

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

SECOND CORINTHIANS

✠ II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson # 14

COMMENTARY ON: 3:10-14

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

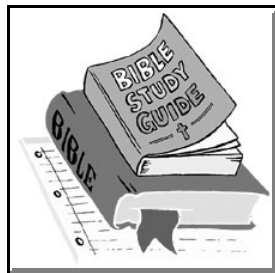
"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

A FADING GLORY

The Holy Spirit moves Paul to elaborate on the transitory nature of the Old Covenant. Although it was from God, and was spiritual, holy, just, and good, it was not intended to be permanent. Its purpose was temporary, and thus so was its glory. In spite of this circumstance, the church has struggled through the centuries with the role of Law in the Divine economy, as revealed in the Old Covenant. Throughout history men have arisen to bind rules and regulations upon Christians that have not been bound upon them by God. The professed church also has a great deal of difficulty dealing with deviate and unacceptable behavior. An understanding of the two covenants will shed no small amount of light on these subjects.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Epistle of Second Corinthians

Lesson Number 14



TRANSLATION LEGEND: AMPLIFIED = Amplified Bible, ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), *ESV=English Stand Version* (2001), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version, KJV=King James Version (1611), LIVING = Living Bible, MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament, NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible 1833, YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862). WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament, WILLIAMS = William's New Testament.

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG=Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

A FADING GLORY

“ 3:10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. ¹¹ For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. ¹² Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 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: ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.” ^{KJV} (2 Cor 3:10-14)

INTRODUCTION

Paul is engaged in spiritual reasoning – **the kind of reasoning that comes from being in the presence of the Lord, and being taught by Him.** He is confirming that once God has given something better, it is wrong to remain under the direction of the lesser. Once God had revealed His Law, and unveiled

something of His Person, it was wrong to look to the heavens for instruction. Nature did, indeed, have a message, but it was inferior to the holy Law of God.

THE DECLARED REALITY

Now God has unveiled even more of Himself, declaring who He is and what

He has purposed. In the Gospel we have a glorious message of a satisfied God who has made full provision for men to become righteous. An Intercessor has been appointed that “*ever liveth*” (Heb 7:25). The foe has been “*destroyed*” (Heb 2:14). Principalities and powers that had enslaved humanity have been “*spoiled*”

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(Col 2:15). The massive debt that had been accumulated by sin has been blotted out by the Lord's Christ (Col 2:14). A righteous way is announced whereby sinners can be "made righteous" (Rom 5:19). The sin of the world has been "taken away" (John 1:29), "put away" (Heb 9:26), and "blotted out" like a "thick cloud" (Isa 44:22).

WHAT GOD IS DOING

Now, in the Person of His Son, the very God whom man had offended quickens sinners, making them alive and placing Him in the heavenly places with the One through whom they have been justified. Having proved man incapable of making himself good, achieving righteousness, or covering a single one of his sins, God has redeemed him from the curse by means of a vicarious sacrifice and a triumphant resurrection. Now, with the account fully settled, He can put His laws into man's inward parts and write them on his heart. Now, there can be accord with God and man, so that He is not ashamed to be called their God, and He is forward to announce they are His people. They all "know" Him, being familiar with His ways, in full accord with them, and delighting in the Lord and what He says. God has been merciful to those who "receive the atonement," removing their transgressions and remembering their sins no more.

THE SITUATION UPON EARTH

Alas, however, all is not well upon the earth – even among those who have believed on the Son, and have been added to the church (Acts 2:47). A "troubler" has entered the ranks, spewing out a false gospel and leading men into a theology that finds them conducting their lives after the manner of the Old Covenant. Some of them are living under a system that has no glory, even though a glorious order is in place.

THE CORINTHIAN DILEMMA

Take Corinth for an example. They had a number of uncomely problems with which Paul was forced to deal.

- ☛ They were confused about marriage (1 Cor 7:1-40).
- ☛ They had people among them who did not know there was only one God, and the condition was shameful (1 Cor 8:1-13).
- ☛ They questioned Paul's Apostleship (1 Cor 9:1-11).
- ☛ They did not conduct themselves properly at the table of the Lord (1 Cor 10:15-21; 11:22-34).
- ☛ They had confusion in their assemblies (1 Cor 14:21-33).
- ☛ Some of them did not believe the dead were raised (1 Cor 15:12-13).

What was the cause behind these conditions? They had heard the true Gospel (1 Cor 15:1-3). They had believed on Christ, were washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor 1:30). Why had these reproachful conditions arisen among them?

TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Paul is going straight to the heart of the matter. It is because they did not have a proper view of the "better

covenant" that is ours in Christ Jesus. It was not enough for him to merely send them a list of rules. Oh, there were some things they had to do – like purging that fornicator from their assembly (1 Cor 5:4-5). He did give them some instructions about conduct in their assembly – and how utterly elementary they were!

- ☛ Those who are speaking can give place to someone who has a word from the Lord (1 Cor 12:30).
- ☛ Seek the best gifts (1 Cor 12:31).
- ☛ Two or three speak during an assembly, one speaking at a time (1 Cor 12:29-31).
- ☛ Make sure the people understand what is said (1 Cor 14:6-19).
- ☛ Carnal interruptions were not to be tolerated (1 Cor 14:34-35).
- ☛ There is not one single function in the body of Christ, allowing everyone to do the same thing (1 Cor 12:14-17).
- ☛ No member of Christ's body can say he has no need of another member (1 Cor 12:21).
- ☛ God has placed everyone in the body where it has pleased Him (1 Cor 12:28).
- ☛ They were divided, and found themselves pitted against one another (1 Cor 1:10-11).
- ☛ They were "carnal," bearing more resemblance to the obtuse and hardhearted Israelites than to the reconciled body of Christ (1 Cor 3:1-4).
- ☛ There was immorality among them (1 Cor 5:1-2).
- ☛ Unmindful of the nature of "newness of life," they were suing one another

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in the courts of men (1 Cor 6:1-8).

Is there anyone of sound mind who considers these to be profound Kingdom observations? Is there a single one of them that love does not effect, and do so very well (1 Cor 13:1-13)? How is it that anyone in Christ could wax so obtuse as to require such basal or elementary instruction? Is there one of these situations that is not immediately addressed by “charity”—or kingdom love?

“Love suffers long and is kind;

among them for “*a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them*” (Acts 18:11). They were blessed with all manner of spiritual gifts, so that it was said of them, “*So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor 1:7).

Alas, something had happened among them. They had somehow been subjected to eroding influences – “*old leaven*” that had to be purged from them (1 Cor 5:7-8). They had embraced something with a fading glory –

babes in Christ” (1 Cor 3:1). Now he is speaking on a higher plane. In this way the folly of their former ways will be more readily apparent and more easily avoided.

Even though the Corinthians did not have a Jewish background, they needed to know of the new covenant under which they operated. Even though that old covenant has been obviated, being overshadowed by a “*better covenant*,” it represented the only **other basis of Divine dealings with humanity**. It was a covenant addressed to people in the flesh, and it relied upon **their** doing. Because of this circumstance, its glory faded, for that covenant was no more stable than the people to whom it was addressed.

The church are Corinth had fallen into the labyrinth of a works-based religion – just like the Old Covenant. That is precisely why they had been divided, entertained respect of persons, and had confusion in their assemblies. It is why they were gathering around men instead of Christ, and going through the routine of the Lord’s Table without partaking of the spirit of it.

There are, after all, only two approaches to God. Either you come on the basis of your own merit, or you come upon the basis of the merit of Another. There is no other way! Prior to the giving of the Law, God left the entire matter in the hands of men. He surrounded them with a universe that testified of His power and Godhead. After 2,500 years, it was clear that men were not able to grope their way to the Living God through their own feeble efforts. Rather than advancing toward the Lord, even in a minuscule way, they fell backward, and God finally “*gave them, up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts*” (Rom 1:24). He “*gave them up unto vile affections*,” and “*over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient*” (Rom 1:26,28).

The next 1,500 years of human history was devoted to proving that men could not measure up to the Divine standard even if they were told what to do. That is where the “*First*,” or “*Old Covenant*” comes in. It was given in a blaze of Divine glory, and it was spiritual, holy, just, and good (Rom 7:12,14). **Yet,**

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love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away” (1 Cor 13:4-8).

This is **not** what love ought to do; it is what it **does!** So why are these qualities so rare in the professed church? Is there some psychological explanation for their absence, as some suggest? Is it that people have not been told what to do or how to conduct themselves with one another? Love is, indeed, “*the more excellent way*”^{1 Cor 12:31-13:1} to achieve the intended edification and betterment of the church. The church at Corinth provides an example of the effects of focusing on lesser things.

