



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-18

LESSON: GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT — May 1, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

(2nd)3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?— Paul had just declared in 1Cor.2:17 that he did not corrupt the Word of God as many do, and that his ministry was based upon a true call of God. He knew that those who opposed him were going to jump on his claim and again accuse him of exalting himself; accuse him of acting like he was the messenger of God who had a corner on the truth. Therefore, Paul begins to head off and prevent the accusation. He asks *"Do we begin again to commend ourselves?"* Now, what credentials does he have that should cause people to listen to him and his claims? There is one basic truth: The minister's credentials are not always letters of commendation or letters of recommendation, for some of them were not always accurate or truthful at that time. Some in the Corinthian church had written letters and used these letters of reference to recommend themselves to the church. Therefore, a person is not really known until he has proven himself on some field of ministry or in some position. Now days, we call it probation. Paul goes straight to the jugular. His credentials were far more excellent than letters.

(2nd)3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:— Paul gives the first credential of the minister: that the Corinthian believers were written upon his heart. Anyone who knew him could see that he deeply cared for the Corinthian church. He always prayed for them, expressed love and concern for them, cherished them. They were dear to him, so dear that he could actually say that they were written in his heart. That's a deep caring. That's just how Jesus felt about us! The lives of the believers whom Paul and his companions had converted were enough of a recommendation. A minister's greatest commendation is the changed lives of people. Their testimony of how they were reached; how they have grown was his letter of commendation, and their testimony before the world was far more important than a letter of commendation.

(2nd)3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. The second credential of the minister: that the lives are written by Christ through the minister. This means the minister is not the one who converts and changes the lives of people.

1. It is Christ and Christ alone who converts and grows the people.
 - a. The lives of the believers are said to be the epistle (letter) of Christ. Christ is the author of the believer's life, the author of his conversion and his righteousness. He is the author and finisher of our faith.
 - b. The lives of believers are not written with ink which men use, but with the Spirit of the living God. Christ used the Spirit of God when He wishes to communicate a message to men.
 - i. He does not write the message upon tables of stone as He did when He gave the commandments to Moses.
 - ii. He writes upon the fleshy tables of the heart. He puts His message upon the hearts of men



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which causes men to live changed lives.

2. It is the minister who ministers to the lives of believers. Paul is saying that Christ creates the letter, the lives of believers, and the minister looks after and cares for it.

The greatest commendation that a minister can have is not letters of recommendation, but...

- Christ written in the lives of people
- The Spirit of the living God written in the conduct and behavior of people
- The law of God written upon the hearts of people.

(2nd)3:4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:— The third credential of the minister is the minister being qualified and made fit by God. The word "God-ward" means that the minister serves God and he serves before God or toward God. He is not only qualified and made fit by God; he is responsible to God for how he ministers.

1. Paul's trust and confidence is toward God through Christ. Paul's boasting was not in himself. The credit for all Paul's accomplishments goes to Christ.

(2nd)3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;— Paul was not sufficient for the ministry, not in and of himself. He was made fit for the ministry through Christ.

2. Paul's only sufficiency was of God. He had no power to change the heart of a person—to give life to a person—to give the assurance and security of God's presence and care to a person—to give the Spirit of God to a person—to write the law of God in the heart of a person. The gift of life and the power to give life is of God and God alone. My God! Chew on that!

(2nd)3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. The word "testament" is better translated covenant. It means an agreement made between two or more people; a special relationship set up and established between persons.

- In the Old Testament, God had set up an Old Covenant between Himself and man which is here called the "Covenant of the Letter." The Old Testament Law was written on tablets of stone. The old agreement required the people to obey God's laws. People were not strong enough to do this. The letter of the law (written law) causes death (condemns the soul), but the Spirit gives life.
- Since Christ, God has set up a New Covenant with man. The New Testament Law is written in our hearts. Paul had already told them in verse 2 that the epistle is written in their hearts. And it's known and read by all men. ¹Paul was now God's servant of the new agreement. Jesus made this new agreement between God and the people when he died for us. So, we are not just able to follow on our own of what the law says, but we depend upon the Spirit. The Spirit helps people to obey God's laws.

LESSON: I. GLORY HIDDEN 2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-11

(2nd)3:7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:— The ministry which brought glory came with death. How can the law which kills and ministers death be said to be glorious?

- The law was glorious in that it was given to Moses by God Himself—face to face. And being in the presence of God caused Moses' face to shine with the glory of God. The glory upon Moses' face was so bright, the people could not continually look upon him (Exo.34:30).

