



Colossians 1:24-29 The Riches of His Glory

24 I now rejoice (a choice to rejoice) in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,
25 of which **I became a minister** according to the stewardship from God which was given to me **for you,** to fulfill the word of God,

- Paul “**became**” a minister of the Gospel
Colossians 1:23
23 . . . of which **I, Paul, became a minister.**
- Paul knew he was chosen from birth for the Gospel
Galatians 1:15
But when it pleased God, **who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace,**
- It’s not as though Saul didn’t have a choice, **but thank you Lord that Saul became Paul for my sake!**
 - Jesus told Ananias that Paul would become God’s **CHOSEN** vessel.
Acts 9:15–16
15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, **for he is a chosen vessel of Mine** to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.
16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”
- **God chose us – but then we also had the free will to refuse Him.**

Ephesians 1:3–5

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,** that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

- **Many have tried to box God into one of two doctrines of man.**
 - **Calvinism – man has no free will**
 - **Arminianism – man has every free will**

C.H. Spurgeon – Sermon: “Both Sides of the Shield”

“In trying to understand the truth of God we are in great danger of being one-sided. One man catches at part of a truth, and says, “That is it, and that is all of it.” Another man lays hold of another side of truth, and he says, “This is all of it”; and immediately there arises a contention between them. They are like the men who quarreled concerning the material of which a certain shield was made. One of them said that it was a golden shield; the other was equally sure that it was a silver one: whereas it so happened that it was gold on one side and silver on the other. So, they fiercely wrangled when they might very well have been agreed if they had known a little more. Most truths have two sides, and it is good to try to see both of them. Nearly every doctrine in the Word of God is balanced by some other doctrine, and many of the differences among the people of God have arisen from the undue stress which has been laid on one aspect of truth, while the other side has been altogether neglected. This danger very frequently besets us. **For example, some see the sovereignty of God, and are so carried away with that sublime truth, that they deny the responsibility of man; so, they both wrest the doctrine they do know, and fight against the doctrine they do not know. Others can see the universality of the gospel invitation, and with large hearts can urge all men to turn to God and live; but they have never seen the speciality of this redemptive work of Christ, and so fail to understand the eternal purpose of God to save his chosen people.** Running away with half a truth, they are like men who go through the wilderness wearing only one shoe, and they get lame on one foot, and that makes them limp all over. **It does not**

matter which foot it is that is lame; the man is a cripple if either foot is afflicted.” ¹

Spurgeon explains: “It is essential for us to hold our minds ready to receive whatever the Holy Spirit teaches, and frequently to accept truths which we cannot harmonize. I have long ago given up all attempts to reconcile what God has revealed in one part of the Bible with what he has made known in another part. If I find in God's Word doctrines which appear to me to be at variance with the teaching in other passages, I say to myself, “God knows where these things harmonize, and if he had wanted me to know it, he would have told me. Since he has not told me, why should I worry myself about the matter? I am not going to speculate and theorize concerning where these truths meet; nor will I cast a bridge of gossamer across the deep gulf which I imagine I see, and then trust myself to a thread that cannot bear my weight.” (ibid)

26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

The Mystery

- **Religion cloaked in hidden mysteries, to be known, or revealed, only by a select few – the GNOSTICS, the church, the Priests, the highly educated.**
 - **SO WRONG!**

Colossians 1:27 **To them God willed to make known** what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- **The Gnostics talked much of “mysteries.”** Paul takes their very word (already in common use, Matt. 13:11) and uses it for the gospel.
 - The Colossian heresy boasted of a “fullness” of knowledge possible **only through their mystical experience.** ³
 - Masonic Lodge
 - Fraternal ORDERS
 - MORMONISM
 - Rosicrucianism
 - The mysterious doctrine of the order is "built on esoteric truths of the ancient past", which "concealed from the average man, provide insight into nature, the physical universe, and the spiritual realm." ⁴

Alan Axelrod, author of the International Encyclopedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders, defines a secret society as an organization that:

1. is exclusive
2. claims to own special secrets

¹ No. 2233-37:613. A Sermon Delivered On Thursday Evening, May 14, 1891, By C. H. Spurgeon, At The Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

² A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Col 1:26.

³ Norman L. Geisler, “Colossians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 675.

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosicrucianism>

3. shows a strong inclination to favor its members.

- **Paul declared that the fullness of the mystery is found only in Christ.**

By “mystery” he meant something once concealed but then revealed.