The Corinthian Experience

Corinth did not start out this way. The first we read of them is: “*and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized*” (Acts 18:8). Paul stayed

something that waned instead of increasing, and made their hearts more like tables of stone that fleshly tables upon which God could write. They – at least some of them – had lost a sense of the newness of the New Covenant – its glorious uniqueness. They had settled into religion as usual – just like a lot of people you may know. Now Paul found himself much like Moses, who had to put a veil over his face. Instead of speaking without any restriction he confessed, “*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*” (1 Cor 3:3). He had to speak with a veil, so to speak, over his face.

Now that he has received a good report of their condition from Titus, Paul proceeds to elaborate on their former condition. Having made some recovery, he can now speak unto them “*as unto spiritual*.” When they were not walking in the light (1 John 1:7), he had to speak to them “*as unto carnal, even as unto*

as Paul is showing, it had a fading glory. Therefore, it could not produce in men what the Lord wanted. No amount of human ingenuity or institutional procedure could change this situation.

Once again, this is pertinent to the Corinthian situation because they had experienced a certain decline, or fading glory. The condition was not acceptable then, and it is not acceptable now! **The day of Christ is not the day of fading**

or declining glory! Deterioration is totally out of order! It is a time of *“better things,” “greater glory,”* and spiritual growth. That is the point this text is firmly establishing. **Spiritual retardation is simply out of order.**

THAT WHICH WAS MADE GLORIOUS

^{3:10a} *For even that which was made glorious . . .”*

Paul is now going to show that when the light of the glorious Gospel appeared, it reduced to nothing the glory that was found in the Law, or First Covenant. As I have suggested, there is a reason for this approach, even though the Corinthians did not have a Jewish background. The reasoning is this: **If the more excellent glory of the New Covenant obliterated the glory of a previous covenant that God Himself had given, it certainly does the same for the small diffusion of pretentious glory that has come from mere human sources.** In other words, there is no glory that continues apart from that which is given to men through the New Covenant. Thus the Spirit moves Paul to refer to the only other source of glory that God recognized – the Old Covenant. By showing that this glory could not remain in the light of the more excellent glory, he has destroyed the thought of approaching to God upon any other basis. **Every religious effort that is not based upon the New Covenant is destined to diminish and finally become extinct.** It cannot last, no matter how revered it is among men.

Furthermore, what declines is not associated with the New Covenant, with Jesus, or with the Spirit. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the *“ministration of the Spirit,”* or *“the ministration of righteousness.”* In the most favorable view such a religion is related to the Old Covenant. **However, that covenant, and those who remain under it, are not received by God.** The reason for that circumstance is the focus of the reasoning that follows.

EVEN THAT

“For even that . . .” Other versions read, *“For indeed,”*^{NASB} *“Indeed,”*^{NRSV} *“Indeed, in this case,”*^{RSV} *“For verily,”*^{ASV} *“For also,”*^{DARBY} and *“In fact.”*^{NLT}

This refers to the Old Covenant in general, and, in particular, to the glory

“. . . which was made glorious . . .”

Other versions read, *“what had glory,”*^{NASB} *“what was glorious,”*^{NIV} *“what once had glory,”*^{NRSV} *“what once had splendor,”*^{RSV} *“which hath been made glorious,”*^{ASV} *“the glory of the first,”*^{BBE} *“that which was glorified,”*^{DARBY} *“what was endowed with glory,”*^{NAB} *“what was once*

If the more excellent glory of the New Covenant obliterated the glory of a previous covenant that God Himself had given, it certainly does the same for the small diffusion of pretentious glory that has come from mere human sources.

seen in Moses face when he delivered it. Paul is showing the comparison of inferior glory to superior glory. He does not borrow an example of inferior glory from works or laws of men. He does not cite the philosophy of Socrates the Greek, who lived over four hundred years before Christ, and impacted the whole world with his philosophy and reasoning. Such a person is unworthy of a comparison with the New Covenant. **Paul will rather take for his example a covenant that was ordained by God – a covenant that was attended by genuine glory that originated with God Himself.** He will show how that glory compares with the glory of the New Covenant. **He will take the best glory and most authentic glory that was before “the day of salvation.”** In so doing, he will have exposed the inferiority of all lesser glories as well.

MADE GLORIOUS

considered glorious,”^{NJB} *“that first glory which shone from Moses’ face,”*^{LIVING} *“That which was once resplendent with glory,”*^{Weymouth} *“what once was so splendid,”*^{Williams} and *“what once had splendor [the glory of the Law in Moses’ face].”*^{AMPLIFIED}

The glory of reference originally came from God’s Person, and was reflected in Moses’ face. **It was actually a Divine glory, greatly diminished when reflected on Moses’ skin.** His face was *“made glorious.”* It was **not** Moses’ nature that caused his face to shine, but the Divine nature, to which he was exposed on the mount. The glory, therefore, was a borrowed glory, yet legitimate.

The glory attending the Old Covenant was a true glory that lingered for a while. It was so bright and dazzling that the Israelites could not

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look upon Moses. His face had to be covered when he spoke with them, for the light shining from his face made the

people “*afraid to come nigh him*” (Ex 34:33). **This was, therefore, a very real glory.** It was not parabolic or

figurative. This is not a literary device, but the recollection of a very real circumstance that occurred.

NO GLORY AND THE REASON FOR IT

“^{10b} . . . *had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.*”

Through the Spirit, Paul is casting down imaginations that had exalted themselves against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:4-5). The Corinthians had been corrupted in their thinking and perceptions. **With the skill of a spiritual surgeon, Paul is cutting out the malignancy that had spread like**

at all.”^{AMPLIFIED}

There are two perspectives provided in this statement.

- First, the Old Covenant did, indeed, have glory. However, it has it no longer.
- Second, there is a specific kind of glory that the Old Covenant never did have.

comparisons that are to be made. **Proper comparisons are not made with things originating with man, or that wholly depend upon man.** The wisdom of man, the works of man, the imaginations of man – these are all on a low and unacceptable plane, and therefore are not proper in the arena of holy comparison. By that I mean they cannot be used to confirm the validity of things pertaining to life and godliness.

Real, Yet Unreal

It is true that in matters relating to resisting the devil (James 4:7), cleansing ourselves of all filthiness of flesh and spirit (2 Cor 7:1), and mortifying our members that are upon the earth (Col 3:5), the things of this world are **NOT** to be viewed as imaginary. The foes against which we grapple are very real (Eph 6:12). The imaginations that are to be cast down are very real assaults upon the mind (2 Cor 10:4-5). The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not mere figments of the imagination (1 John 2:15-17).

However, when it comes to making righteous comparisons, the things of this world, and the products of natural thinking, are not to be brought into the equation of holy reasoning.

There is a sense in which temporal things are to be considered as non-existent. That is, things that are actually passing away are not to be the dominating factors in our reasoning. Those in Christ have “*eternal life*” (1 John 5:13), an “*eternal inheritance*” (Heb 9:15), the prospect of an “*eternal weight of glory*” (2 Cor 4:17), are summoned to look to unseen things which “*are eternal*” (2 Cor 4:18), and are headed for “*eternal glory*” (2 Tim 2:10). There is a certain frame of reasoning in which all other things must be viewed as though they did not exist at all. It is in this sense that we read, “*And if Christ be in you, the body*

When speaking of approaches to God, and the means by which men become acceptable to Him, there are lofty comparisons that are to be made. Proper comparisons are not made with things originating with man, or that wholly depend upon man.

a cancer through the thinking of the Corinthians. Failing to perceive the nature and superiority of the New Covenant, they had settled for a religion of lesser glory. Because this circumstance also dominates the American church, this section of Scripture is most pertinent. It affirms something that must be seen if any genuine spiritual progress is to be realized.

HAD NO GLORY

“ . . . *had no glory . . .* ” Other versions read, “*has no glory,*”^{NASB} “*has no glory now,*”^{NIV} “*has lost its glory,*”^{NRSV} “*has come to have no splendor at all,*”^{RSV} “*hath not been made glorious,*”^{ASV} “*no longer seems to be glory,*”^{BBE} “*is not glorified,*”^{DARBY} “*in this part was not glorified,*”^{DOUAY} “*was not glorified in this point,*”^{GENEVA} “*in this case has no glory,*”^{NAU} “*has lost all claim to glory,*”^{NJB} “*was not glorious at all,*”^{NLT} “*hath not been glorified,*”^{YLT} “*is worth nothing at all,*”^{LIVING} and “*has come to have no splendor*

Both of these are true, and are reflected in the various translations. In the first instance, it has already been established that the giving of the Law was attended with a certain glory. It was **not** a glory upon which the Israelites could steadily gaze. In this case, the glory that the Old Covenant once had is now gone. It has faded away, just as surely as the skin of Moses face ceased to glow with celestial splendor. With respect to it as a means of identity with God, the Old Covenant now has “*no glory.*” That is, this is no longer the means by which righteousness or life is defined.

