

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Another Overview Chart](#) on right side

Overview of Second Corinthians

2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21
Character of Paul	Collection for the Saints	Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation	Confidence	Vindication
Gratitude		
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

Adapted & modified from [Jensen's Survey of the New Testament \(Highly Recommended Resource\)](#) & [Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible](#)

2 Corinthians 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: ei de kai estin (3SPAI) kekalummenon (RPPNSN) to euaggelion hemon, en tois apollumenois (PMPMPD) estin (3SPAI) kekalummenon, (RPPNSN)

Amplified: But even if our Gospel (the glad tidings) also be hidden (obscured and covered up with a veil that hinders the knowledge of God), it is hidden [only] to those who are perishing and obscured [only] to those who are spiritually dying and veiled [only] to those who are lost. ([Lockman](#))

Barclay: But if in fact the good news that we preach is veiled to some, it is veiled in the case of those who are doomed to perish. ([Westminster Press](#))

God's Word: So if the Good News that we tell others is covered with a veil, it is hidden from those who are dying. ([GWT](#))

Easy English: Those who are lost cannot find our good news.

ESV: And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ([ESV](#))

KJV: But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

NET: But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing, ([NET Bible](#))

NIV: And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NLT: If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: If our Gospel is "veiled", the veil must be in the minds of those who are spiritually dying. [Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Weymouth: If, however, the meaning of our Good News has been veiled, the veil has been on the hearts of those who are on the way to perdition,

Wuest: But if also, as is the case, our gospel has been covered, in the case of those who are perishing it has been covered, . ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: and if also our good news is veiled, in those perishing it is veiled,

- **Our:** Ro 2:16 1Th 1:5 1Ti 1:11
- **it is:** 2Co 4:4 2:15,16 3:14 Mt 11:25 1Co 1:18 2Th 2:9-11
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE GOSPEL?

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing -Paul continues to use the plural pronoun (drawing attention away from himself). "**Our gospel**" in 1Th 1:5+ is used in a different sense for 1Th 1:1 introduces "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy" which is reflected in his use of "**our**". In other passages Paul calls the Gospel "**my Gospel**" indicating that the special emphasis he gave the good news in his ministry. (Ro 2:16+, Ro 16:25, 26+ 2Ti 2:8+) Can you say like Paul could say with assurance that it is "your" Gospel (you possess it and it possesses you)?

[Paul Apple](#) points out that "The Light of the Gospel Will **Never** Penetrate the **Non Elect**! No human way to reach this target group successfully; takes the pressure off us; No reason to get discouraged by a lack of response to the gospel; Still we are responsible to make the offer available to all men

Is veiled to those who are perishing - **KJV** = "it is hid to them that are lost". **GWT** = "hidden from those who are dying." **Amplified** = "hidden [only] to those who are perishing and obscured [only] to those who are spiritually dying and veiled [only] to those who are lost." **Weymouth** = " the veil has been on the hearts of those who are on the way to perdition". **Barclay** = "veiled in the case of those who are doomed to perish' **Is veiled** is two verbs, the first **is** (estin) is the present tense signifying continuous action or effect. **Veiled** ([kalupto](#)) is in the perfect tense which speaks of the permanent state of this veiling. These verbs do not present a happy picture! In fact it should break our hearts these individuals (some of whom are sadly likely to be our own family members and/or close acquaintances) are separated from God's fellowship (Jn 1:12+ Gal 3:26+ 2Co 6:18+) and are unable to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Redeemer (Job 19:25 Ps 19:14+) of Adam's lost race (cp Ro 5:12+, 1Co 15:22+).

William MacDonald - The apostle has been speaking of the tremendous care he used in seeking to make the truth of God clear to men, both by precept and by practice. If the gospel is veiled or hidden to some, it certainly is not God's fault, and Paul does not want it to be his fault either. And yet even as he writes the words, he is aware that there are those who simply cannot seem to take it in. Who are they? It is those who are perishing. Why are they thus blinded? The answer is given in the following verse. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Spurgeon writes that "According to the text, he that believes not on Jesus Christ is a lost man. God has lost you; you are not his servant. The church has lost you; you are not working for the truth. The world has lost you really; you yield no lasting service to it (**Ed**: this is the essence of the meaning of **apollumi** - see below - and this includes all great contributors to arts, sciences, etc -- the point is that if they never become believers, all their labors vanish like the wind in light of an eternal destiny of dreadful doom!). You have lost yourself to right, to joy, to heaven. You are lost, lost, lost... It is not only that you **will be** lost, but that you **are** lost ...lost **even now**.

Veiled ([2572](#)) (**kalupto**) means to cause something to be covered over literally (as with a lamp, Lk 8:16, dirt, Lk 23:30, water of waves, Mt 8:24) and hence not be visible. Figuratively, as used by Paul in this verse **kalupto** means to to cause something not to be known and thus means to hide, conceal, keep secret (cp similar figurative uses in Mt 10:26, Jas 5:20, 1Pe 4:8).

Paul explains in the next verse (2Co 4:4) that the Gospel is **veiled** to those who have refused to believe (**THE CAUSE**) and have subsequently been spiritually blinded by Satan (**THE EFFECT**). There is a similar spiritual dynamic seen in Second Thessalonians where Paul is describing the future time during which the Antichrist will be in power (See Daniel's Seventieth Week Chart)

that is, the one (referring to the Antichrist, the Man of Sin or Lawlessness, the Little Horn, the Beast of Revelation) whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan (in other words the Antichrist is "energized" by

Satan), with all power and signs and false wonders and with all the deception (apate - giving of a false impression) of wickedness (unrighteousness) for those who perish (same word used in 2Co 4:3 - apollumi), because they did not (Gk = ouk = absolute negation) receive (dechomai = they absolutely did not accept it nor welcome it -- the implication is that they had exposure to the Gospel - we have all encountered these individuals) the love of the truth (~the Gospel) so as to be saved. For this reason (**What reason?** Their unbelief and willful rejection of the truth) God will send upon them a deluding influence (i.e., God actively gives them over to the power of deception = divine retribution/recompense; judicial hardening as God did to rebellious Israel in the OT) so that they will believe what is false (Now they believe but error rather than truth!), in order that (PURPOSE CLAUSE) they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure (DELIGHTED IN, WERE WELL-PLEASED) in wickedness. (2Th 2:10-12+)

Guzik adds that **Paul** is not saying that those to whom **the Gospel is veiled** "are innocent victims of Satan's blinding work. Satan's work upon them is not the only reason they are blinded. Jn 3:19 says, And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Though men love the darkness, and choose the darkness, Satan still works hard to keep them blinded to the glorious Gospel of light and salvation in Jesus. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

Gospel (2098) (**euaggelion** from **eú** = good + **aggéllo** = proclaim, tell) is literally good news or glad tidings. In secular Greek it originally referred to a reward for good news and later became the good news itself. The word **euaggelion** was commonly used in the first century as our words "good news" today. The idea then and now is something like this - "Have you any **good news** (euaggelion) for me today?" This was a common question in the ancient world. In modern secular use **gospel** has an interesting meaning of something accepted as infallible truth or as a guiding principle (e.g., such and such is "the gospel truth"). This is not a bad Biblical definition either! Uses of euaggelion in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 9:23; 1 Co. 15:1; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 4:3; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:14; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:7;

Paul's passion was proclamation of the **Gospel** embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ...

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. (1 Co 2:1-2+)

The best Biblical definition of the **gospel** is found in First Corinthians 15...