- This contrasted with the Colossian heretics' notion that a mystery was a secret teaching known only to an exclusive group and unknown to the masses. ⁵

7 Revelations of PAUL

1. Righteousness in Christ alone. Rom 10.3
2. Salvation of the Jews – Romans 11.25
3. Marriage Eph 5.31
4. Spiritual Gifts. 1 Cor 12.1
5. Missions rigor 2 Cor 2.8
6. Devil's Devices 2 Cor 2.11
7. Life after death 1 Thess 4.13

27 To them God willed to make known

what are **the riches of the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles: which is (here's the mystery:) **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

- God wanted us to know!

- **To know what?**

- The great mystery of **CHRIST IN YOU!**
- **OH, the riches of the Glory!**

Romans 9:23 and that He might make known **the riches of His glory** on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of **the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!** How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need **according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

Colossians 2:3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

⁵ Norman L. Geisler, “Colossians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 675.

■ Glory even among the Gentiles!

- **This is the crowning wonder to Paul that God had included the Gentiles in his redemptive grace, “the riches of the glory of this mystery”** (το πλουτος της δοξης του μυστηριου τουτου [*to ploutos tēs doxēs tou mustēriou toutou*]) and that Paul himself has been made the minister of this grace among the Gentiles (Eph. 3:1–2). ⁶

■ What is that Glory?

● Christ in you!

- He is addressing Gentiles, but the idea of ἐν [*en*] here is in, not among. It is the personal experience and presence of Christ in the individual life of all believers that Paul has in mind, the indwelling Christ in the heart as in Eph. 3:17.⁷

28 Him we preach,

warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom,
that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

● It's ALL about Jesus!

- **J Vernon McGee** - “The gospel is not what we preach, but it is whom we preach.”
- It's not about the stories, the illustrations, the jokes!
- The Church is starving for the WORD OF GOD!

● Warning and teaching:

- **proclaim Him** who had done so much for him. *Katangellō* (**proclaim**) means to publicly declare a completed truth or happening. ⁸
- **For him to admonish meant to warn, to stimulate, and to encourage.** Paul would actually *plead* with people to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20).

He would at times even shed tears (cf. Acts 20:19, 31; 2 Cor. 2:4; Phil. 3:18). ⁹

Acts 20:31 (To the Ephesian Elders). Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

29 To this end I also labor,

striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

“We labor . . .”

⁶ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Col 1:27.

⁷ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Col 1:27.

⁸ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Colossians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 79.

⁹ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon*, vol. 6, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 92.

- So the weariness that results from being repeatedly struck, and so by analogy the physical tiredness caused by work and exertion. Consequently, the verb can mean both “become weary” and “work hard, labor, strive” (F. Hauck, *TDNT* 3.827–28). Paul uses it regularly for the hard work of ministry and preaching (Rom. 16:6, 12; 1 Cor. 4:12; 15:10; 16:16, etc.). The emphasis is strengthened (as in 1 Tim. 4:10) by the complementary imagery of engaging in an athletic contest (ἀγωνίζομαι, as in 1 Cor. 9:25), with its equivalent implication of giving oneself in the utmost effort, with all the self-discipline required to achieve the goal¹⁰
- **“Striving”** (ἀγωνιζομενος [*agōnizomenos*]). Present middle participle of common verb ἀγωνίζομαι [*agōnizomai*] (from ἀγών [*agōn*], contest, as in 2:1), **to contend in athletic games, to agonize, a favorite metaphor with Paul who is now a prisoner.** ¹¹
 - **Hence the verb means to enter a contest, to contend, to struggle.** The metaphor is a favorite one with Paul, and, with the exception of three instances (Luke 13:24; John 18:36; Heb. 12:1), the words ἀγών *contest* and ἀγωνίζομαι *to contend* are found only in his writings. ¹²
 - Philosophers commonly used metaphors from athletic competition, such as “strive” (KJV, NASB) here (the image is much rarer in the Old Testament, e.g., Jer 12:5). Divine empowerment “within” (NASB, NRSV) has few ancient parallels apart from Old Testament texts about the Spirit’s enabling God’s servants; Paul’s language here would have impressed ancient readers in a special way (see introduction to Rom 8:1–11). ¹³

Ephesians 1:19 and what is **the exceeding greatness of His power toward us** who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

- **76.1 δύναμις^b, εως f:** the potentiality to exert force in performing some function— ‘power.’ ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς **‘but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you’** Ac 1:8. ¹⁴

¹⁰ James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 126.

¹¹ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Col 1:29.

¹² Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 481.

¹³ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Col 1:29–2:1.

¹⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 679.