IN THIS RESPECT

“ . . . *in this respect . . .* ” Other versions read, “*in this case*”^{NASB} “*now,*”^{NIV} “*in this part,*”^{DOUAY} and “*that is.*”^{GENEVA}

When speaking of approaches to God, and the means by which men become acceptable to Him, there are lofty

is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom 8:10). And again, *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be **dead indeed unto sin**, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom 6:11).

Although, from the lower view, the body is **not** dead, and we **do** wrestle with the law of sin that is in our *"members"* (Rom 7:23), yet we are to learn to think in view of their ultimate demise.

The Nature of the New Covenant

The New Covenant essentially deals with eternal things, and we are to think of it in that regard. The Old Covenant dealt exclusively with temporal matters and issues.

Ponder the eternal nature of the New Covenant. God puts His laws into our minds, and writes them into our hearts. He becomes our God, and we become His people. From the least to the greatest, all the people know Him. Their sins are remembered no more (Heb 8:9-12). The only matter that is at all confined to time is the Lord being *"merciful to their unrighteousness"* (8:12a). Even that, however, will be vividly recalled in the glory to come, where Jesus will be seen as *"the Lamb slain"* (Rev 5:6,12; 13:8), and the song of Moses and the Lamb will be sung (Rev 15:3).

The nature of the New Covenant is what causes it to have transcendent glory. **Its benefits all transfer into "the world to come," which is characterized throughout with glory.** Ultimately, there is nothing about the New Covenant that is temporal. Nothing about it will be forgotten in *"the ages to come."*

BY REASON OF

" . . . by reason of . . . " Other versions read, *"because of,"* NKJV *"on account of,"* NASB *"in comparison with,"* NIV *"as touching,"* GENEVA *"by contrast with,"* NJB *"compared with,"* NLT and *"compared to."* IE

The Spirit addresses this subject with great care and precision. He does not speak in broad generalities that can be easily dismissed. When He speaks of the waning glory of the Old Covenant, He is careful to place the matter within the

context of the New Covenant. **It is ONLY because of the presence and dominance of the New Covenant that the Old Covenant has lost its glory.** That first covenant has not become obsolete because of a mere timeline, so to speak. Rather, it is because something *"better"* has been put into place. The Old Covenant has not merely been replaced with a different set of laws or commandments. It has not been supplanted by a new book of rules, as some sophists suppose.

THE GLORY THAT EXCELLETH

" . . . the glory that excelleth." Other versions read, *"the glory that surpasses it,"* NASB *"the surpassing glory,"* NIV *"the greater glory,"* NRSV *"the greater glory of that which comes after,"* BBE *"the*

glory that excelleth," DOUAY *"the exceeding glory,"* GENEVA *"the glory that transcends it,"* NJB *"the overwhelming glory of the New Covenant,"* NLT *"the superior glory,"* YLT *"a glory which is so much brighter,"* IE *"on account of its surpassing splendor,"* Williams and *"because of the overwhelming glory that exceeds and excels it [the glory of the Gospel in the face of Jesus Christ]."* AMPLIFIED

The Old Covenant is inferior ONLY when compared with the New Covenant. Compared with any other Law or covenant of men, it is absolutely superior. No nation has ever operated under a better Law than the one given to the Jews from Sinai! **If we were to compare the "Law given by the disposition of angels, and ordained in the hands of a mediator" (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19) with any other code originating with men, we would find the glory that Old Covenant to be greater.** A point is made of this in Scripture.

☛ *"For what nation is there so great,*

who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut 4:7-8).

- ☛ *"All thy commandments are faithful . . ."* (Psa 119:86).
- ☛ *"Thy commandment is exceeding broad"* (Psa 119:96).
- ☛ *"Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right . . ."* (Psa 119:128).
- ☛ *"He showeth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto*

Although, from the lower view, the body is not dead, and we do wrestle with the law of sin that is in our "members," yet we are to learn to think in view of their ultimate demise.

Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD" (Psa 147:19-20).

- ☛ *"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good . . . For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin"* (Rom 7:12-14).

All of the theological systems, moral orders, and disciplinary routines that have been invented by men are inferior to the Law. They have less glory than the Law. When compared with the glory of the New Covenant, their value is even less than that of the Old Covenant. **The sacrificial system, clean and unclean categories of food, and various statutes and ordinances of the Law have more glory than the "how-to" machinations of twentieth-century men!** However, such a comparison is not proper, which means that God Himself does not even recognize the highly revered methods of men. They are nothing more

than expressions of foolishness. Those who attempt to regulate and correct men from without “*are not wise*” (2 Cor 10:2).

However, as glorious as the Old Covenant was, when compared with the laws of men, a broken covenant and a violated Law eventually loses its glory – all of it! God cannot save men by means of a broken covenant. Nor can He pronounce a man righteous who has transgressed His covenant!

MORE EXCELLENT

The glory of the New Covenant “*excelleth*” because of its absolute superiority. **There is more of God in it, and therefore it shines more brightly.** The Mediator of the New Covenant has “*obtained a more excellent name*” (Heb 1:4). He has

bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved” (Luke 5:37-38).

Those who have “*tasted that the Lord is gracious*” (1 Pet 2:3), sense the incompatibility of the new with the old. **Just as an expert in wine knows that new wine requires new bottles, and a seamstress knows that new cloth cannot be sewn onto an old garment, so the spiritually minded know that a glory that excels cannot be blended with a glory that has passed away.** In this world, and in the flesh, the lesser and the greater can dwell together. The inferior and the superior can complement one another. **But this is not the manner of Divine glory.** When once the glory of God has departed from a

desireth new: for he saith, The old is better” (Luke 5:39). This parallel depicts new wine being taken from a better vineyard that bore superior grapes. It was a vineyard that had a “*glory that excelleth.*” Yet, those to whom it was offered had no taste for its superiority, and thus preferred the old wine of the Law.

A Lesson to be Learned

The inferiority of a covenant that is “*weak through the flesh*” can never be seen until men have actually “*tasted of heavenly gift,*” are “*made partakers of the Holy Spirit,*” and have “*tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come*” (Heb 6:4-5). Until they have “*tasted that the Lord is gracious*” (1 Pet 2:3), a system of rules and regulations actually has more appeal to them. **The inferior cannot be seen as inferior until the superior has been beheld.**

Christ and Him Crucified

Somehow, many in Corinth had lost their vision of the glory of the New Covenant. Carried away with the external aspects of spiritual gifts, and puffed up with a carnal mind, they were living in a manner that was more compatible with the Old Covenant than the new. This propensity was so strong that Paul “*determined not to know any thing among*” them, “*save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” (1 Cor 2:2).

Why did not Paul say Christ “*risen,*” or “*glorified,*” or “*exalted?*” While I do not wish to press this matter too far, there is something to be seen in this consideration that is relatively new to me. I have not found any other man who has made such observations, although I do not doubt that others have seen these things. Here are some critical aspects of the Gospel that were never developed in the Corinthian epistles.

Christ’s Ascension. There are no direct references to Christ’s ascension in First or Second Corinthians. Other references include Ephesians 1:20; 4:8-10; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:3; 4:14; 9:24.

Christ’s exaltation. There are no direct references to Christ’s exaltation in First or Second Corinthians. Other references include Romans 8:24; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:8-10; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 2:15; 1 Timothy 3:16;

However, as glorious as the Old Covenant was, when compared with the laws of men, a broken covenant and a violated Law eventually loses its glory – all of it! God cannot save men by means of a broken covenant. Nor can He pronounce a man righteous who has transgressed His covenant!

obtained a “*more excellent ministry*” (Heb 8:6). His approval came from a “*more excellent glory*” (2 Pet 1:17). The strength derived from involvement in this covenant is referred to as “*the excellency of the power*” (2 Cor 4:7). The knowledge of, or acquaintance with, the “*Messenger of the covenant*” (Mal 3:1) is called “*the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*” (Phil 3:8).

It is no wonder that the New Covenant possesses a “*glory that excelleth.*” It is not a waning or fading glory, but one that is increasing.

AN APPLICATION

The New Covenant is of such transcendent glory, that a person who experiences its benefits can no longer devote himself to lesser things. Jesus depicted this circumstance when He said, “*And no man putteth new wine into old*

thing, that glory is given in greater measure to something else. This is no more true than in the matter of the Old and New Covenants.

