

## **Introduction: You can't see God**

- Problem of his invisibility...
  - ref David Robertson's "adversaries" amongst contemporary atheism...
- **But as Christian believers we are convinced that there are two visible manifestations of the invisible God**
  - first, past, the beginning of the Christian era
  - second, future, the climax of the Christian era
- Both are referred to in our passage tonight, and set the context for the rest of Paul's teaching
  
- Epiphany: visible appearing of something previously invisibly (but already existing)
  - eg dawn (sun hidden now seen), ambushing soldiers coming out of hiding, etc
- 11 times in NT, once for that classic use:
  - in Acts where the sun and stars made no "epiphany"/appearing while Paul was on the boat running before the storm - cloud cover was too complete... They were there, Paul and his shipmates just couldn't see them. (**Acts 27:20**)
  
- The the other 10 are all to do with the appearing of Jesus:
  - 4x in reference to Jesus first coming
  - 6x in reference to his second coming
  - and two of the references are in Titus 2!
  - and **both** of these refer to our **salvation (vs.11 & 13)**
- They are however also distinct:
  - the first is an appearance of grace
  - the second is an appearance of glory

## **The Epiphany of grace (v.11)**

- Expound grace
  - didn't come into existence when Jesus came into the world
  - but did then appear visibly, shone brightly in his humble birth, in his life and ministry and supremely in his death and resurrection
  - full of grace and truth
  - an epiphany of his saving grace, which appeared for the purpose of salvation
  
- What does grace teach us?
  - to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions
  - to say yes to a life of self-control, uprightness, godliness
  - and that in this present age... now, in daily life

## **The Epiphany of glory (v.13)**

- It's Jesus alone who returns (Jesus is God and Jesus is Saviour)
  - its the same person who will appear who did appear
  - the one of the cross, who saved us and who cleanses us from all wickedness to live with him forever, in his holiness
  
- We are living between these two:
  - John Stott has some wonderful phrases for this...
  - we are between kingdom come and kingdom coming...
  - we are between kingdom inaugurated and kingdom consummated
  - we are between Jesus' first and Jesus' second comings
  - we are between the already and the not yet of salvation
- We are to face both ways at the once: back to Christ's life, and forward to his return
  - note resonance with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians about the Lord's Supper...  
*- For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Cor 11:26)*

## A Life of grace and glory (v.12, 14, 15)

- Critics of Christians might at this point be scornful:
  - can't you live today? All you are concerned with is the distant past and the remote future...
  - but what Paul does is, if you like, draw a line between the two epiphanies, the two appearances, and say "in-between, live connected to the two... live like this..."
- Like the swimming pool centre line, or the markers in the Swallows and Amazons that guide you into harbour...
- Note **grace** doesn't teach us to be free **to** sin!
  - that would be anchored in the first epiphany, but not the second
- Neither does **glory** teach us to be **set on victory** and the triumph of his second coming only:
  - that would be to be anchored only to the second epiphany, not the first
- Rather we are to live between the two, joined to both, taking our bearing from them together...