Now I make known to you [since it seems to have escaped you], brethren, **the gospel** which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain (does not teach that true believers are in danger of losing their salvation, but it is a warning against non-saving faith -- could be translated "unless your faith is worthless" -- holding fast was/is the result and evidence of genuine salvation). 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. (1Co 15:1-8 notes 1Co 15:1; 15:2; 15:3; 15:4; 15:5; 15:6; 15:7; 15:8)

Euaggelion was commonly used in the Greco-Roman culture as "a technical term for "news of victory." The messenger appears, raises his right hand in greeting and calls out with a loud voice: "*rejoice ...we are victorious*". By his appearance it is known already that he brings good news. His face shines, his spear is decked with laurel, his head is crowned, he swings a branch of palms, joy fills the city, *euaggelia* are offered, the temples are garlanded, an *agon* (race) is held, crowns are put on for the sacrifices and the one to whom the message is owed is honored with a wreath...[thus] euaggelion is closely linked with the thought of victory in battle." (From the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)

THOUGHT - This is a convicting definition - here a pagan messenger radiantly announces good news of an earthly victory. How much more radiant should we be who are the bearers of the great news of Christ's eternal triumph over sin, Satan, and death!

The New Testament evangelists appropriated **euaggelion** in reference to the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ep 2:8, 9-note). "**Gospel**" in fact was Paul's favorite term for his message. In Paul's letters the meaning of **euaggelion** narrows down to the specific sense of the "good news" that God has acted to save people from their sins and to reconcile them to Himself through the death of His Son Jesus Christ (Ro 5:10+ Col 1:22+ 2Co 5:18, 19, 20). For Paul, the **Gospel** is itself "the (**dunamis** = inherent, dynamic ability to accomplish) power of God for salvation (**soteria** - a word filled with significance for believers) to everyone who believes (pisteuo), to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Ro 1:16, 17+). The **Gospel** then possesses the inherent power to deliver (rescue and preserve) otherwise eternally lost sinners "from the domain (exousia = the power = right

and the might) of darkness" and transfer them "to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col 1:11, 12, 13-+).

Euaggelion is found in several combination phrases, each describing an aspect of the Gospel like a multifaceted jewel in various terms from a different viewpoint (from the NASB, 1977):

- the gospel of the kingdom (~ the "King") (Mt 4:23+ Mt 9:35+, Mt 24:14+, Lk 16:16+)
- the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk 1:1+) because it centers in Christ
- the gospel of God (Mk 1:14+) because it originates with God and was not invented by man
- the gospel of the kingdom of God (Lk 16:16+)
- the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+)
- the gospel of His Son (Ro 1:9-+)
- the gospel of Christ (Ro 15:19+)
- the gospel of the glory of Christ (2Co 4:4+)
- the gospel of your salvation (Ep 1:13+)
- the gospel of peace (Ep 6:15+)
- the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2Th 1:8+)
- the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11)

Are perishing - Not *are being annihilated* for that is not the fate of men. But utter and abysmal and eternal ruin is the fate for all who fail to believe in Christ. The **present tense** pictures this fate as their persistent plight.

Perishing (622) (**apollumi** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy <> root of **apollyon** [Re 9:11] = destroyer) means to destroy utterly but not to be caused to cease to exist. **Apollumi** as it relates to men, is not the loss of *being* per se (annihilation), but is the loss of *well-being*. It means to ruin so that the person ruined can no longer serve the use for which he or she was designed (ultimately the chief end of man being to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever!). Their lives are rendered useless in a sense. The gospel promises everlasting life for the one who believes. The failure to possess this life will result in utter ruin and eternal uselessness (not a cessation of existence). **Apollumi** is the term Jesus used to speak of those who are thrown into hell (Mt 10:28; cp Lk 13:3; Jn 3:16). As He makes clear elsewhere, hell is not a place or state of nothingness or unconscious existence, as is the Hindu Nirvana but is the place of everlasting torment, the place of eternal death, where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 13:42, 50).

Story about Sir Isaac Newton.

Certainly no one could say that he was not an intellectual or that he was not a man of remarkable ability. One day someone said this to him:

"Sir Isaac, I do not understand. You seem to be able to believe the Bible like a little child. I have tried but I cannot. So many of its statements mean nothing to me. I cannot believe; I cannot understand."

This was the reply of Sir Isaac Newton:

"Sometimes I come into my study and in my absentmindedness I attempt to light my candle when the extinguisher is over it, and I fumble about trying to light it and cannot; but when I remove the extinguisher then I am able to light the candle. I am afraid the extinguisher in your case is the love of your sins; it is deliberate unbelief that is in you. Turn to God in repentance; be prepared to let the Spirit of God reveal His truth to you, and it will be His joy to show the glory of the grace of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ." Sir Isaac Newton was not only a great scientist but also a great preacher. Why don't people believe? Because Satan has blinded their eyes "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

It is a glorious gospel, but it is glorious because it reveals the glory of Christ. Tragically that is what men do not want to see (cp Jn 3:19, 20, Jn 3:36).

Illustration from H A Ironside - Lost In the Church - In an English village a Sunday school entertainment was being held in a small church. The place was crowded and in darkness as a stereopticon exhibition was being given. A knock at the door summoned an usher, who made his way to the front and announced, "Little Mary Jones is lost. Her family and the town officers have been searching everywhere for her. If anyone has seen her or knows of her whereabouts, will he please go to the door and communicate with the friend who is inquiring." No one moved and the lecturer went on with his address and pictures. At the close, when the lights were turned on, a lady noticed Mary sitting on a front seat. Going over to her, she said, "Why, Mary, didn't you hear them inquiring

for you? Why did you not let them know you were here?" Surprised, the child asked, "Did they mean me? They said Mary Jones was lost. I am not lost. I knew where I was all the time; I thought it was some other Mary Jones." She was lost in the church and did not know it. How many others are like her. They have a name that they live, but are dead. Though members of some local church, they have never seen their need of Christ, nor have they believed the message of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 4:4 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. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek : en tois o theos tou aionos toutou etuphlosen (3AAI) ta noemata ton apiston eis to me augasai (AAN) ton photismon tou euaggeliou tes doces tou Christou, os estin (3SPAI) eikon tou theou.

Amplified: For the god of this world has blinded the unbelievers' minds [that they should not discern the truth], preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ (the Messiah), Who is the Image and Likeness of God. ([Lockman](#))

Barclay: In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who refuse to believe, in order that upon them there may not dawn the light of the good news which tells of the glory of Christ in whom we can see God. ([Westminster Press](#))

God's Word: The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. As a result, they don't see the light of the Good News about Christ's glory. It is Christ who is God's image. ([GWT](#))

Easy English: The god of this world (that is, the devil) has made blind the minds of those who do not believe. The result is that they cannot see the light of the good news of the *glory of Christ. He is the exact *likeness of God.

ESV: In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ([ESV](#))

KJV: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

NET: among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe so they would not see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. ([NET Bible](#))

NIV: The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NLT: Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: The spirit of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, and prevents the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, the image of God, from shining on them. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Weymouth: in whom the god of this present age has blinded their unbelieving minds so as to shut out the sunshine of the Good News of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God. because of the thanksgivings of the increased number, may more and more promote the glory of God. .

Wuest: in whom the god of this age blinded the minds of the unbelievers to the end that the light of the good news of the glory of the Christ who is the derived image of God should not dawn upon them, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: in whom the god of this age did blind the minds of the unbelieving, that there doth not shine forth to them the enlightening of the good news of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God;

- **the god**: Mt 4:8,9 Jn 12:31,40 14:30 16:11 1Co 10:20 Eph 2:2 6:12 1Jn 5:19 Rev 20:2,3
- **blinded**: 2Co 3:14 1Ki 22:22 Isa 6:10 Jn 12:40
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

2 Corinthians 3:14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the

same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

THE POWERFUL REALITY OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

In whose case - Referring to those who are in a persistent state of spiritual ruin even though they are still physically alive (2Co 4:3)! Paul proceeds to pull the curtain back on spiritual warfare for human souls behind the scenes (so to speak).