Difficulty of Adjusting

Having said all of that, men have extreme difficulty in embracing “*new*” things that have come from God. By nature they tend to prefer the “*old*” ways of doing things. Thus, when a new Temple was built, there were some who could not rejoice in the day of beginnings. In their eyes the rebuilt Temple “*was in comparison of it [the first Temple] as nothing*” (Hag 2:3; Ezra 3:12).

Jesus also spoke of this difficulty, depicting the religious leaders of His day as those who simply were unable appreciate the “*new wine*” that was being prepared in their day. “*No man also having drunk old wine straightway*

Hebrews 1:3; 2:9; 4:10,14; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:12,24; 10:12-13; 12:2.

Christ's omnipotence. There are no direct references to Christ's Omnipotence in First and Second Corinthians. Other references include Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:16; Heb 1:3; 7:25.

Christ's High Priesthood.

There are no direct references to the High Priesthood and Intercession of Jesus in First and Second Corinthians. Other references include Hebrews 2:17-18; 3:1-2; 4:14-15; 5:4-5; 6:20; 7:11-28; 8:1-2,6; 9:12-13-14,23-24,26; 10:12.

If these observations are true, why are they so? **I believe it is because of the stifling or suffocating effects of a non-glorious approach to religion.**

A law-centered, or fleshly, approach to life in Christ Jesus brings with it an inability to perceive the remarkable advantages that are found in Him. Such an approach throws a shroud over the "eyes of the heart" so that it cannot see the magnificent glory of the New Covenant. The miserable condition of the American church is the direct result of its stilted theology – a theology that is more like the Old Covenant than the New.

THAT WHICH WAS DONE AWAY

"11a For if that which is done away was glorious . . ."

The apostle elaborates further on the Old Covenant – a covenant that was made by God Himself, and stands for any and every approach to God that depends upon human achievement. He will affirm that while this covenant was in force as a basis for Divine commerce with man, this is no longer the case.

The point that must be established in our thinking is that there is no possible way for man to be justified by a system that is fueled by human effort. There has only been one such system that was recognized by heaven. That system, or arrangement, was based upon "[mere] external rules and regulations for the body imposed to tide the worshipers over until the time of setting things straight [of reformation, of the complete new order when Christ, the Messiah, shall establish the reality of what these things foreshadow—a better covenant]."^{AMPLIFIED} No such covenant has ever again been established by God. Once the glory of it faded, there was no place provided for a similar covenant. This is what will now be briefly expounded.

THAT WHICH WAS DONE AWAY

"For if that which is done away..." Other versions read, "That which is passing away,"^{NKJV} "that which fades away,"^{NASB} "what was fading away,"^{NIV} "what was set aside,"^{NRSV} "what faded away,"^{RSV} "the order that was for a time,"^{BBE} "that annulled,"^{DARBY} "what was being brought to an end,"^{ESV} "that which should

be abolished,"^{GENEVA} "what was going to fade,"^{NAB} "what was transitory,"^{NJB} "the old covenant," "that which is being made useless,"^{YLT} "the old system that faded into nothing,"^{LIVING} and "what passed away."^{Williams}

Note that two distinct views are

☛ **The fading was the result of a judicial act:** "was set aside," "annulled," "being brought to an end," "abolished," and "being made useless."

When the glory of the Old Covenant left, it was "done away" –

The point that must be established in our thinking is that there is no possible way for man to be justified by a system that is fueled by human effort.

reflected in the various translations.

- ☛ **The glory has already been removed:** "is done away," "was set aside," "faded away," "was for a time," "annulled," "faded into nothing," and "passed away."
- ☛ **The glory is in the process of passing away:** "is passing away," "being brought to an end," and "is being made useless."

There are also some additional perceptions seen in these translations.

- ☛ **This fading glory is something that was intended:** "was for a time," "was going to fade," and "was transitory."

brought to an end, terminated, and declared useless for purposes of establishing righteousness.

That which is "done away" is NOT the fading glory itself, but the thing which the glory attended – the giving of the Law as a covenant between God and Israel. This is the point established by a poignant statement made in Romans 10:4. "For Christ is the end of the law **for righteousness** to every one that believeth." The Ten Commandments themselves did not end, for they are still "for the lawless and disobedient" (1 Tim 1:9). **Rather, Christ ended the Law as a means to becoming righteous.** That is, men are not made righteous by what they do or don't do. They are "made righteous" "by the obedience of One,"

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who is Jesus Christ (Rom 5:19). Rather than becoming righteous by measuring up to a code, God Himself **makes** them “*the righteousness of God*” in Christ (2 Cor 5:21).

In actuality, the glory of the Old Covenant has already vanished. From the standpoint of perception, it is vanishing. That is, from heaven’s view, and in keeping with God’s eternal purpose, the Old Covenant has **no** glory whatsoever. However, from the standpoint of human experience the glory appeared to gradually fade.

This is precisely why the early church continued to struggle with the matter of circumcision (Gal 5:1-3; 6:12-13), the eating of meats (1 Tim 4:13; Heb 13:9), and the observance of days (Gal 4:10; Col 2:16-17). That kind of approach

to righteousness had really been abrogated because its glory no longer existed. However, men were not able to perceive this with clarity, and thus the glory, for them, was “*fading away*.”

Again, let me emphasize that it was the glory that was “*done away*,” not the Ten Commandments, as some have erroneously taught. When God gave the New Covenant, He was not exchanging an old set of laws and ordinances for a new set of commandments and directives. **The New Covenant is a new kind of covenant – unlike the Old.**

WAS GLORIOUS

“*. . . was glorious . . .*” Other versions read, “*was with glory*,”^{NASB} “*came with glory*,”^{NIV} “*came through glory*,”^{NRSV} “*came with splendor*,”^{RSV} “*had its glory*,”^{BBE} “*was full of glory*,”^{NLT} and

“*was full of heavenly glory*.”^{LIVING}

The Old Covenant “*was glorious*.” It no longer has any glory. **If this is true, those who are attracted to rules and regulation as a basis for righteousness have, in fact, been deceived.** The loftiest form of such an approach no longer has any glory, and thus has been “*done away*.” Therefore, there is only one way to be attracted to such a form of religion, and that is deception. God will not draw men into the approach He Himself has obviated. Such people have been blinded to the glory of the New Covenant, and are thus attracted to the old order of things, which is a natural propensity. The seriousness of such a condition cannot be overstated, and yet it is remarkably common in our time.

THAT WHICH REMAINS

“^{11b} . . . *much more that which remaineth is glorious*.”

Having established that the First Covenant once had glory, and that its glory has now been “*done away*,” the Spirit now declares the reason for the passing of that ancient glory. As I have already mentioned, it was not because an appointed period had expired – like a clock that had been wound up, and gradually ran down. He will trace the diminishing of the Old Covenant glory to the appearance of the greater glory of the New Covenant.

MUCH MORE

“*. . . much more . . .*” Other versions read, “*how much greater*,”^{NIV} “*must have much more*,”^{RSV} “*much rather*,”^{DARBY} “*how much greater*,”^{NIB} “*far greater*,”^{NLT} “*is certainly*,”^{LIVING} and “*far*

more.”^{Montgomery}

The superlative nature of the New Covenant cannot be understated. It is in every way “*superior and more excellent, [because] it is enacted and rests upon more important (sublimier, higher, and nobler) promises*”^{AMPLIFIED} (Heb 8:6).

When the New Covenant is presented as merely “*way of living*,” or a compilation of certain laws, procedures, and regulations, a great disservice has taken place. In fact, God Himself has been dishonored and the Lord Jesus reproached. **If it is true that the Savior Himself is better, and that He has obtained a “more excellent name” because of the grandness of His accomplishments, what place can there possibly be for any form of**

mediocrity in either our presentation or exposition of the New Covenant? Too long Christianity has been identified with dullness, a lack of initiative, lifeless tradition, and a fading glory. This is a total misrepresentation! Such attributes belong to the Old Covenant than to the New!

In the expression “*much more*,” we capture the essence of a grand and glorious covenant. These words are employed by the Spirit to describe being saved from wrath (Rom 5:9), being saved by Christ’s life (Rom 5:10), and the abounding nature of the grace of God (Rom 5:15). They are used to depict those in Christ reigning in life by Christ Jesus (Rom 5:17), and the grace of God which did infinitely more than sin (Rom 5:20). These are the words that most aptly describe the effective work of Christ’s blood in purging the conscience (Heb 9:14), and the superiority of faith over the earth’s repository of gold (1 Pet 1:7).

Make no mistake about this, when we speak about the New Covenant, we are dealing with superior matters, glorious results, and better things! Such things cannot

If it is true that the Savior Himself is better, and that He has obtained a “more excellent name” because of the grandness of His accomplishments, what place can there possibly be for any form of mediocrity in either our presentation or exposition of the New Covenant?

be contained in academic vessels, religious traditions, or stereotyped procedures.