¹ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/2corinthians-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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- The law was glorious in that it reveals the nature of God Himself, that He is holy and righteous and must be approached in holiness and righteousness.
- The law was glorious in that it pointed men to their desperate need for salvation. It showed men that they were sinners and short of God's glory and desperately needed a Savior.

And then it says ... **for the glory of his countenance which glory was to be done away:**— What Paul is saying is that the glory of God which was upon Moses' face was a symbol of God upon the Old Covenant. However, the glory of God upon the Old Covenant was passing away, for it was meant to be only a temporary arrangement between God and man, for God would establish His New Covenant through His Son Jesus Christ.

(2nd)3:8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?— The above verse stated that the ministration of death...was glorious, then the thought provoking question is asked: *"How shall the ministration of the spirit be more glorious."* It's like receiving an upgrade that you didn't think you needed.

- The Old Covenant ministration was written on stone (outward), now the ministration of the Spirit is written in the heart (inward).
- The Old Covenant ministration was temporary (what's seen), the ministration of the Spirit is eternal (the unseen).
- The Old Covenant ministration leaned toward death, the ministration of the Spirit leans toward life.

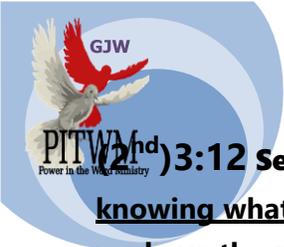
If the Old Covenant that Moses received and the glory was shown upon his face (outward appearance), how much shall the ministration of the Spirit (the New Covenant) be made glorious in the inward man? The answer is obvious—the ministry of the Spirit is to give life to men and the power to live life. In fact, life is eternally more glorious than death.

(2nd)3:9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. *Romans 8:1-2* comes to mind: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The New Covenant, the Spirit of God imparted righteousness. Christ took our unrighteousness and gave us His righteousness, the very nature of God. The Old could not do that. It could save. It kept them in bondage while ministering death, but the New exceeds gloriously through Christ bringing life.

(2nd)3:10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. Therefore the glory of the New Covenant exceeds the Old Covenant so much that by comparison the Old Covenant has no glory at all. The New Covenant far excels the Old Covenant because God sent His only begotten Son! His very own glorious presence came down to save us through Christ which hides any glory that the Old Covenant once had!

(2nd)3:11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. The Old Covenant or law faded away, the New Covenant remains and is permanent. That's why there is no need for another upgrade. Its glory and function will never be superseded! No need for anymore changes. There will be no new relationship set up between man and God, no new way for man to become related to God. The final covenant between God and man has been set and established forever. If a man is ever to have a relationship with God, he must allow God's Spirit to enter his heart and life. There is no other way to live with God. If a man wishes to live forever with God, he must invite God's Spirit into his life and it will be glorious.





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II. GLORY REVEALED 2 CORINTHIANS 3:12-18

(2nd)3:12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:— Our hope is knowing what Christ has done on the cross for us; It's His finished work, and the Spirit of God in us that we have the ministration of the Spirit and the ministration of Righteousness within us operating which is permanent. With such hope we can't help but speak with great plainness about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Old Covenant spoke with veiled meaning; the New Covenant speaks with plain (outspoken, clear, and bold) meaning. The reason we can proclaim it so clearly and boldly is because the New Covenant is given by the Spirit in a clear and unveiled message.

(2nd)3:13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:— The veiled meaning is illustrated by Moses. When the people saw the glory of God shining in the face of Moses, He had to put a veil upon his face. Why? – Because the people withdrew from the brightness of the glory of God. Sin could not stand in God's presence. They also were not to see the glory fade away from Moses' face. Man looks at the law and sees that he is to obey it if he wishes to please God. Therefore, man works and works to keep the law believing all the time that he is earning the favor and acceptance of God. This is simply not God's way. But, the Law had to fade away to give way to the fulfillment of the Law. Christ is the fulfillment of that Law. So, even as Moses veiled the brightness of the glory, it also concealed the old order which was passing away.

(2nd)3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. This shows that until God allows you to see a thing, your mind will be blinded from seeing it. The glory and meaning of the law are veiled from Man's sight; he is unable...

- To see the real meaning of the law.
- To see that the law was given to reveal the nature of God's glory and perfection.
- To see that man comes short of the glory and perfection of God.
- To see that man cannot keep the law, not perfectly.
- To see that the law was given to show man his desperate need for a Savior.

(2nd)3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Even today when Moses is read the Old Testament, those who still follow the law are blinded to the truth. The veil still remains over their hearts, covering the true glory of God, and that lets us know that there is a need for a Savior— The New Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives. It is Christ and Christ alone who has removed and can still remove the veil. To God be the glory! Those in your household; those in the nations; those incarcerated.