The god of this world - More literally this is "**the god of this age**" ("*World*" is **aion** [word study] = *age*). This epithet (a characterizing phrase occurring in place of the name) refers to "the **great dragon** (who) was thrown down (to occur at mid-point of "Daniel's 70th Week" see **chart for events at "Midpoint"**), the **serpent** of old (Ge 3:1) who is called the **devil** and **Satan**" (Rev 12:9-[+](#)) (See also the discussion of the 3 mortal enemies of our soul - **world, flesh, devil**). As discussed below God has granted Satan temporary "squatter's rights" over the earth, but never forget that God is still on His Throne and the earth ultimately belongs to Him (eg, see Pr 24:1, 1Ti 1:17). To be sure, Satan has very real power and authority but he can only do what the Lord permits (eg see Job 1:6, 7, 8, 9 10 11 12).

John MacArthur rightly reminds us that although Paul uses the same Greek word *theos* here to describe the devil, the truth is that "Satan, of course, is not a god but a created being. He is called a god because his deluded followers serve him as if he were one. Satan is the archetype of all the false gods in all the false religions he has spawned. ([2Corinthians Commentary](#))

Guzik has a helpful note warning that...The Biblical truth that Satan is **the god of this age** can be understood in a wrong way. Some later Christians (like the Manichaeans) promoted a dualistic understanding of God and Satan, and emphasized this phrase **the god of this age**. Their idea was that God and Satan were "equal opponents," instead of understanding that in no way is Satan the opposite of God. In reaction to these false doctrines, many early Christian commentators (like Augustine, Origen, Chrysostom and others) interpreted this verse strangely to "remove ammunition" from the heretics. But this is wrong. Just because some one twists a truth one way, it doesn't mean we can twist it the other way to "compensate." Calvin well remarks of this approach, "being hard pressed by their opponents they were more anxious to refute them than to expound Paul." Instead, Calvin gives a good sense of what we should understand by the phrase the god of this age: "The devil is called the god of this age in no other way than Baal was called the god of those who worshipped him or the dog the god of Egypt." ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

Satan is the one who has been granted temporary authority over this fallen world system (see **kosmos**) a truth that is taught in the Devil's temptation of Christ where he offers our Lord all the kingdoms of the world...

And he (the devil) led Him (Jesus) up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the **devil** said to Him, "I will give You all this **domain** (**exousia** ~ the right and the might) and its glory (albeit a passing glory - 1Jn 2:17-+); **for it has been handed over (paradidomi** = given over into the power of Satan) **to me**, and I give it to whomever I wish. "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." (Lk 4:5, 6,7, cp Mt 4:8, 9).

Comment: Note that the Lord does not deny Satan's "claim" over all the kingdoms of this world.

Jesus refers to **Satan** as a **ruler** declaring...

Now judgment is upon this world; now the **ruler** (archon - first in rank - in the spiritual world over all spiritual forces of wickedness - Ep 6:12-+) of this world shall be cast out. (Jn 12:31)

I will not speak much more with you, for the **ruler** (archon) of the world (kosmos) is coming, and he has nothing in Me (There is nothing in Jesus character wherein the devil can get a foothold) (Jn 14:30)

(Jesus speaking about the Holy Spirit Jn 16:8, 9, 10) and concerning judgment, because the **ruler** of this world has been judged. (Jn 16:11)

Comment: The fate of Satan is so sure that here Jesus speaks uses the past tense to describe the future judgment of Satan at the Cross, where Christ triumphed once and for all over **the god of this world**. (even as foretold in the Protoevangelium in Ge 3:15, cp He 2:14,15-+, Col 2:15-+, with Satan's final and eternal punishment in Rev 20:10-[+](#))

Paul calls Satan a **prince**...

(Addressing the saints at Ephesus who were once spiritually dead Ep 2:1+) in which you formerly walked (conducting your life) according to the course of this world (kosmos), according to the **prince** (archon ~ Satan) of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working ("energizing") in the sons of disobedience. (Ep 2:2-+)

John refers to him as **the evil one** over this fallen world..

We (believers) know (perfect tense = speaks of a permanent, intrinsic knowledge God's Spirit has bestowed on believers so that they might be assured that they are genuinely saved - cp 1Jn 5:13, Jn 20:31 Ro 8:15-+ Ro 8:16-+ Gal 4:6) that we are of God (in His family, 1Jn 3:1+, His children Jn 1:12, 13), and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (1Jn 5:19)

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 - Note they were unbelieving and that is what they were allowed to be blinded by Satan. And once spiritually blinded they cannot see the truth of the Gospel. The Gospel light shines but they cannot see the light.

Blinded - This description recalls Paul's initial encounter with Jesus on the Damascus Road (Read Acts 9:3, 4, 5, 6) in which the light of the glory of Christ blinded Paul's physical eyes (Acts 9:8, 9), but opened the eyes of his heart so that He could see Jesus for Who He really was. The spiritual dynamic Paul describes here in 2Co 4:4 is essentially the antithesis (direct opposite) of his own personal experience, for in the present passage, instead of opening the eyes of the mind, Satan **blinds** their mind and their spiritual vision, leaving their physical vision intact. The upshot (final effect) is that these unbelievers (whose unbelief precedes their being blinded) are rendered incapable of seeing (comprehending) **the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ** (See below for related note on "**blinded**" in John 12:40).

Barclay translates it "In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who refuse to believe, in order that upon them **there may not dawn** the light of the good news which tells of the glory of Christ in whom we can see God.

In his description of the superiority of the New Covenant **Paul** had just explained that the minds of most of the Jews in the Old Testament (excepting the believing **remnant**)...

were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. (2Co 3:14-+)

Comment: In other words, because they refused the light God had given them, they experienced His divine retributive judgment ("hardened" is in the passive voice = which speaks of action on the subject from an outside source, i.e., in this case God!) and were consequently unable to comprehend (cp "a veil lies over their heart" - 2Co 3:15-+) the true significance and purpose of the Old Covenant (which pointed to Christ in shadows and types and which shut men up in their sin, teaching them the sinfulness of sin but also leading them like a tutor to Christ)

But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 Jn 2:11)

Blinded (5186) (**tuphloo/typhloo** from **tuphlos/typhlos** = blind from a root **tuph/typh-** = to burn, smoke, cp **tuphos** = smoke) to envelop with smoke and in the active sense means to make blind, to rob of sight. The passive sense means to go blind, to be blinded, to be unable to see clearly. The figurative sense means to be unable to "see" (understand, comprehend) some truth, especially spiritual truth.

Ralph Enlow on blindness - "Scripture often employs the imagery of blindness to describe the spiritual condition of persons who are either unable or unwilling to perceive divine revelation. The things of God are perceived not by observation and inquiry, but by revelation and illumination (Mt 11:25, 26, 27; 1Co 1:21; 2Pe 1:19, 20, 21-+). It is the Lord who "gives sight to the blind" (Ps146:8+; Is 42:16). The New Testament reveals that believers are subject to spiritual blindness. Peter deems those who fail increasingly to exhibit diligence in pursuit of spiritual virtue as blind or nearsighted (2Pe 1:9-+). And the exalted Lord of the church views the lukewarm but haughty Laodicean church as wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked (Re 3:17-+). Spiritual blindness, then, refers in some instances to the inability of unbelievers to comprehend spiritual truth, specifically failure to recognize the true identity of the **Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ** (Jn 1:1, 14) **It is vital, therefore, to conduct all Christian witness in dependence on the Holy Spirit** (Acts 1:8 2:4 4:8 4:31 6:5 8 10 7:55 9:17 10:38 11:24 13:52) Who works to counteract the cataracts of Satan and to reveal the truth of God (cp Lk 24:45 Ac16:14, 26:18). But spiritual blindness can also afflict believers who fail to perceive their true spiritual condition. To avoid the plague of spiritual blindness and escape the condemnation of leading others into spiritual ruin, believers must be quick to appropriate and obey the Word of God. (Read the entire article - [Blindness - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)) (Bolding and color added for emphasis)

Paul uses the figurative sense meaning to cause someone not to be able to understand or comprehend the Good News of Jesus.

