inside, if we don't start there, we are Pharisees (Matthew 23:23-26, 12:33-37). Christ cleanses the inside of the cup. He does so when He regenerates and renews our nature. When He does this, He endows us with a new nature, which is governed by a love for Christ and is freed from the power of sin and self-gratification (Romans 6:22).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery, and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside may become clean also. (Matthew 23:23-26).

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:33-37).

3. He sent the Spirit to indwell us, to guide and empower us and to give us wisdom and direction (Romans 8:13).

If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:13-14).

4. He gave us His Word by which He guides, strengthens and gives wisdom (2 Timothy 3:15; 1 John 2:14).

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. (1 John 2:14).

C. We Experienced His All-Sufficiency Already When He Called Us By His Glory And Excellence. Through The True Knowledge Of Him Who Called Us By His Own Glory And Excellence (v. 3).

1. We experienced at conversion, when we were effectually called, a sight of His glory. Of Him who called us.

We "tasted the kindness of the Lord" (1 Peter 2:3). We experienced His fulness of grace (John 1:16). Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 that conversion occurs when we are given a spiritual sight of the glory of Christ. In other words, we experienced firsthand His all-sufficient infinite grace and love, and His infinite delivering power. We see that He is the exact image of God, therefore, He is more than able and sufficient to pardon us from all our sin and deliver us from its power.

2. We were recipients of the specific excellencies of character, all of which are infinite in their fulness and all-sufficiency. By His own glory and excellence (v. 3).

In general we are called by Christ's "own" glory. In other words, Christ possesses in Himself infinite glory and it is by this glory that we are called and saved. Glory is that, in general, which makes a person worthy of renown and regard.

Peter doesn't simply say we are called by Christ's glory. He goes further and says we were called by His "own" particular excellencies as well. Excellencies are the specific things, the particular perfections, of that glory, things such as His mercy, grace, love, and power. The word for excellencies is *οπετη*. It refers to any specific excellency of a person or thing. It is any eminent endowment property or quality, any particular moral excellence, perfection in a person's nature or being. In the LXX it is translated splendor or glory (Habakkuk 3:3; Zechariah 6:13).

His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise (Habakkuk 3:3). I shall mention of the lovingkindness of the Lord, the praises [excellencies] of the Lord ... and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has granted them according to His compassion (Isaiah 63:7). Let them give glory to the Lord and declare His praise [excellence] in the coastlands (Isaiah 42:12). So that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you (1 Peter 2:9).

In the plural, it is used for the praises of God (Isaiah 43:21, 42:12, 63:7). Peter's point is that it was by the exercise of Christ's own excellencies and our experience of those specific excellencies that we were called and saved. Furthermore, Peter stresses that they are Christ's "own" unique peculiar excellencies which He alone possesses. In other words, Christ alone is able to do what He does when He calls a sinner. He alone has the infinite mercy, grace, love, and power to call and liberate a sinner

III. THIRD, CHRIST HAS PROMISED HIS ALL-SUFFICIENCY FOR OUR EVERY NEED. FOR BY THESE HE HAS GRANTED TO US HIS PRECIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT PROMISES (v.4) .

A. The Priceless Treasure Of His Promises.

His promises are great and precious. Some things can be great and not precious, but His promises are precious and great. Furthermore, they remain irrevocably and forever our promises as indicated by the perfect tense of the verb "granted."

B. The Scope Of His Promises Extend To Any Area Where His Sufficiency May Be Needed For His People.

- 1. For our acceptance with God we have a full pardon from all sin by the sufficiency of His justifying blood (Romans 3:24-26, 5:9).**

2. For our weaknesses we have the sufficiency of His power and strength to stand in trials and glorify Him (Philippians 4:12).

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. (1 Peter 4:14-16).

3. For our enemies we have the sufficiency of His protection and deliverance.

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me ... But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished ... The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:16-18).

Make sure your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

4. For our perplexities and confusion we have the sufficiency of His guidance and wisdom (James 1:5).

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. (John 14:27).

When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:21-26).

- 5. For our necessities we have the sufficiency of His provision of our basic needs (Philippians 4:19).**

IV. FOURTH, THE PRODUCT AND RESULT IS THAT WE HAVE COMMUNION WITH GOD IN HIS NATURE, SO THAT WE ARE ABLE TO LIVE ABOVE OUR TROUBLES. SO THAT BY THEM YOU MAY BECOME PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, HAVING ESCAPED THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD BY LUST (v.4).

