

**Title of Series: “In Defense of the Truth”
 \ II Corinthians**

Theme: “The Unfading Glory of Jesus” #6

Passage: II Corinthians 3:6-18

- **Last Week: “Competency of a Servant” #5**
 - **Authenticity illustrated by changed lives v1-3**
 - **Confidence in God’s call v4-6a**
 - **A life-changing message v6b**

Introduction:

The demands of life are real. Much of our time is spent in an attempt to rebuff those demands, because we feel as though they were placed upon us arbitrarily. As like an outward law, making its demand upon us without feeling or concern of our needs! The result is rebellion against such demands. The pressure from these outside sources diverts attention and kills motivation.

The Apostle Paul understood that his “worth” was not something to be measured by a personal standard; rather his fitness as a person and with is ministry was of God and Him only. (**v5, 6a**). He continues in verse **6**, using the phrase “new testament” while referring back to an “old covenant”, ...not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. **v6b**.

He was referring to the covenant which the LORD promised to his people in **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

He amplifies his ministry and those by his side: the ministry of the Gospel comparing it with the ministry of the Law, which he considers in the person of Moses, by whom the Law was given: against whom he sets Christ the author of the Gospel. Now this comparison is taken from the very substance of the ministry. The Law is as it were a writing in itself, dead, and without efficacy: but the Gospel, and new Covenant, as it were the very power of God itself, in renewing, justifying, and saving men. The Law offers death, accusing all men of unrighteousness: the Gospel offers and gives righteousness and life. The administration of the Law served for a time to the promise: the Gospel remains to the end of the world. Therefore what is the glory of the Law in comparison of the majesty of the Gospel?

In verse six the apostle contrasts the New Covenant with what he refers to as the Old Covenant in **v14**, (ESV) as that which gives life rather than *kills*. In the following verses, he further emphasizes the contrast between “the letter and the Spirit”, the Law and the Gospel, as the basis for his *boldness in ministry*, **v12** (where “hope” signifies “expectation”).

There is no doubt that the Old Covenant, represented by the Law of Moses, was glorious (**v7**). Consider the glory

of the Tabernacle and the Feasts, the garments of the priesthood, and the manifestation of God's glory over the Tabernacle. But its glory was dimmed forever by the offering of Christ on the cross. The noun *doxa*, "glory," occurs **11 times** in our text and the verb *doxazō*, "glorify" occurs twice (**v10**). David Garland notes, "Glory . . . is the key theme of this unit. Paul makes the incredible assertion that his ministry is far more glorious than that of Moses . . . It is this glorious ministry that is the ground for his bold speech . . ." And it should be for ours as well! In **v7-11** Paul contrasts the Law with the Gospel while in **v12-18** he speaks of the consequences of these contrasts, demonstrating in both paragraphs the greater glory of the New Covenant.

Since there are only two ways to approach God—by keeping his Law perfectly or by trusting Christ to save us—these verses are relevant to both those who are being saved and those who are perishing (**2 Corinthians 2:15**).

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE COVENANTS V7-11

A. Three conditional sentences ("if," **v7, 9, 11**) present Paul's argument (lesser to greater).

B. The Old Covenant, "written and engraved on stones," was "the ministry of death" (**v7**) because it was "the ministry of condemnation" (**v9**). *That's why* "the letter kills" (**v6**).

1. As we noted previously, the Law cannot save because it reveals our sin, the wages of which is death, but has no power to remove sin. It *demand*s obedience if one is to live. **Deuteronomy 27:26**, "Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law by observing them."

Galatians 3:10, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'" **James 2:10**, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all."

2. The reason the children of Israel could not look on Moses' face was that he reflected the glory of a holy God, whose Law had been broken. Ref. the context of **Exodus 34:29-35**.

David Garland, "Wearing the veil was . . . Moses' way of *protecting* the stiff-necked people from 'the death-dealing judgment of the glory of God' against sinners that is decreed in the old covenant. . . . The veil expresses God's judgment: God's glory must be veiled because of their sinful state . . . The veil also expresses God's mercy. It makes possible for the glory of God to be brought into the midst of the people through Moses."

Kent Hughes, "His veiling was not . . . to hide the fading glory but . . . to protect Israel."

C. The New Covenant is referred to as “the ministry of the Spirit” (**v8**) and “the ministry of righteousness” (**v9**). *imputed* righteousness—**2 Corinthians 5:21**. Ref. **Romans 4:22-25**. (to pass to one’s account)! - standing of worth! you are significant! approval! security! loved! NO GUILT!

D. The Old Covenant was “passing away” (**v7, 11**), “being brought to an end,” ESV.

E. The New Covenant “remains,” **v11**, Pres. Act. Part. ESV, “is permanent.” Amen!

F. The glory of the Old Covenant fades (**v7**, NASB) in comparison to the glory of the New Covenant. Ref. **v8b, 9b, 10b** and **11b** with **v10a**.

“As the lantern shines at night, but at noonday is overpowered by the sun, so was the glory of Moses overshadowed by Christ.” David Garland, Citing Theodore (5th century).

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVENANTS V12-18

A. God’s glory is veiled by the Old Covenant. As noted, the veiling of Moses’s face was not to keep Israel from seeing his “glow” fade but rather to keep them from dying at the sight of God’s glory! Ref. **Exodus 33:18, 20**, “And he said, ‘Please, show me Your glory.’ . . . But He

said, ‘You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.’”

1. The veil was like the boundary at the foot of Sinai—**Exodus 19:12-13, 16-22**.

2. Sadly, this veiling hardened Israel to the Gospel, **v14-15**. “Blinded” is from *pôroô*, to harden; from *pôros*, “a stone, a callous.” Aorist Passive! Ref. **Romans 11:7**, “What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”

John 12:40, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”

B. The “veil” is only taken away by Christ, **v14b, 16**.

1. “Turns,” Suggests you must turn *from* something. **1 Thessalonians 1:9**, “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”

2. “Is taken away” is Present *Passive*, the work of God!

3. Those who turn to the Lord are no longer enslaved to the Law! “Liberty”, Ref. use in **Galatians 5:1**, ESV, “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

C. In the New Covenant God's glory is being revealed in every Christian, **v18**. Cf. **2 Corinthians 4:6!**

1. The mirror speaks of a reflection of God's glory which we see once the veil has been removed!

a. We still cannot behold God's glory "first-hand" in our present state! Ref. Paul's experience! Ref. John's.

b. This glory is reflected in God's word, in God's works (creation, providence, regeneration), and in his Son, ^{KJV} John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

2. Every Christian is in the process of transformation into the Lord's image! Ref. **v18**, "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

Romans 8:29, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

a. "Are being transformed" is from the Present Passive form of *metamorphoô*, the same word used of the transfiguration of Christ. Ref. its use in **Romans 12:2**, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

b. This transformation into his image is by degree, "from one degree of glory to another," ESV. Progressive sanctification through the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

Our inclusion in the New Covenant is cause for celebration! We look back to what Christ accomplished on our behalf and we look forward to His return in glory. We also look inward to insure that we are walking in a manner worthy of those being transformed from one degree of glory to another. **O what a day it will be when we behold His beauty!**

For those here who are not part of this glorious covenant, you are described by Paul as those who are perishing. Only faith in Christ can save you from the wages of sin!