NIDNTT comments that the root noun **tuphlos** "may even be applied to dark, obscure things, and also to rivers and harbours choked with mud. The barbaric custom of blinding for revenge or punishment is well attested.

There are only 3 uses (2Co 4:4, Jn 12:40, 1Jn 2:11) of **tuphloō** in the NT and all are used with the figurative meaning referring to blinding of one's ability to understand something. (One occurrence in the non-apocryphal Lxx = Is 42:19)...

John 12:40 "HE HAS **BLINDED** THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM." (Quoting Is 6:10)

Comment: The **context** is important in understanding this passage (see Jn 12:37, 38, 39) In Jn 12:37 John records that the Jews were not believing in Jesus and explains that this fulfills the prophecy in Is 53:1. Then John quoted Is 6:9,10 to explain that Israel as a whole was **unable** to believe (Jn 12:39 = "They **could not** believe"!). Jn 12:39 teaches that it is possible to harden one's heart to the point that he cannot believe. The corollary caution is because of this danger, we must believe while there is still light. Israel as a nation (excepting the believing remnant) had repeatedly rejected God's righteous revelation and the result was that God had punished them with **judicial blindness**. **John MacArthur** adds that "Although God predestined such judgment, it was not apart from human responsibility and culpability (see Jn 8:24)."

Guzik comments: There comes a place where God will strengthen us in our decision, whether *for* Jesus or *against* Jesus. Ultimately, before God, we get what we want, and those who push Jesus away will not have to endure eternity with Him. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

William MacDonald comments on Jn 12:40: This quotation was from Isaiah 6:9, 10. God blinded the eyes of the people of Israel and hardened their hearts. He did not do this at first, but only after they had closed their eyes and hardened their own hearts. As a result of Israel's stubborn and willful rejection of the Messiah, they cut themselves off from sight, understanding, conversion, and healing. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Warren Wiersbe summarization of Jn 12:37-41 - The key word in this section is **believe**; it is used eight times (in Jn 12:37-49). First, John explained the unbelief of the people. They **would not** believe (John 12:37-38, with a quotation from Isa. 53:1); they **could not** believe (John 12:39); and they **should not** believe (John 12:40-41, with a quotation from Isa 6:9, 10). ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament. Victor or Wordsearch](#))

1Jn 2:11+ But the one who hates (present tense = habitual conduct) his brother is (present tense = continually) in the darkness and walks (present tense = habitual conduct) in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has **blinded** his eyes.

Wuest comments: The penalty of living in the darkness is not merely that one does not see, but that one goes blind. The neglected faculty is atrophied. Compare the mole, the crustacea in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. Commenting on the words "**has blinded**," Vincent says: "The **aoirist tense, blinded**, indicates a past, definite, decisive act. When the darkness overtook, it blinded. The blindness is no new state into which he has come." This person is, of course, an unsaved person professing Christianity. Habitually conducting (**present tense** = habitual conduct) one's self in the sphere of darkness is indicative of an unsaved state (cp 1Jn 3:15). ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

J Vernon McGee agrees: My friend, John has given here a tremendous statement: "He that hates (continually) his brother is in darkness, and walks (continually) in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes." If you want to know for sure that you are a child of God, apply this test to your own life. If you are hating your brother, you are dwelling in (the kingdom of) darkness (cp Jn 3:18, 20, 21). If you are loving your brother, you are dwelling in (the kingdom of) light (cp the "transfer" that all believers experience when they are first born again = Acts 26:18 and 1Pe 2:9-+).

It is worthy noting that the noun **tuphlos/typhlos** is used 15 times in John 9 (Jn 9:1, 2, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24,25, 32, 39 40 41)

Mounce comments: In John 9, the literal **typhlos** of the man born blind is blended with the figurative **typhlos** of the Jews (Jn 9:40). There is further irony in the Jews being referred to as **typhlos** (Jn 9:39), for it was a matter of pride to them that they were the teachers and guides to the blind (Ro 2:19-+). Jesus directly confronts the Jews with their **typhlos** of unbelief, declaring that they are blind guides of the blind (Mt 15:14). See NIDNTT-A, 566-67.

Joseph Beet commenting on 2Co 4:4 writes that "Many of those to whom Paul preached had evidently never seen the image of

Christ portrayed in the Gospel. For they were unmoved by it. To them, therefore, the Gospel was veiled. And, since the truth was set plainly before them, the hindrance to sight was not in the Word but in the hearts of those who did not believe it. By not seeing the image set before them they proved themselves incapable of seeing it. And their blindness was so unnatural that it must have been inflicted. And it could be a work only of the enemy of the race. Since the blinded ones were wholly occupied with things of the present life and were thus prevented from beholding the Gospel light, Paul says that they were blinded by the God of this age. And, since the inevitable result of their blindness was that they were unable to see the light which shines forth from Him who reveals to men the face of God, he properly speaks of this as the dire purpose of the blindness inflicted by their foe. This blindness was wrought, not only by Satan, but by God: as is taught expressly in 2Th 2:9 10 11 12; Ro 11:8; Jn 12:40. In just punishment God surrenders to the cruelty of Satan those who reject the Gospel, that He may destroy their capacity for receiving it. This dual source of spiritual insensibility is illustrated in 2Sa 24:1 and 1Chr 21:1. The blindness is also attributed to the word, and to those who preach it: Is 6:10; Mk 4:11 12. For, by God's ordinance, the Gospel hardens those whom it fails to soften. This blindness, though terrible, is not necessarily final; any more than is the death described in Ro 7:9,10, 11 12 13. For Christ, who raises the dead, gives sight (Lk 4:18) to the blind. But the blindness and death are such as no earthly power can save from. Yet in our deepest darkness we know the direction of the light. And, as we turn towards it, the light of life by its creative power gives eyes to the blind. ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

McGee - I would like to give you a quotation from Sir Isaac Newton. Certainly no one could say that he was not an intellectual or that he was not a man of remarkable ability. One day someone said this to him: "Sir Isaac, I do not understand. You seem to be able to believe the Bible like a little child. I have tried but I cannot. So many of its statements mean nothing to me. I cannot believe; I cannot understand." This was the reply of Sir Isaac Newton: "Sometimes I come into my study and in my absent-mindedness I attempt to light my candle when the extinguisher is over it, and I fumble about trying to light it and cannot; but when I remove the extinguisher then I am able to light the candle. I am afraid the extinguisher in your case is the love of your sins; it is deliberate unbelief that is in you. Turn to God in repentance; be prepared to let the Spirit of God reveal His truth to you, and it will be His joy to show the glory of the grace of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ." Sir Isaac Newton was not only a great scientist but also a great preacher. Why don't people believe? Because Satan has blinded their eyes "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." It is a glorious gospel, but it is glorious because it reveals the glory of Christ. Apparently that is what men do not want to see.

COMPARISON 2Co 4:4 and 2Co 4:6	
2Co 4:4	2Co 4:6
Satan blinds to	God creates
the light	the light
of the Gospel	of the knowledge
of the glory	of the glory
of Christ	of God
Who is the image of God	In the face of Christ

John Piper (above table is credited to Dr Piper also) writes..