The Greek word "divine" is the same word for "divine" in verse 3. This indicates that as a result of His calling of us by His glory, we share in His own nature. As a result of the new nature, we are freed from, or have escaped, the bondage of our corrupt desires. Peter describes the result of the new nature as "having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." What this all means is that are able to share in all that His nature consists of, things such as:

- A. His Power.**
- B. His Love and Mercy.**
- C. His Peace.**

WHY CHRIST IS PRECIOUS TO THE BELIEVER

– 1 Peter 2:9

INTRODUCTION

- A. His Concern Is To Encourage People Undergoing Suffering And Mistreatment.**
 - B. He Centers On 5 Great Realities Of What God Has Done In Christ.**
 - C. He Crystalizes What It Means To Preach And Exalt Christ.**
- I. HE EXALTS ILL-DESERVING SINNERS TO AN INCONCEIVABLE PRIVILEGED STATUS AS GOD'S TREASURED AND PRIZED PEOPLE. BUT YOU ARE A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION.**
- A. A Race By Election And Divine Choice.**
 - 1. A race is a people characterized by common ancestry, parentage, etc (1:23).**

The emphasis is on birth and decent. The English word, race, means "a group of persons related by common decent, blood, or heredity." The Greek word is *γενος*, it comes from *γινομαι*, which means to come into existence, or to receive being. It means offspring or family. It is the aggregate of many individuals of the same nature, kind, or sort. God has chosen them and they were constituted a new race by the new birth. Their chief all-transcending identity is that God is their Father.

- 2. Chosen refers to the initiative and sovereign decision by God to save a particular people. Election is pride-crushing, God-exalting, and strength-giving (1 Corinthians 1:30).**

B. A Priesthood With Royal Prerogatives.

- 1. There is full access and privilege before God that was accomplished by Christ's death, and it resulted in an unending priesthood. All are priests, there are no elite.**
- 2. There is full authority and a co-reigning with Christ as royal priests (Revelation 3:21). We are priests with kingly authority.**

C. A Nation Set Apart And Distinctive From All Others.

The Greek word for nation is *εθνος*. It refers to a people unified by language, culture and customs. Believers are identified and unified by the fact that they are Christ-worshippers, Word-obeyers, peacemakers, pure in heart, and lovers of Christ. As a people, we have our own distinct food, language, customs and experiences. We are a distinct people group among the nations of the world.

D. A People Treasured By God As His Prized Possession.

The word possession is *περιποιησις*. It refers to a preserving of something (Hebrews 10:29). It is a possession obtained as one's own property for one's own personal use and enjoyment (Ephesians 1:14). It is something that has been obtained for personal use (1 Thessalonians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:14).

The verb means to obtain something for oneself in order to preserve or keep it safe: *Which He purchased with His own blood* (Acts 20:28). *Obtain for themselves a high standing* - good reputation, (1 Timothy 3:13).

*But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you O Israel, "do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; **you are Mine!** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. (Isaiah 43:1-3)*

The noun refers to a possession which is obtained in order to be enjoyed: *For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9). He called you...that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Whoever seeks to keep his life [gain] will lose it and whoever loses his life will preserve it (Luke 17:33).*

1. We are prized and safely kept (Isaiah 41:10-11).

'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish (Isaiah 41:10-11).

2. We are prospered and blessed.

II. HE EFFECTUALLY CALLS ENSLAVED SINNERS BY GOD'S POWER AND GRACE OUT OF THEIR MISERY IN SIN. SO THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM WHO HAS CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT.

A. The Plight In Slavery And In Darkness With No Hope Of Release, From Which He Called Us Out (Luke 4:18; Matthew 9:36).

1. The darkness and bondage of the power of sin is complete so that we can only be brought out by God's initiative and power.

2. **There is the darkness of spiritual ignorance and superstition (1:18).**

B. The Power Of God Is Directly Exercised Through The Word And Spirit In Delivering And Regenerating Power (1 Peter 1:23, 25).

These whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified (Romans 8:30).

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13).

III. THEY ENJOY ALL THEY HAVE AND EVER WILL HAVE NOT BY WHAT THEY'VE DONE BUT BY GOD'S MERCY. FOR YOU ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE, BUT NOW YOU ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD; YOU HAD NOT RECEIVED MERCY, BUT NOW YOU HAVE RECEIVED MERCY.