THAT WHICH REMAINS

“. . . that which remaineth . . .”

Other versions read, “*what remains*,”^{NKJV} “*that which lasts*,”^{NIV} “*the permanent*,”^{NRSV} “*what is permanent*,”^{RSV} “*the eternal order*,”^{BBE} “*that which abides*,”^{DARBY} “*what endures*,”^{NAB} “*that which lasts forever*,”^{NJB} “*the new covenant, which remains forever*,”^{NLT} “*that which is remaining*,”^{YLT} “*permanently arrayed*,”^{Weymouth} and “*that which ever abides*.”^{Montgomery}

Once God was revealed through Jesus Christ – i.e., once the light was focused on His eternal purpose – all lesser glories began to dissipate. An inferior covenant cannot subsist with a superior one. An subaltern glory cannot gather attention to itself when once a transcendent glory has appeared. Men do not study the moon while the sun is in its zenith. They do not train their telescopes on the stars while the sun is ruling the day. If you want to study the stars, you must do so during the night.

The truth of the matter is that only the superior can withstand the test of both time and eternal glory. What “*remains*” in the blaze of the superior glory is spiritually lasting. Everything else, by design, is temporal.

Clinging to the Scaffolding

The Old Covenant was to the salvation of God what scaffolding is to a sky-scraper. While the building of the structure is in process, the structure itself is obscured by the scaffolding. However upon the completion of the building, the scaffolding is removed, for it no longer has a purpose. I suppose someone could be found who would like to become an expert in discarded scaffolding, but it does not seem to me that such a pursuit is wise. What “*remains*” is the point. If the building is an office building, the offices will be located in the building, not here and therefore among the scaffolding. The utilities that make those offices functional – like plumbing, electricity, telephones, and water, will be placed within the building, not the scaffolding. The various pieces of furniture that make the offices productive – like desks, chairs, and office

equipment – are placed within the building, not the scaffolding. Actually, the offices did not open for business until the building was completed and functional.

Those who maintain an inordinate affection for law and regulations are like people trying to do business in the discarded scaffolding of the Old Covenant. It should not surprise us that they cannot achieve spiritual consistency. The Old Covenant was never intended to be the place where spirituality and Divine acceptance are realized.

Once God was revealed through Jesus Christ – i.e., once the light was focused on His eternal purpose – all lesser glories began to dissipate. An inferior covenant cannot subsist with a superior one. An subaltern glory cannot gather attention to itself when once a transcendent glory has appeared.

The New Covenant Remains

The idea is that the two glories – that of the Old Covenant and that of the New – were for a moment existent at the same time. However, the greater glory outshined the lesser glory, and now it alone “*remains*,” and the former is “*done away*.” However, there is more to the matter than that.

The New Covenant actually antedates the Old Covenant. That is, it was in existence before the Old, or First, Covenant. The Spirit makes a point of this in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. They too had been struggling with propensities to a system of law for justification.

Traced Back to Abraham

The New Covenant is associated with “*the blessing of Abraham*,” which involved the offsetting of the curse brought into the world by sin. This is why Paul writes, “*And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed*” (Gal 3:8). He further declares that those in Christ “*are blessed with faithful*

Abraham” (Gal 3:9) – that is, **the New Covenant now realized in Christ Jesus was first announced to Abraham.** This was a covenant of blessing, and therefore the announcement of it to Abraham is called the preaching of “*the Gospel*” – good news!

In a grand statement of the case, the Spirit moved Paul to write, “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of*

Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:13-13). Confirming that this is, in fact, referring to the New Covenant, he continues, “*Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ*” (Gal 3:15-16).

With even more clarity, Paul declares that the New Covenant, ratified in Christ Jesus, was actually declared to Abraham before the Law. “*And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect*” (Gal 3:17). Note, the Law came 430 years AFTER “*the covenant*” that was “*confirmed of God in Christ*” – the New Covenant. This point is made even more clear by the following salient statement: “*Wherefore then serveth the law? It WAS ADDED because of transgressions,*

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till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal 3:19).

The Law was not "added" to the promised covenant itself, but to the revelation of it. The Law was a necessary preparation for the glorious covenant now mediated by Christ. It defined sin, stopping every mouth and rendering the whole world guilty before God (Rom 3:19-20). In doing this, it paved the way for the Savior from sin. In fact, it was the appointed "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal 3:24).

As a "schoolmaster," the Law had a certain glory – for a while. **But when the Savior was enthroned in glory, and the New Covenant was**

because it is a "better covenant which was established upon greater promises" (Heb 8:6). It survives because it is linked with God's "eternal purpose," hinted at in Eden, promised to Abraham, and foretold by the Prophets.

What "remains" is not the glory, but the covenant that is glorious. The First Covenant has been "done away," but the promise to Abraham remains! All glory be to God!

IS GLORIOUS

"... is glorious." Other versions read, "is in glory," ^{NASB} "splendor," ^{RSV} "subsists in glory," ^{DARBY} and "abide in glory and splendor." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The New Covenant, which remains, "IS glorious." It provides insight into the Person and purpose of God. It is

of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor 4:3-4). Men may not prefer to state the case so strongly. It may appear more fashionable to tone things down so they are not so abrasive. Nevertheless, this is how the Spirit moved Paul to declare the situation. **The absolute glory of the New Covenant is so great and so pervading, that only those who are blinded by Satan can fail to see it.** What is more – and we cannot get away from this – there is a sense in which those failing to see this glory are "lost." While I do not intend to sit in judgment upon anyone, it cannot be denied that this is what the Spirit has declared. Therefore, it is not to be taken lightly.

What growing believer has not been concerned about the shallow presentations of modern preachers and teachers? Where can a sensitive spirit be found that has not been chagrined by the spiritual froth that is being thrown out to the church? Have you ever wondered why far too many religious leaders spend so much time on peripheral issues? How is it that so much time can be spent on temporal things, and so little on things that are eternal? I will tell you why. **Those guilty of such shallowness have not seen the glory of the New Covenant.** That is why they do not speak of it and its marvelous benefits. That is why they spend time trying to correct aberrant behavior, and seem unaware that the Law of God can be "put" into the mind and "written" upon the heart. Their minds have been "blinded."

If it is countered that this is too strong, and if it can be proved that such men really do see the glory of the New Covenant, then we have another situation on our hands. **Such men, in the very best consideration, are unfaithful stewards. They are watchmen who have not lifted up their voice, and messengers with glad tidings who have not heralded those "glad tidings of good things."** What person of sound mind envies such a condition?

As a "schoolmaster," the Law had a certain glory – for a while. But when the Savior was enthroned in glory, and the New Covenant was inaugurated upon the basis of His blood, that glory at once began to subside.

inaugurated upon the basis of His blood, that glory at once began to subside.

Now, as we peruse the horizon of eternal purpose, the glory of the First Covenant no longer exists. It could not survive the rising of the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal 4:2), that was only in the early dawn of Abraham's time, and during time of the Old Covenant as well.

The Glory Remains

The glory of the New Covenant "remains." It has survived the sin of man. It has survived the exposure of that sin. It has even survived the breaking of the First Covenant by the very ones with whom it was made. It survives because it was before the Old Covenant. It survives

the preeminent means by which we come into the "knowledge of God," whereas the Old Covenant conveyed the "knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20). Here, in the New Covenant, the "eternal purpose" of God is expounded. Here the "blessing of Abraham" is delineated. Here the promises are unfolded.

The New Covenant "IS glorious." It is not that it ought to be glorious, or that it has the potentiality of being glorious. **If men fail to see that glory, therefore, it can only be owing to spiritual blindness.** That is precisely why Paul wrote, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 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

WE HAVE SUCH HOPE

^{12a} *Seeing then that we have such hope . . .*

Paul will now reason with the Corinthians concerning the manner and

foundation of his ministry to them. His motivations were holy, and they were

driven by insight into the nature and effectiveness of the salvation of God.

SEEING THEN

“*Seeing then . . .*” Other versions read, “*Therefore,*”^{NKJV} “*Since, then,*”^{NRSV} “*Since,*”^{RSV} “*Having then,*”^{BBE} “*Since,*”^{NLT} and “*So.*”^{Williams}

There is a difference between the benefits realized under the Old Covenant, and those enjoyed under the New. **Under the Old Covenant men could not see the purpose of God with clarity.** Holy men were discontent with this situation. For example, David asked for understanding so he could keep God’s Law (Psa 119:34), learn God’s commandments (Psa 119:73), and know God’s testimonies (Psa 119:125). He also associated the understanding for which he asked with life (Psa 119:144). He asked the Lord to make him “*understand the way*” of His precepts (Psa 119:27). In these requests, David excelled his peers. **Yet, his desires were but a faint reflection of what God provides for men in the New Covenant.**

The New Covenant is an economy of insight, understanding, perception, and comprehension. Compare the benefits of this “*better covenant*” with all that was before it.