In 2Co 4:4 Satan blinds the mind; in 2Co 4:6+ God creates light in the heart. 2Co 4:4 describes the problem; 2Co 4:6 describes the remedy. These two verses are a description of the condition of all people before conversion, and what happens in conversion to bring about salvation. More than any part of the Bible that I know of, the connections between 2 Corinthians 4:4 and 2Corinthians 4:6 shed light on the ultimate meaning of good in the term good news.

Let's be clear that we are talking about the gospel in these verses. The fact that Paul does not mention the facts of Christ's life and death and resurrection does not mean he has left them behind. They remain the historical core of the gospel. There is no gospel without the declaration of Christ crucified for sinners and risen from the dead (1Co 15:1 2 3 4). This is assumed here. When Paul speaks of "the gospel of the glory of Christ," he means that the events of the gospel are designed by God to reveal the glory of Christ. This is not incidental to the gospel—it's essential. The gospel would not be good news if it did not reveal the glory of Christ for us to see and savor. It is the glory of Christ that finally satisfies our soul. We are made for Christ, and Christ died so that every obstacle would be removed that keeps us from seeing and savoring the most satisfying treasure in the universe—namely, Christ, who is the image of God.

The supreme value of the glory of Christ revealed in the gospel is what makes Satan so furious with the gospel. Satan is not mainly interested in causing us misery. He is mainly interested in making Christ look bad. He hates Christ. And he hates the glory of Christ. He will do all he can to keep people from seeing Christ as glorious. The gospel is God's instrument for liberating people from exulting in self to exulting in Christ. Therefore Satan hates the gospel.

Thus 2 Corinthians 4:4 says that Satan blinds people to keep them from seeing "the light of the gospel." He has more than one way to do this. One way, of course, is to prevent the preaching of the gospel. This he does by derailing many preachers and missionaries. They may die, or be thrown in prison (Rev. 2:10), or forsake the ministry (2Ti 4:10). Or they may abandon the truth and speak "a different gospel" (Gal. 1:6 7 8; Acts 20:30).

But in 2 Corinthians 4:4 the way Satan keeps people from seeing "the light of the gospel" is not by preventing preaching, but by preventing spiritual perception. The words of the gospel are heard. The facts are comprehended. But there is no "light." What does this mean? It means that blinded persons consider the facts of the gospel but see no compelling spiritual beauty, no treasure, nothing supremely precious. They see facts. They may even agree that the historical facts are true. Satan surely does. But they do not have "true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising."

That last quote is from Jonathan Edwards. Edwards thought more deeply about this spiritual "light of the gospel" than anyone I have ever read. Here is how he describes what Satan prevents in verse 4, and what God gives in verse 6.

[It is] a true sense ... of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things, an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind and more sublime nature than in other things, [and] a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. (from Jonathan Edwards' sermon [A Divine and Supernatural Light](#))

Seeing this "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" is not neutral. One cannot see it and hate it. One cannot see it and reject it. If one claims to see it, only to reject it, one is "seeing" it only the way Satan sees it and wants us to see it. In that case we are still in the grip of his blinding power. No, the kind of seeing that Satan prevents is not the neutral seeing that sets you before a meal with no taste or distaste for what you see. The kind of seeing that Satan cancels (v. 4) and God creates (v. 6) is more like spiritual tasting than rational testing.

This kind of seeing is not the circumstantial inference that the brown fluid in the bottle with the wax comb must be honey. Rather this seeing is the immediate knowledge that it is honey because of putting some on the tongue. There is no series of arguments that awakens the certainty of sweetness. This is what seeing light means. If you are blind, someone may persuade you that the sun is bright. But that persuasion is not what Paul is talking about. When your eyes are opened—that is, when God says, "Let there be light"—the persuasion is of a different kind. That's what happens in the preaching of the gospel. It's what happens when God moves with Creator power over the darkness of human hearts. (The interested reader is strongly encouraged to read the entire chapter by Dr Piper online in his book [God Is the Gospel by John Piper - go to page 54 in the Pdf and read chapter 4](#))

Minds (3540) (**noema** from **noéo** = perceive in turn from **noús** = mind) is literally the result of the activity of the "**nous**" or mind, that part of man which thinks. **Noema** means that which is thought (a thought), perceived with the mind (a mental perception), understood, pondered, or considered. The basic idea of **noema** is what results from directing one's mind (**nous**) to a subject. **BDAG** divides **noema** into two main categories (1) That which one has in mind as product of intellectual process = thought, design, purpose, intention. (20 The faculty of processing thought = the mind or the understanding. **Noema** - 6x in 6v in **NAS** - 2Co. 2:11; 2Co 3:14; 4:4; 10:5; 11:3; Phil. 4:7. **NAS renders** - minds(4), schemes(1), thought(1).

Don't miss an important point in this passage - While Satan clearly works men's hearts (Ac 5:3 - and some might equate "mind" in this passage with "heart"), the primary "battlefield" in our spiritual war (Ep 6:12+) is our **mind**. And the spiritual war is not a **power** struggle but a **truth** struggle.

Paul uses **noema** with a negative connotation in his description of our Adversary writing that "in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his **schemes** (his devices or designs = **noema**). (2Corinthians 2:11+)

John MacArthur notes that "Unregenerate people cannot think properly about spiritual truth (1Co 2:14+) because they have a "depraved mind" (Ro 1:28+; 1Ti 6:5; 2Ti 3:8+). No matter how slick the presentation is, it will not persuade a depraved mind to respond favorably to the gospel. Only God can turn on the light in the human heart (cf. 2Co 4:6+; Lk 24:45+; Acts 26:18+) so that it can respond in saving faith to the gospel of the glory of Christ. ([2Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Unbelieving (571) (**apistos** from **a** = without + **pistos** = believing, faithful) means lacking in faith, without faith, disbelieving, unbelieving - in this **context apistos** is one who does not believe the Good News about Jesus Christ (1Ti 5:8, Titus 1:15, Rev 21:8). It is used once to describe that which is incredible (Acts 26:8+), but most NT uses describe those without faith, not trusting, unfaithful. In secular Greek use **apistos** described reports, etc as *incredible*. **BDAG** gives an example of an ancient secular use of **apistos** in the description of "a patient (who) sneers in disbelief at healings recorded in a shrine of Asclepius and subsequently receives the sobriquet (a descriptive name) : "*Apistos*"

Apistos - 23x in 20v in **NAS** - Mt 17:17; Mk 9:19; Lk 9:41; 12:46; Jn 20:27; Acts 26:8; 1Co 6:6; 7:12,13,14; 10:27; 14:22, 23 24; 2Co 4:4; 6:14 15; 1Ti 5:8; Titus 1:15; Rev 21:8. **NAS** = incredible(1), unbeliever(4), unbelievers(7), unbelieving(10), unbelieving one(1). Used twice in Lxx - Pr 17:6, Is 17:10.

Paul repeatedly used **apistos** in his letters to the church at Corinth because of their great need to understand how to interact with unbelievers (1Co 6:6; 7:12,13,14; 10:27; 14:22, 23 24; 2Co 6:14 15). For example, Paul commanded the believers at Corinth...

