

Colossians 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Analysis

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Paul shifts from present to future, completing the eschatological picture. Christ is described as "our life" (hē zōē hēmōn, ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν)—not merely life-giver but life itself. Christian existence is Christ living in believers (Galatians 2:20); He is not supplement to our life but constitutes it entirely.

"Shall appear" (phanerōthē, φανερωθῇ) anticipates the Second Coming when Christ's glory, currently veiled to unbelieving world, will be universally manifest. "Then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (tote kai hymeis syn autō phanerōthēsethe en doxē, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ) promises believers' glorification. Currently hidden, believers' true state will be revealed publicly when Christ returns, sharing His glory visibly and eternally.

Historical Context

Early Christianity's hope centered on Christ's return (Maranatha, "Come, Lord"). This expectation sustained persecuted believers, knowing their suffering was temporary while coming glory was eternal. The doctrine answered both Greek philosophy's escape-from-matter scheme and Jewish expectation of earthly kingdom by promising bodily resurrection into glorified existence when Christ returns visibly to establish His eternal kingdom.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing Christ as your life affect daily identity, purpose, and priorities?
2. Does Christ's return remain vivid hope shaping present conduct, or has it become distant theological abstraction?
3. How should the promise of appearing with Christ in glory affect your response to present shame, suffering, or obscurity?

Interlinear Text

ὅταν	ὁ	Χριστὸς	φανερωθήσεσθε	ἡ	ζωὴ	ἡμῶν	τότε
When	G3588	Christ	appear	G3588	life	who is our	then
G3752		G5547	G5319		G2222	G2257	G5119

καὶ	ὕμεῖς	σὺν	αὐτῷ	φανερωθήσεσθε	ἐν	δόξῃ
also	ye	with	him	appear	in	glory
G2532	G5210	G4862	G846	G5319	G1722	G1391

Additional Cross-References

John 11:25 (Parallel theme): Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

1 John 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Galatians 2:20 (References Christ): I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

1 Peter 1:13 (References Christ): Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

John 17:24 (Glory): Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Philippians 3:21 (Glory): Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Hebrews 9:28 (References Christ): So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

1 John 2:28 (Parallel theme): And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

1 Peter 5:4 (Glory): And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Revelation 22:14 (Parallel theme): Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.