- ☛ “*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God*” (Eph 3:17-19).
- ☛ “*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*” (Col 1:9).
- ☛ “*That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*” (Phil 3:10).

What are the benefits of the Old

Covenant in comparison to that? What insight under the First Covenant can equate to such marvelous provisions as those realized in Christ Jesus?

What Paul will now say is the result of his spiritual insight. He is not stating an official sectarian creed or position – a practice that is common in our day. He is not arguing for the superiority of a certain segment of the Christian community, or for a favored human movement. He rather speaks as one who is himself participating in, and enjoying, the New Covenant – one who is in fellowship with. This is nothing less than the expression of insightful “*newness of life.*”

Here is another glorious benefit of the New Covenant: there are lasting benefits to be enjoyed. Under the Old Covenant, most, if not all, of the benefits were temporal.

THAT WE HAVE

“*. . . that we have . . .*” Other versions read, “*since we have,*”^{NKJV} “*Having,*”^{NASB} “*we know,*”^{LIVING} “*cherishing,*”^{Weymouth} and “*as I have.*”^{Williams}

Here is another glorious benefit of the New Covenant: **there are lasting benefits to be enjoyed.** Under the Old Covenant, most, if not all, of the benefits were temporal. Allow me to briefly provide a sampling of those benefits. They are found in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy.

- ☛ Blessed in the city.
- ☛ Blessed in the field.
- ☛ Blessed shall be the fruit of the body.
- ☛ Blessed shall be the fruit of the land.
- ☛ Blessed shall be the fruit of the cattle.
- ☛ Blessed shall be the increase of the oxen.
- ☛ Blessed shall be the flocks of sheep.

- ☛ Blessed shall be the basket and bowl.
- ☛ Blessed when coming in.
- ☛ Blessed when going out.
- ☛ Enemies smitten before thy face.
- ☛ A blessing commanded on the storehouses.
- ☛ A blessing upon all you set your hand to do.
- ☛ Blessed in the land given to them.
- ☛ Publicly established as a people unto God when the people of the earth saw

them plenteous in goods, in the fruit of their body, fruit of their cattle, and fruit of the ground.

- ☛ The Lord would give them rain in its season.
- ☛ The Lord would bless the work of their hand.
- ☛ They would lend to nations and not borrow.

How do these blessings compare with those realized under the “*better covenant that was established upon better promises*”? Under that Old Covenant there were **no** blessings of remission of sin, justification, or remembering sin no more. Fellowship with Deity is not promised, nor is the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is no mention of eternal life, or even the resurrection of the dead. Access to God is not promised, nor is mercy to help in the time of need. Not one of these things was promised under the Law. **ALL of them are realized in the New Covenant** (Acts 10:43; Rom 5:10; Heb 8:12; 1 Cor 1:9; Acts 2:38; 1 John

5:13; 1 Cor 15:51-52; Eph 3:12; Heb 4:16)!

How would a statement like this fit into that impressive Deuteronomy list? *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love”* (Eph 1:3-4).

There is no immediate need to further develop this aspect of the New Covenant. It is enough to now observe that there is such a thing as speaking out of a state of spiritual insight. **There are benefits that, when possessed, provoke remarkable insights and expression.** Further, what is not possessed cannot be enjoyed or bring benefit. It is ever true, *“The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits”* (2 Tim 2:6).

We Have!

Thus Paul will now speak of something he possesses – *“seeing we have!”* He will not speak as a philosopher, but as one who himself possesses the benefit considered. He will not speak as the representative of a specific religious movement or denomination. He was called of God, and appointed an Apostle by the Lord Jesus Himself. He will not depart from that calling and appointment when he speaks or writes, but will express himself as a called and appointed messenger of Christ.

No Place for Speculation or Supposition

Let it also be clear in your mind, **effectual ministry cannot be accomplished through speculation or supposition.** The one who ministers for God must not envelop his teaching with theoretical scenarios, abstract possibilities, and mere hypotheses. Men cannot be called out of darkness into light by such paltry means. Neither, indeed, can the saints of God be edified by such presentations. It is most unfortunate that so much of this kind of preaching and teaching dominates the church world. Further, it should surprise no one that so many moral and spiritual challenges are particularly facing the American church. It has become a seed-bed for how-to merchants, purported problem solvers,

counselors, recovery experts and the likes. **Our text is showing us the approach of a God-sent holy man to difficulties in the church.**

SUCH HOPE

“ . . . such hope . . . ” Other versions read, *“such a hope,”* ^{NASB} *“such trust,”* ^{GENEVA} *“a hope like this,”* ^{NJB} *“such confidence,”* ^{NLT} and *“such [glorious] hope (such joyful and confident expectation).”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word *“hope”* comes from the Greek word ἐλπίδα (el-pie-da). From the etymological point of view it means *“expectation of good, hope, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation . . . certainty.”* ^{THAYER} Other lexical meanings are, *“good hope, expectation, prospect, hopeful confidence,”* ^{FRIEBERG} *“Hoping against hope; ground or basis of hope; what is hoped for,”* ^{UBS} and *“look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial.”* ^{LOUW-NIDA}

As used in this text, *“hope”* is a noun, not a verb. **It is not something that is done, but something owned or possessed – “we HAVE such hope.”** In this sense, we find *“hope”* mentioned eighteen times in the New Covenant Scriptures (Acts 24:16; Rom 4:18; 5:4; 15:4; 2 Cor 3:12; 10:15; Gal 5:5; Eph 2:12; Phil 1:20; Col 1:5; 1 Thess 4:13; 5:8; 2

joined together in hope. A fervent longing is found for the Lord Himself and the blessing that He confers. There is also an expectation and persuasion that what is desired will be realized. There is no doubt in hope, and thus it stabilizes the soul.

This “hope” involves a firm persuasion that all will be well with us when the Lord appears in all of His glory (Col 3:4). It is the conviction that when we stand before the throne of God we will be *“faultless”* in His sight (Jude 1:24-25). This is a *“hope”* that constrains the individual to *“purify himself, even as He is pure”* (1 John 3:3). It is a hope that is caused to *“abound”* in us by the Holy Spirit Himself (Rom 15:13). This is the *“hope”* by which we are *“saved”* (Rom 8:24-25). That is, those possessing this hope do, in fact, work out their own salvation *“with fear and trembling”* (Phil 2:12).

Hope in the Book of Hebrews

The *“hope”* of which Paul speaks, together with all of its various aspects, has sprung from the New Covenant itself. **It is as though the New Covenant was the mother of this marvelous hope.** The association of the New Covenant with *“hope”* is not an unusual



Thess 2:16; Tit 2:13; 3:7; 1 Pet 1:3,21; 1 John 3:3).

Peter reminds us that God has *“begotten us again unto a lively hope”* – *“a living hope”* ^{NKJV} (1 Pet 1:3). Another version reads, *“we have been born again to an ever-living hope.”* ^{AMPLIFIED} **That is, we have been born again in order that this “hope” might dwell within us.** This is a *“hope”* that cannot be possessed by those who have **not** been *“created in Christ Jesus”* (Eph 2:10).

Desire and expectation are

one. The book of Hebrews also makes this association. After affirming that *“the Law made nothing perfect,”* the Spirit declares, *“but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God”* (Heb 7:19). Here again, the *“hope”* that is possessed is the direct result of the New Covenant itself. Within that covenant, in which the Law is put into the mind and written upon the heart, a filial relation between God and the people is formed, and sins are remembered no more. *“Hope”* is thus ushered into a place of prominence and becomes powerful constraint to godliness (1 John 3:3).

This “hope” is clearly seen as being central in the life of faith. Thus we are said to be Christ’s house “*IF we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*” (Heb 3:6). Again, we are told of the “*full assurance of hope*” that is to be maintained “*unto the end*” (Heb 6:11). Coming to the Lord is also depicted as having “*fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us*” (Heb 6:18). Again, this hope is so integral to spiritual life that it is said to be “*an*

anchor of the soul, both steadfast and sure, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Heb 6:19).

All of this has to do with the New Covenant itself, which, together with its Mediator, is expounded in the book of Hebrews (7:22; 8:6-13; 9:15-20; 10:16-17,19; 12:24).