Do not be bound together with **unbelievers**; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? (2Co 6:14, 15+)

Henry Morris: Paul is here using a metaphor based on Deuteronomy 22:10 and Leviticus 19:19, which forbade plowing with an ox and ass yoked together or attempting to interbreed animals of different kinds. The clear inference is that believers and unbelievers are so different in character and interests (as well as ultimate destiny) that they should never be "yoked" together in situations requiring strong agreement of attitudes and goals (marriage, churches, business partnerships, lodges or other organizations with religious overtones). The prohibition is not intended to require complete repudiation of all secular or charitable organizations (1Co 5:10) or friendships. When one's Christian faith is in jeopardy, or his Christian conduct and influence is endangered, then such connections should be severed. One can witness to unbelievers without partaking of their beliefs or sinful behavior. ([Defender's Study Bible online](#))

Jesus used **apistos** even to describe the weak faith that characterized His very own disciples (as indicated by the **context** = Mt 17:20, eg see example of their weak faith = Mt 15:33) albeit to a lesser extent than Israel as a nation who for the most part continued in their unbelief...

Matthew 17:17 (cp Mk 9:19 Lk 9:41) And Jesus answered and said, "You **unbelieving** and perverted (twisted and distorted throughout) generation (recalling Moses' words to Israel Dt 32:5, 20), how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me (Mt 17:14-16)."

Jesus alludes to the ultimate dreadful destiny and destruction of unbelievers...

Luke 12:46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces (Figurative description of the severity of the final judgment of unbelievers! eg Lk 13:27, 28, Mt 24:51), and assign him a place (The final destination of unbelievers = [Gehenna](#) not [Hades/Sheol](#) = [Lake of Fire](#) - see also the related discussion of the Second Death in chart on [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#)) with the unbelievers.

Jesus used **apistos** in addressing His disciple Thomas...

John 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."

Writing to Titus **Paul** used **apistos** to describe those who profess to know Christ but are unregenerate and detestable...

To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled (miaino = spiritually corrupted and tainted ~"dyed with another color", perfect tense = their persistent state) and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled (same verb again in perfect tense = their persistent state). They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable (they "stink") and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed. (Titus 1:15+, Titus 1:16+)

G Campbell Morgan said that "The god of this world is able only to blind the minds of the unbelieving...Why has he had power to

blind them? Because of unbelief. The whole teaching of the letter to the Hebrews has dealt with that. The one sin that will bring men ultimately to perdition is the sin of unbelief, unbelief as refusal of Christ, refusal of the Gospel, refusal to accept what God is offering to them. To put it quite bluntly, if anyone goes down to perdition, why will they go? Because of their sins? No, but because of their sin, the sin of rejection of Jesus Christ. "If our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing." Who are they? Those who refuse that Gospel, blinded by the god of this age, blinded because of unbelief. Refusal to believe is the secret and reason of the blindness that happens to men. Oh, it does not matter people are told, what we believe. Believe me, it does matter. It matters very much what we believe and whether we believe at all. That is the whole picture here. ([Commentary on 2 Corinthians - go to page 221](#))

I like **Guzik's** point that "Satan can only blind those who do not believe. If you are tired of having your mind blinded by the god of this age, then put your trust on who Jesus is and what He has done for you! Then Satan can't blind you anymore!" ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

Kent Hughes has an **encouraging illustration** of Guzik's point "Recently I heard a member of my congregation tell how she had repeatedly explained the gospel to another woman who simply did not get it, though she apparently wanted to. So finally she said to the woman, "You have a veil over your heart. And you need to pray that God will remove it." A few weeks later the woman called, elated, as she explained that she had gone to bed the night before perplexed, but when she awoke that morning everything was clear. The veil was gone forever. Nothing had been wrong with the gospel. The gospel had been veiled to the woman because it was veiled in her. The veil was in her heart and mind, not over the gospel. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

Color Blind - The famous agnostic Thomas Huxley was once lovingly confronted by a very sincere Christian. This believer stressed to Huxley that he was not in any way impugning Huxley's sincerity. Nevertheless, might it not be possible that mentally the great scientist was color blind? That is, some people cannot see traces of green where other people cannot help but see it. Could it be that this was Huxley's problem—that he was simply blind to truth that was quite evident to others? Huxley, being a man of integrity, admitted that this was possible, and added that if it were, he himself, of course, could not know or recognize it.

SO THAT THEY MIGHT NOT SEE THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD:
eis to me augasai (AAN) ton photismon tou euaggeliou tes doxes tou Christou, os estin (3SPA) eikon tou theou:

- **That they might not:** 2Co 4:6+ 2Co 3:8,9,11+, 2Co 3:18+ Jn 8:12 12:35 Ac 26:18 Col 1:27 1Ti 1:11 Titus 2:13
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL: THE GLORY OF CHRIST

John Piper writes that "This is one of the most remarkable descriptions of the Gospel in the whole Bible. There is nothing else quite like it. It defines the Gospel as "the Gospel of the glory of Christ." And it says that this Gospel of Christ's glory emits, as it were, a "light"—"the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ." And it says that Satan does not want us to "see" this light. Seeing "the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ" is what liberates people from his power. (I highly recommend that you take time to read chapter 4 of Dr Piper's online book [God Is the Gospel- go to page 54 in the Pdf to begin Chapter 4](#))

Barclay gives a straightforward rendering the Gospel is "the good news which tells of the glory of Christ in Whom we can see God." ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

Ray Stedman - So what hope is there that anybody who has been blinded by the devil will ever believe the good news? It looks hopeless, doesn't it? If a veil lies over their minds, and if, as we have already seen in the previous passage, only when someone turns to the Lord is the veil removed -- yet, in order to turn, men must see the glory of Christ that the veil obscures -- what hope is there? It is very evident from this that men cannot remove the veil themselves. Only Christ can take it away. How then can men be saved? That is the question Paul is facing.

So that they might not see - Figurative use of "**see**". Refers to inability to **see** spiritual truths (cp 1Co 2:14). Their inability to **see** is a divine judgment given to them because they refused to believe. God in a sense turned them over to Satan who was given the power to blind their spiritual vision. This is a horrible consequence of willful, intransigent (unwilling to change one's views, obstinately maintaining an attitude of) unbelief.

When even brilliant intellectuals are unable to understand and accept the easy-to-understand gospel of Christ (that even a child can comprehend - Mt 18:2, 3 Mk 10:14, 15 Lk 18:16, 17 ~ all speak of the the unquestioning trust of a little child), especially His works of creation and redemption, it is because their spiritual eyes (their mind, their heart) have been blinded and they are unable to behold **the glory of Christ** in the radiant **light of the Gospel**. But we can (and should) always intercede with our Father for their souls

asking Him to send His Spirit "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18) (See Pastor Hughes' encouraging example)

John Calvin said that...the blindness of unbelievers in no way detracts from the clearness of the Gospel, for the sun is no less resplendent because the blind do not perceive it. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

See (826) (**augazo** from **auge** = dawn [in Ac 20:11]) transitively means to see distinctly, to discern, to view in the clearest light and then to understand. Intransitively **augazo** means to shine forth (Lev 13:24, 25, 26, Lv 14:56 24:25). **Augazo** was used by Euripides of the sun meaning to beam upon or to illumine (One could imagine a play on words here with the Son beaming upon, illumining receptive souls). **Hodge** observes that **augazo** "signifies the brightness emitted by a radiant body." **TDNT** says...means a. "to shine forth," b. "to illuminate," and c. "to see." In 2 Cor. 4:4 b. is impossible, and while older translations (See **KJV** in list of translations above) and variants favor a., the parallel in 2Co 3:13 strongly supports c. ("*that they should not see*"). **Augazo** - Only here in the NT. Seven times in seven verses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) - Lev 13:24, 25, 26 28, 38, 39; 14:56

The light (5462) (**photismos** from **photizo** from **phos** = light <> from **phao** = to shine) the giving of light, illumination in the physical sense. Figuratively, it describes an enlightenment, something made fully known by revealing clearly and in detail, in this passage referring to that which has been revealed as true -- the spiritual illumination in the Gospel. In 2Co 4:6+ **photismos** describes the bringing to light or a revealing (revelation).