(2nd)3:16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. The veil of the Old Covenant is removed only when a person turns to the Lord. When a person truly turns to Jesus Christ, he is shown how Jesus Christ is the glory of God and the end, the purpose, and fulfillment of the law. The veil is removed from the law, and he understands the marvelous glory of God. Galatians 3:24-25 says "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

(2nd)3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The New Covenant brings liberty through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord is identified as the Spirit; one with God.





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The Lord Himself was actually the One who secured salvation and liberty for man, but it is the Spirit who actively involved in revealing the truth of salvation and liberty to man. "...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

- Christ frees the believer from the dominion of sin.
- Christ frees the believer from the law.
- Christ frees the believer from the bondage of fear.
- Christ frees the believer from the power of Satan, which is the fear of death.
- Christ frees the believer from the bondage or corruption.

(2nd)3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. "We all" refers to believers; those who have turned from sin to Christ—those who had the veil removed from their face—those who stand face to face with the glory of the Lord with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord. As Moses' face reflected God's glory at Mt. Sinai, the face of every believer radiates the glory of Christ for that which was reserved for only the highest under the Old Covenant is made available to all in the New.

- **The open face means that the believer is given the privilege of standing face to face with Christ.** This is the privilege of knowing Christ personally and learning all about Him. There is no veil over the face or eyes of the believer, nothing to keep him from knowing the Lord.
- **The believer is to behold the glory of the Lord.** We behold Christ who is the image of God. When we see Jesus, we see the Father. This means to behold the Godhead and deity of the Lord, the splendor, brilliance, and excellence of His person and Being. The "glory" describe the splendor, holiness, and majesty of God; the manifestation of God's presence. Jesus Christ, the Son of God became Man. Glory came to the earth and paid the supreme and ultimate price for the salvation of man.
- **The believer beholds as in a glass the glory of the Lord.** No man who is only finite and flesh could ever understand the Lord who is infinite Spirit. **The believer only sees and understands the glory of all the Lord as in a glass or a mirror. That is, he only sees a reflection of the Lord, not the full image. Presently, the believer is able to see the Lord only through the Word and the Holy Spirit; in the future, he shall stand face to face with the Lord throughout all eternity. Then he will know the Lord even as the Lord now knows him.**
- **The believer's image will be changed.** For Moses the glory eventually faded away, but **under the New Covenant the believer is changed into the same image from glory to glory.** *1 Corinthians 15:49 says "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."* Ultimately **"...we shall be like Him (Christ): for we shall see Him as He is" 1 John.3:2c.**
 - **The believer is changed / transformed into the image of Christ from glory to glory:**
 - When the believer beholds (grasps, understands, studies, and lays hold of) the glory of the Lord, **the same glory is created in him.**
 - When the believer beholds (grasps, understands, studies, and lays hold of) the glory of the Lord, **the believer progresses and grows from one stage of glory to a higher stage.**

SUMMARY:





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7 Moses wrote the words of the old agreement on pieces of stone. It showed how great and powerful God was. Moses' face shone brightly after God spoke to him. It did not stay bright, but the Israelite people still could not look at Moses' face. The old agreement that brought death was powerful. 8 So the new agreement, which comes from God's Spirit, will show the power of God even more. 9 The old agreement showed people that they were guilty. God's new agreement makes people right with him. So surely the new agreement shows God's power even more than the old one did! 10 The old agreement was great and powerful at one time. But now God's new agreement has come in its place. The great power of the new agreement shows that the old agreement is no longer powerful. 11 The old agreement was powerful, but it came to an end. God's new agreement will continue always. So it surely shows the power of God even more! (3:7-11) EEB.

12 So, because we know all this, we speak God's message bravely. 13 We are not like Moses. His face did not continue to be bright with the light from God. So he covered his face with a cloth. He did not want the Israelite people to see that the light was coming to an end. 14 But those Israelite people could not think properly. Even today, they still do not understand the message of God's old agreement. When they read it, they are like people who have a cloth that covers their minds. It continues like that unless they believe in Christ. Then Christ removes the cloth so that they understand. 15 Even today, when the Israelite people read Moses' books, a cloth still covers their minds. 16 But when a person turns to trust the Lord, then God takes the cloth away. 17 The Lord is the same as the Spirit. And when the Lord's Spirit is with anyone, that person is free. 18 We show the power of the Lord to other people. It is like God has removed a cloth from over our faces. He is changing us so that we become more and more like him. We show how great God is more and more clearly. It is the Lord who does all this, by the work of His Spirit (3:12-18) EEB.