As used in our text, “*hope*” is a summary word that gathers together

all of the benefits of the New Covenant into a single expression. It affirms the marvelous effects of that covenant, and confirms its superiority in every way. Participation in this covenant alters every aspect of human thought. The glory of the covenant that Jesus is presently mediating impacts upon every facet of newness of life. That is the kind of “*hope*” we now have – as Paul said, “*we have such hope.*” Now he will tell how its effects upon his preaching.

GREAT PLAINNESS OF SPEECH

“^{12b} . . . we use great plainness of speech”

How, as well as what, a man preaches or teaches reveals what he has seen. Now Paul will share how his understanding of the Gospel and the New Covenant impacted his preaching.

WE USE

“ . . . we use . . . ” Other versions read, “*we are,*”^{NIV} “*we act,*”^{NRSV} “*we can,*”^{LIVING} and “*we speak.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Mat 13:52). Such a person does not have to constantly draw upon the wisdom of others, but has a reservoir of wisdom himself. I have often noted that the most insightful writers provide a rather brief bibliography.

When Paul says “*we use,*” he is referring to the manner in which he

^{LIVING} “*speak without reserve,*”^{Weymouth} “*with the greatest boldness,*”^{Williams} and “*we speak very freely and openly and fearlessly.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

The word “*plainness*” does not mean simplistic or juvenile. It comes from the Greek word *παρησιᾶ* (par-ray-sia), which means “*freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speaking . . . freely, openly, frankly, without concealment.*”^{THAYER} Other lexical meanings are “*boldness, plainness, outspokenness, openness, with courage, confidence, and boldness,*”^{FRIEBERG} “*before the public,*”^{UBS} “*a state of boldness and confidence, sometimes implying intimidating circumstances,*”^{LOUW-NIDA} and “*freespokenness, openness, frankness.*”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

This Greek word is used several places in Scripture. That usage will confirm the idea that is being conveyed in this text.

- ☛ “*And he spake that saying openly*” (Mark 8:32).
- ☛ “*For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world*” (John 7:4).
- ☛ “*Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews*” (John 7:13).
- ☛ “*Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing*” (John 18:20).

The objective of preaching is to put the truth of God within the reach of honest and good hearts.

The good preacher is a kind of builder. He constructs a message with words – words “*which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual*” (1 Cor 2:13). **The objective of preaching is to put the truth of God within the reach of honest and good hearts.**

Another facet of delivering the truth of God is drawing upon spiritual resources that are **personally possessed**. Jesus spoke of this kingdom manner in this way. “*Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is*

crafted his speech. We will find that manner was very deliberate, and was couched within the framework of an acute awareness of the nature and content of the New Covenant.

GREAT PLAINNESS OF SPEECH

“ . . . great plainness of speech. ” Other versions read, “*great boldness,*”^{NKJV} “*are very bold,*”^{NRSV} “*keep nothing back,*”^{BBE} “*use much boldness,*”^{DARBY} “*use much confidence,*”^{DOUAY} “*act very boldly,*”^{NAB} “*with complete fearlessness,*”^{NJB} “*can be very bold,*”^{NLT} “*use much freedom of speech,*”^{YLT} “*preach with great boldness,*”

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“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth **boldly**, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:19).

Other texts using this word include John 7:26 (boldly); 10:24 (plainly); 11:14,54 (plainly, openly); 16:25,29 (plainly, plainly); 2 Cor 7:4 (boldness); Phil 1:20 (boldness); Col 2:15 (openly); 1 John 5:14 (confidence).

The meaning of using “great plainness of speech” is multifaceted. **In summary, it means Paul speech was designed to open up the truth to the people – all of it.** It involves speaking with candor, or being frank. It also includes speaking confidently, knowing in himself the truth and power of what he spoke.

Plainness of Speech

The expression “great plainness of speech” does not refer to vocabulary. **Paul neither spoke nor wrote using a juvenile vocabulary.** His doctrine certainly was not simplistic. Some men are still finding it difficult to comprehend what Paul said and wrote. Concerning his writings, Peter said they contained “some things hard to be understood” (2 Pet 3:16). Those familiar with the writings of Paul have never suggested they were “on a sixth to eighth grade level.” They have proved challenging to the most prodigious thinkers throughout the last two thousand years.

Think of some of the key words used in Second Corinthians: “tribulation,” “consolation,” “partakers,” “conscience,” “sincerity,” “acknowledge,” “confidence,” “establishes,” “anointed,” “earnest,” “determined,” “anguish,” “sufficient,” “advantage,” “triumph,” “savor,” “corrupt,” “commendation,” “manifestly,” “testament,” and “covenant” (chapters 1-3). **Are these words for “children?”** Even among

mature adults, most of them require extensive explanation – particularly regarding how they are used in Scripture.

Ponder some of the concepts that have been expressed thus far on this book: “Father of mercies,” “partakers of the sufferings,” “despaired even of life,” “according to the flesh,” “the earnest of the Spirit,” “helpers of your joy, anguish of heart,” “swallowed up of overmuch sorrow,” “the savor of His knowledge,” “fleshly tables of the heart,” “the ministration of death,” “the ministration of the Spirit,” “the ministration of condemnation,” and “the ministration of righteousness” (Chapters 1-3). Are these phrases on a sixth to eighth grade level? Are they the kind of phrases used by the immature?

Forever put behind you the notion

not openly declared. It also involves boldness and confidence. That is, there was no question in his mind about the realities concerning which he spoke. But there is more to this than these things.

The point Paul is making is that he took care to leave the people thinking about the right thing. He did not leave the people thinking about domestic, political, and social aspects of life. He did not leave them thinking primarily of this world and the affairs that take place in it. When men heard him speak they began to think about God, what He has purposed, and their relationship to Him. They began making an association between the Lord Jesus Christ and what God has revealed concerning His eternal purpose. Living was seen in the light of what God has provided, and the end toward which all

In summary, it means Paul speech was designed to open up the truth to the people – all of it. It involves speaking with candor, or being frank. It also includes speaking confidently, knowing in himself the truth and power of what he spoke.

that “plainness of speech” means simple speech that is easily understood by the unlearned or immature!

MORE TO THE POINT

Allow me to get more to the point of the text. If “plainness” does not relate to vocabulary and the manner in which sentences are phrased, just what does it mean?

Regarding the manner in which Paul spoke, “plainness” means in a straightforward and uncompromising manner. It also means publicly, or openly. Paul held no secret doctrines that were

things are advancing.

Our preaching must not leave people in doubt concerning “the end of all things.” There must be no question about what the Lord expects of us, and the resources that belong to us in Christ Jesus. **The Person, accomplishments, and present ministry of Jesus must not be vague. The nature and content of the New Covenant must not remain an area of confusion.** “Great plainness of speech” involves speaking in such a manner as to allow for men being oriented for glory.

NOT AS MOSES

“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.”

Paul now speaks more specifically to the manner in which He spoke – how he preached among the people. He did not

come to obscure the truth, but to make it known. He knew that his commission was to *“open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light”* (Acts 26:18). Therefore he endeavored to *“make all men see”* the glorious realities that had been revealed to him (Eph 3:9).

An uninformed people who have no real understanding of the New Covenant bring no glory to Jesus. When spiritual ignorance reigns in the professed church it is a source of shame, regardless of any other professed advancements that have been made. That

was *“ordained”* (Gal 3:19). He is so intricately associated with the Law that twenty-two times it is called *“the law of Moses”* (Josh 8:31,32; 23:6; Judges 4:11; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 23:25; 2 Chron 23:18; 30:16; Ezra 3:2; 7:6; Neh 8:1; Dan 9:11,13; Mal 4:4; Lk 2:22; 24:44; John 7:23; Acts 13:39; 15:5; 28:23; 1 Cor 9:9). For this reason, the nature of the Law will be associated with the glory that Moses face, and with the manner in which he handled it, when he was giving the Law. Paul will compare how Moses gave the Law with how he himself has delivered the good news of the Gospel, which is the message

transformed his face, but his face could not transform the people. Transforming glory only passes to the first generation. **The “changed” generation cannot of itself provoke change in the next generation.**

It ought to be said here that accommodating to a carnal state belongs more to the Old Covenant than to the new. **Those who insist on, what is commonly called, “seeker friendly services,” have actually instituted an Old Covenant practice.** They are putting a veil over their face, so to speak. This text particularly bears on this subject. Paul says that when he preached he did **NOT** do so as Moses, who had to veil his face, reducing its brightness lest the people be turned away.

It is always a sign of deficiency when the things of God cannot be uttered plainly. Thus Jesus said to His disciples, *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now”* (John 16:12). Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able”* (1 Cor 3:2). Again, he wrote to the Hebrews concerning Melchizedec, *“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing”* (Heb 5:11).