Photismos - Only 2x in NT - 2Co 4:4,6. Six times in 6 verses in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)** - Job 3:9; Ps 27:1; 44:3; 78:14; 90:8; 139:11.

Psalm 27:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my **light** (Lxx = **photismos**) and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?

Spurgeon: Here is personal interest, "my light," "my salvation;" the soul is assured of it, and therefore, declaring it boldly. "**My light**;" -- into the soul at the new birth divine light is poured as the precursor of salvation; where there is not enough light to see our own darkness and to long for the Lord Jesus, there is no evidence of salvation. Salvation finds us in the dark, but it does not leave us there; it gives light to those who sit in the valley of the shadow of death. After conversion our God is our Joy, Comfort, Guide, Teacher, and in every sense our Light;

He is light within,
light around,
light reflected from us,
and light to be revealed to us.

Note, it is not said merely that the Lord gives light, but that He "is" light; nor that He gives salvation, but that He is salvation; he, then, who by faith has laid hold upon God has all covenant blessings in His possession.

Psalm 44:3 For by their own sword they did not possess the land, And their own arm did not save them, But Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence, For You favored them.

Psalm 78:14 Then He led them with the cloud by day And all the night with a **light** (Lxx = **photismos**) of fire.

Comment: It is interesting to see **photismos** used to describe the **pillar of fire** which was associated with the presence of the **Angel of the LORD**, Who most observers agree was a preincarnate manifestation of Christ (Ex 13:21, Ex 14:19, Ex 14:19NLT).

Psalm 90:8 You have placed our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your presence.

The light of the Gospel - The Gospel has **inherent power** (Col 1:5, 6 = the Gospel is likened to a "*supernatural seed*" [cp 1Pe 1:23] which is has the power to be "constantly bearing fruit") which brings supernatural spiritual **light** to liberate those entrapped in the kingdom of spiritual darkness.

(The Gospel has the power) **to open their eyes** so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18, cp Isa 29:18 35:5 Isa 42:6,7)

The LORD (**Jehovah**) opens (Lxx translates with "sophoo" in the present tense = Jehovah continually makes wise, gives wisdom to) the eyes of the **blind** (Lxx = **tuphlos/typhlos**); The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous (Ps 146:8-[+](#))

Spurgeon comments: Jesus did this very frequently, and hereby proved himself to be Jehovah (See **Jehovah = Jesus**). He who made the eye can open it, and when He does so it is to His glory. How often is the mental eye closed in moral night! And who can remove this dreary effect of the fall but the Almighty God. This miracle of grace He has performed in myriads of cases, and it is in each case a theme for loftiest praise. Spiritual blindness, its curse, cause, and cure.

The Lord raises them that are bowed down. This also Jesus did literally, thus doing the work peculiar to God. Jehovah consoles the bereaved, cheers the defeated, solaces the despondent, comforts the despairing. Let those who are bowed to the ground appeal to him, and he will speedily upraise them.

William Law: Precious lessons are learned from contemplating God's gracious dealings. His people are born in the prison-house of Satan. God removes the shackles; they go forth free. **They are** (spiritually) **blind by nature**. He opens their eyes to see all the wonders of redeeming love. Heavy burdens often oppress them. He enables them to lay aside every weight so as to run with patience the heavenward road. He delights to cheer them with manifestations of His love. They are strangers and pilgrims in an enemy's land. He is their constant guardian. In family destitution He brings relief. But just wrath burns fiercely against His adversaries forever and forever. God shall reign inhabiting the praises of His people. Bless the Lord, O our souls. Amen.

F B Meyer: The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.--What a true portraiture is this of the ministry of Christ through the ages (Luke 4:18; see also John 9:1-33). Mark these present tenses! This is His unceasing work. Victor Immanuel--Emancipator!

Charles Simeon: To the blind and willing slaves of sin—[The world at large are in bondage to their lusts, and to that wicked one (Satan) who leads them captive at his will; and they are shut up under a sentence of condemnation for their numberless violations of the law of God (Ga 3:23).

**Yet, so blind are they to their real state,
that they cannot see, and will not believe it.**

Their cunning adversary has undertaken to be their guide, but has led them into the heart of the enemies' country, and, if mercy does not interpose, into the very jaws of (everlasting) destruction (cp 2 Kings 6:18 19 20 21). But the Lord Jesus is not an unconcerned Spectator of their misery: He is ready to weep over them as over the murderous Jerusalem: and even while they reject Him, He "would gladly gather them, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings." *(Mt 23:37) He would give them an eye-salve, whereby they should be enabled to see clearly (see Rev 3:18-[19](#)): He would cause their chains to fall off (Lk 4:18), and would say to them, go forth, and show yourselves (Is 49:9 with Ac 5:18, 19, 20 cp Lk 17:14): yea, so desirous is He to exercise mercy towards them, that nothing but a determined rejection of His grace can involve them in final ruin. (Read his full sermon [The Extent of Christ's Compassion on Ps 146:7,8](#))

(In Col 1:9, 10, 11 Paul is praying for the saints at Colossae) giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified (hikanoo - the moment we believed in Christ) us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (~"the kingdom of light"). For (explaining what happened when we first believed and were set free from kingdom of darkness ruled by Satan) He delivered (rhuomai - rescued us from danger of perishing - cp 2Co 4:3) us from the **domain** (**exousia** ~ the right and the might) of darkness (and from the power of the ruler of this kingdom!), and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (the "kingdom of light") (Col 1:12, 13)

(Jesus' reading Isa 61:1 in the synagogue declared He was the fulfillment) 18 "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND **RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND**, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN (Lk 4:18)

(Jesus post-resurrection appearance with His disciples) Then **He opened their minds** to understand (spiritually "see") the Scriptures (Lk 24:45, cp Lk 24:44)

And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that **those who do not see** (spiritually blind) may see; and that those who see may become blind." (Jn 9:39)

Comment: While Jesus first coming was not specifically for the purpose of judgment (Read Jn 3:17), it inevitably did result in judgment for all who rejected Him. See Mk 4:12 and Is 6:9)

Glory ([1391](#)) (**doxa** from **dokeo** = to think) speaks of a manifestation of God's true nature, presence, or likeness. In simple terms **doxa** means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something and thus **the glory of**

Christ expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is. To be where He is will be glory.

The glory of Christ - How can one even comment on such an infinite, transcendent truth! For the majority of His earthly life he veiled His glory, except that His Transfiguration was a "preview of coming attractions."

Joseph Beet - Of the invisible Father the Son is a visible manifestation and outshining, visible once on earth, though veiled in human flesh, and visible now to those who surround His throne. We know, in part, what God is because we have seen Christ reflected in the gospel mirror. That Christ is the image of God, reveals the greatness of His glory and of the light which proceeds from the Gospel in which His glory is reflected, and the infinite loss of those whose blinded thoughts cannot see this glorious light. ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

MacArthur comments that "The privilege of seeing God's glory revealed in Christ is granted only to those to whom God in His mercy grants spiritual sight." ([2Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

The apostle **John** wrote of **the glory of Christ**...

And the Word (Jn 1:1+) became flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld **His glory**, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:14+)

When did **John, Peter and James** behold **the glory of Christ**? **Matthew** records that...

And He was transfigured before them (Mt 17:1); and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. (Mt 17:2, Mk 9:2, 3, Lk 9:28)

Years later **Peter** testified to having seen having witnessed **the glory of Christ**...

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. (2Pe 1:14+)

In his letter to Titus **Paul** pictures saints now as exhibiting a "lifestyle of looking", of looking with anticipation and expectation for the appearing of **the glory of Christ** and as a consequence living in the light of God's sure promised of this future event (See Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming).