A. We Were Objects Who Did Not, And Never Would Have Deserved Mercy.

1. **By definition, mercy involves undeservedness (Luke 18:9).**
2. **The emphasis of the perfect tense, "had not received mercy," is that we were in a permanent state of hopelessness.**

B. We Obtain Infinite Eternal Mercy.

1. **Christ showed mercy by what He did for us.**

Christ showed mercy objectively when He bore our sin and endured the wrath we deserved. Christ showed infinite mercy,

justifying us, having forgiven all our sins and imputing His righteousness to our account (2:24, 3:18). This is what Christ did for us.

2. Christ showed mercy by what He did in us.

Christ showed mercy subjectively in us at the moment of our conversion when we were born again and freed from sin's enslaving power (1:3).

IV. THEY NOW EXIST BY HIS MERCY AS A GOD-CENTERED PEOPLE WITH THE PURPOSE TO EXALT AND MAGNIFY HIS MATCHLESS PERFECTIONS AND EXCELLENCIES. THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM WHO HAS CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT (2:9b).

A. Our Pursuit of Exalting Christ Is Rooted In And Is A Result Of Our Own Experience Of His Wondrous Light.

You were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8).

OUR DARKNESS

- 1. We were slaves, helpless to deliver ourselves.**
- 2. We sinned and were stiff-necked in our darkness.**
- 3. We suffered and were in misery because of our sin.**

HIS LIGHT

- 4. He showed mercy and exercised His power in delivering us.**

5. We have seen and experienced the wondrous light of His own glory that consists of His attributes and excellencies, by which we were redeemed, justified, and adopted as sons (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

3) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5) For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6) For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

6. He has satisfied us and made us joyful and happy by delivering us and ending our misery.

B. Our Purpose Is To Exalt Christ by Proclaiming The Perfections Or Excellencies of His Being and Nature By Which He Has Given To Us Joy and Gladness.

The Greek word for excellency is *αρετη*, which refers to any excellence of a person or a thing. It is an eminent endowment, property or quality. It indicates any particular moral excellence, or perfection. In the Old Testament LXX it is translated, splendor or glory (Habakkuk 3:3; Zechariah 6:13). In the plural it is used for the praises of God (Isaiah 43:21, 42:12, 63:7).

His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise (Habakkuk 3:3).

I shall make mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, the praises (excellencies) of the LORD ... and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has granted them according to His compassion (Isaiah 63:7).

Let them give glory to the Lord and declare His praise (excellence) in the coastlands (Isaiah 42:12).

1. **We experienced His infinite mercy and compassion when He relieved us from the misery of our personal darkness (v.10).**
2. **We experienced His power when He called us out of our darkness.**
3. **We experienced His abundant mercy and grace when He endured punishment we deserved (2:3), and by it freely redeemed us (1:18-20), and justified us by His blood.**

C. The Parallel Passage To 1 Peter Is From Isaiah 43:21 Where God Declares His Own Pursuit Of His Glory Through The Good And Joy He Brings In Delivering His Unworthy People (Isaiah 43:20-21).

1. **The passage and context is directly taken from the LXX (Septuagint) translation of Isaiah 43:21.**

20) The beasts of the field will glorify Me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I have given waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My chosen people. 21) The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise (αρεις) (Isaiah 43:20-21).

2. **The parallel references elsewhere in Isaiah emphasize God's pursuit of His glory by making His people happy and joyful when He delivers them from their misery.**

a. The Messiah's ministry (good news, Isaiah 63:1) is to free people from captivity, so there is no longer mourning, but gladness (Isaiah 61:1-3). This, in turn, glorifies Him.

1) The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to

*captives and freedom to prisoners; 2) to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3) to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, **the oil of gladness instead of mourning**, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, **that He may be glorified.** (Isaiah 61:1-3).*

- b. They are planted and secure from enemies and violence (Isaiah 60:18, 21-22).
- c. They are delivered through the waters and fire for His glory (43:1-7).
- d. His goodness is so that He is glorified (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).
- e. Christ's glory is manifested when He brings out prisoners, and when He delivers those in bondage. It manifests His unique glory that no one else possesses, and it calls forth the joyous singing of praise and worship (Isaiah 42:6-12).

*6) I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, and **I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations,** 7) to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. 8) **I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.** 9) Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you. 10) **Sing to the LORD a new song, sing His praise from the end of the earth!** You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it. You islands, and those who dwell on them. 11) Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voices, the settlements where Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela **sing aloud, let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains.** 12) **Let them give glory to the Lord and declare His praise in the coastlands.** (Isaiah 42:6-12).*