(Those who have been saved by grace [Titus 2:11+] and are daily being instructed by grace [Titus 2:12+] are continually [present tense]) looking (see *prosdechomai*) for the **Blessed Hope** and the appearing of **the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus** (Titus 2:13+)

One day future all men will see **the glory of Christ**...

Therefore (because of His perfect obedience - Php 2:7, 8+) also God highly exalted Him (see Jn 17:4, 5 - "**glorify** Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the **glory** which I had with Thee before the world was"), and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to **the glory of God** the Father. (Php 2:9, 10, 11+)

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING (in **glory** - see below) WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. (Rev 1:7+)

But immediately after the **tribulation** (referring to the last 3.5 years = Great Tribulation) of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the **Son of Man** (Note = No need to speculate! "He" Himself is the sign!) will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and **great glory**. (Mt 24:29, 30)

But when the Son of Man comes in His **glory**, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on **His glorious throne** (On the earth - when He sets up His Millennial Kingdom) (Mt 25:31)

And throughout eternity we will join the chorus with all the saints and angels to praise Him for **His great glory**...

saying with a loud voice "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and **glory** and blessing." And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and **glory** and dominion forever and ever." (Re 5:12+, Re 5:13+)

Our "[Hallelujah Chorus](#)" will testify to the **glory of Christ**...

After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and **glory** and power belong to our God (Rev 19:1⁺, cp Re 19:6⁺, Re 19:7⁺)

Indeed His **glory** shall be our Light forever...

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the **glory** of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. (Re 21:23⁺)

A. T. Robertson has this description of **the glory of Christ**...

Many persons had looked on the face of Jesus while in the flesh who did not understand Him. There was beyond doubt a wondrous fascination in the face of Jesus that no artist has succeeded in putting upon canvas. The pictures of Jesus are either too effeminate or too crude. No face has ever so haunted and baffled the greatest artists. This face was really human but free from the taint of sin and disease. No specter of the past looked through those eyes, no shadows of forbidden secrets flitted past. Pity, unutterable compassion looked out of the depths of purity and unsullied strength. Untarnished truth looked out on a world of lies. The noblest impulses of man met the shock of hate and envy. The clear light of heaven's love gazed longingly at the suffering and the sinning. Those eyes could flash with terrific power upon hypocrites who used the livery of heaven to serve the devil in. Before His wrath, men slunk away like cowed beasts guilty and condemned. But the penitent and the contrite saw a new hope as they looked in the face of Jesus. There were some who could never forget the thrill of joy which came to their hearts as they gazed into that face. At moments they could be amazed at the struggling emotions in His countenance. There were three who beheld His majestic glory on the mount. But not all men could see all this in the face of Jesus. The rabbis were angered to desperation as they saw that calm and powerful face. Its very innocence enraged them (**The Glory of the Ministry**)

George Matheson who himself was blind wrote these words about Paul's vision of **the glory of Christ**...

Remember the Christ whom Paul first saw was the Christ of heaven. He never gazed upon the man of Galilee. His earliest vision was the vision of a Jesus glorified, not on the road to the cross did Christ meet him. He came to him panoplied in heavenly splendor. What his inner eye beheld was the Christ of the future, a Christ of majesty, a Christ of power, a Christ who came clothed in the lightning and wreathed in the conqueror's robe. That was the first Christ Paul's soul saw. It is wonderful that it should have been the first Christian image in his writings.

JESUS THE IMAGE OF GOD: THE RADIANCE & EXACT REPRESENTATION

Image (1504)(**eikon**) expresses two ideas (1) **likeness**, as in the image on a coin or the reflection in a mirror and (2) **manifestation** with the sense that God is fully revealed in Jesus. **Eikon** does not denote mere likeness or resemblance. **Eikon** conveys the meaning that Christ is whatever God is--spiritual, omnipotent, omniscient, holy--all the attributes of the eternal God. The Lord Jesus is **the image of God** in the sense that "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*" (John 14:9).

Earlier **Jesus** had emphasized His **intrinsic unity** with His Father declaring

"I and the Father are one." (Jn 10:30)

Henry Morris rightly says that: Such a claim, if not that of a madman (and this is unthinkable in view of the age-long influence of the incomparable teachings of Jesus), can only be understood in terms of the doctrine of the "hypostatic union"--the indissoluble union of eternal God and perfect Man in the person of Jesus Christ. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

The writer of **Hebrews** says that **Christ**...

is the **radiance** (see comment below) of His (the Father's) glory and the exact representation of His nature (hupostasis), and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb 1:3)

Comment: It is notable that the word radiance is related to the same word Paul used above for "see" (**augazo**). Thus radiance is **apaugasma** (from **apaugázo** = emit light or splendor in turn derived from **apó**

= from + **augazo** = shine) and literally means "off-flashing" and then the brightness beamed forth which describes the effulgence (from Latin *effulgere* = to shine forth and thus radiant splendor or brilliance emanating from an original light body), splendor or light emitted or issuing from a luminous body. It is not preceded by the definite article, which makes the term highly descriptive of character or nature.

Exact representation is the Greek word **charakter** (derived from **charasso** = to engrave and source of our English word *character* which describes one of the attributes or features that make up and distinguish an individual) was used in classical Greek of an engraver who mints coins or an engraving tool, a die, a stamp, a branding iron, a mark engraved, an impress or a stamp on coins and seals. Later it came to mean the impression itself, usually engraved, cut in, or stamped on in the form of a character, a letter, a mark or a sign. This impression or mark with its particular features was considered to be the exact representation of the object whose image it bore. As a figure of speech **charakter** described a distinctive mark "impressed" on a person, by which he is distinguished from others. It is thus a characteristic of that person and was a Greek idiom for a person's features. The author is saying that whatever the Divine essence is, Jesus is the perfect expression and thus affirms the deity of Jesus Christ and alludes to the the plurality of God. Jesus is distinct from God the Father and yet identical with Him. **Charakter** conveys the idea of exact correspondence as when Jesus said that "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9) He who had seen Jesus had seen the Father because **Jesus** is the **exact representation**, the exact expression of the Father's attributes, nature, etc so that all that God is, Jesus is, and yet two distinct Persons of the Godhood. Jesus is all that God is, not has been given what He is! God hasn't given Jesus something. He already is!

Paul explains that

And He is the **image (eikon)** of the invisible God, the first-born (pre-eminent) of all creation. (Col 1:15)

Henry Morris comments that: This is a clear affirmation of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ. Christ is whatever God is--spiritual, omnipotent, omniscient, holy--all the attributes of the eternal God. The word image (Greek *eikon*) conveys this meaning. Jesus Christ represents--and indeed He is--"very God of very God." Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," (John 14:9). God in His essence is invisible (John 1:18), but we see all His attributes in Christ. Christ is "**the firstborn,**" **not in the sense that He ever came into existence from a prior condition of non-existence** (Like the **Jehovah's Witnesses** claim this passage teaches - but they ignore the following **context** = He is the Creator of ALL things Col 1:16), but rather as eternally proceeding from the Father, the only begotten Son, always manifesting the Father. This truth can be called the doctrine of eternal generation. He is from eternity to eternity in relation to the Father as a Son. Some are sons of God by creation (angels--Job 1:6), and we can become sons of God by adoption (Ro 8:14,15), but He is the Son by eternal generation (or eternal relation), the only-begotten of the Father. He also has the right of inheritance of the firstborn (Hebrews 1:2) and is "the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18). ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) used the image of God as an inspiration to evangelism in her hymn ["Rescue the Perishing"](#)

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.
Rescue the perishing, care for the dying;
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.