None of these people were in a commendable state. Further, these expressions did not suggest that Jesus and Paul lisped to the people in spiritual baby talk. The things Jesus said to His disciples on the evening of His betray are still subjects of great consideration. They were not for the disinterested. **Paul’s writings to the Corinthians still engage the thoughts of profoundly intelligent men, and the book of Hebrews is nowhere viewed as shallow.**

Jesus and Paul did not reduce the luster of the truths they communicated, toning them down, so to speak. They rather had lofty things to say that could not be said because of the condition of the people. For Jesus’ disciples, the *“Sun of*

An uninformed people who have no real understanding of the New Covenant bring no glory to Jesus. When spiritual ignorance reigns in the professed church it is a source of shame, regardless of any other professed advancements that have been made.

is precisely why Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame”* (1 Cor 15:34).

In view of the above statement, lacking spiritual understanding is not a minor deficiency. It is rather a door through which sin can enter and righteousness can leave. **Where men must be awakened and admonished to “sin not” there is a serious inadequacy in the knowledge of God.** That is why Paul is laboring to unfold the glory of the New Covenant and the manner of his preaching.

NOT AS MOSES

“And not as Moses . . .” Other versions read, *“unlike Moses,”* ^{NKJV} *“We are not like Moses,”* ^{NIV} *“not according as Moses,”* ^{DARBY} *“as not as Moses did,”* ^{LIVING} and *“Now [do we act] like Moses.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Moses is set forth because he was the one through whom the Law was given. As it is written, *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). He is the *“mediator”* in whose hands the Law

of the New Covenant.

A VEILED FACE

“. . . which put a veil over his face . . .” Other versions read, *“who used to put a veil over his face,”* ^{NASB} *“who would put a veil over his face,”* ^{NIV} *“who was putting a veil upon his own face,”* ^{VLT} *“who always wore a covering over his face,”* ^{IE} *“who used to throw a veil over his face,”* ^{Weymouth} *“who kept covering his face,”* ^{ISV} and *“who used to cover his face with a veil.”* ^{Montgomery}

When Moses was before the Lord, he uncovered his face. **When he was before the people he covered it.** This was his regular manner until the glory faded away, as suggested in Exodus 34:34-35. *“But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.”* He had to adapt himself to the people. He had to accommodate himself to their weakness. **The glory of the Lord**

righteousness” had not yet risen to His zenith, and thus what COULD be known was limited. For the Corinthians and the Hebrews, they had not availed themselves of the glory that was available to them, and thus became incapable of receiving the precious things of God. Neither Jesus nor Paul reduced the glory of the things they could not deliver to the people. They rather withheld them from the people.

THEY COULD NOT LOOK STEADFASTLY

“ . . . that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look . . . ” Other versions read, “so that the children of Israel could not steadily look,”^{NKJV} “that the sons of Israel could not look intently,”^{NASB} “to keep the Israelites from gazing,”^{NIV} “so that the Israelites might not see,”^{RSV} “so that the children of Israel might not see clearly,”^{BBE} “so that the children of Israel should not fix their eyes,”^{DARBY} “so that the Israelites should not watch,”^{NJB} “He wanted to stop the sons of Israel from staring at it,”^{IE} “to hide from the gaze of the children of Israel,”^{Weymouth} and “to keep the children of Israel from beholding.”^{Montgomery}

The children of Israel could not fix their gaze upon Moses. **Their eyes simply were not adapted to the splendor that emanated from his face.** They could not concentrate on the glory of Moses’ face, to say nothing of the Source of that glory.

In order for the people to look at Moses at all, he had to cover the glory that attended the giving of the Law – the secondary, or reflected, glory that was found in His face. The people could glance at the glory, but they could not gaze upon it. **We will find that transformation cannot come by glances, glimpses, and brief exposures to Divine glory.**

A Plague of Our Times

One of the particular plagues of our time is the consistently limited exposure to the things of God that is found in the modern church. Every individual is given one hundred and sixty-eight hours a week – a stewardship from the Lord. The average American church, at the best, offers these people approximately four hours a week (2.2%) of supposedly concentrated exposure to the things of God – and that is an

extremely charitable view. Two hours on Sunday Morning, maybe one hour Sunday evening, and perchance one hour on Wednesday evening. Many people only avail themselves of the first two hours (1.1%). Even during these times, very little is really given to the people that comes under the heading of “*glory*.” I am viewing this in the most favorable light, and even that view is questionable in our country.

Clarification

To clarify the matter, and to remove any ambiguity from this subject,

When people so not fix their gaze upon what God has given, they cannot possibly be changed or advantaged by it. In such a case moral and spiritual become an impossibility! Those who consider spiritual things occasionally, and do not take them into their hearts for meditation and consideration cannot be profited or advanced by them! They cannot grow

here is what I am saying. **When people do not fix their gaze upon what God has given, they cannot possibly be changed or advantaged by it.** In such a case moral and spiritual advance become an impossibility! Those who consider spiritual things occasionally, and do not take them into their hearts for meditation and consideration **cannot** be profited or bettered by them! They cannot grow! If people think they have actually gained some spiritual benefit from such brief exposure, they have only been deceived.

TO THE END OF THAT

“ . . . to the end of that . . . ” Other versions read, “at the end,”^{NKJV} “while the,”^{NIV} “on the face of,”^{DOUAY} “at the outcome,”^{ESV} “at the cessation,”^{NAB} “while the radiance,”^{NIB} “the passing,”^{Montgomery} and “the finish of.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The comparison Paul is making is that of briefly glancing upon a fading glory, versus looking intently upon an increasing glory. When Israel glanced at Moses’ face, they were beholding an ending or terminating glory. **It was in**

the process of fading away – and they could not even bear to behold that kind of glory. They could not become engrossed in something that was in the process of passing away.

IS ABOLISHED

“ . . . which is abolished.” Other versions read, “what was passing away,”^{NKJV} “what was fading away,”^{NASB} “that was being set aside,”^{NRSV} “the fading splendor,”^{RSV} “the present order of things,”^{BBE} “of that annulled,”^{DARBY} “that which is made void,”^{DOUAY} “what was being brought to an end,”^{ESV} “what was

transitory,”^{NJB} “that which be being made useless,”^{YLT} “the vanishing [splendor which had been upon it].”^{AMPLIFIED}

That which “*is abolished*” is the glory coming from Moses’ face. The reason the glory that attended the giving of the Old Covenant was coming to an end was because that covenant itself was to be abolished, or annulled. **God would render void the covenant that relied upon human discipline and effort.** It is not possible for salvation to be implemented by such a means. That is why it, and its attending glory, was done away.

One might reason that such a covenant should not have been given in the first place. “What purpose can be served,” says the carnal mind, “by a covenant that was intended to be temporary?” The answer to this is seen in the following. **Because a thing is temporary does not mean it has no benefit while it is in place.** The ark that Noah built was temporary, but who would say it had no benefit? Journeying through a wilderness to the promised land

was temporary, but who would venture to suggest it was not profitable? Christ's tenure in this world as a man was temporary, but that by no means suggests it was not beneficial, and even absolutely essential. His post-resurrection time with His disciples was temporary, lasting only forty days. Yet, those days were filled with profit and spiritual gain.

One Final Thought

I cannot leave this section without

observing that even an inferior glory in its decline was too glorious for the Israelites to steadfastly behold. That glory was only introductory, and was really "no glory" when compared to the magnificent glory that is inherent in the Gospel of Christ. It ought to be abundantly evident that unless God provides for a fundamental change in men, there is no hope of them ever being able to concentrate on Him.

BUTTRESSING THE POINT

Allow me to again buttress this point. Paul affirms that his ministry was not after the manner of Moses' ministry. **He did not come before the people with a shroud over the message to dull its glory. He did not detract from the grandness of the message by dabbling in inferior matters, or speaking of things that are less offensive to the flesh.** He did not adapt his message for those who were offended by the truth.

THEIR MINDS WERE BLINDED

"^{14a} *But their minds were blinded . . .*"

The Spirit now leads Paul to expound the Sinaitic experience more precisely. He will explain WHY the Israelites were not capable of beholding Divine glory – **why they could not dwell upon the thoughts that came from God.** These days there is an enormous amount of explanation extant in the religious community – and most of it is miserably fleshly and extremely distant from the truth. Since the church has been captured by opportunists, the psychologists and students of human behavior have been allowed to explain why people are deficient. They tell us it is because of their environment, or the bad experiences they have had in early life. Perhaps they were "abused," or have some physiological deficiency in their genes. Maybe they have an illness that makes them emotionally unstable. It is even possible, they tell us, that they have a natural propensity to drugs and other addictive substances. Some even attempt to trace significant spiritual differences to gender, the family tree, or even a "generational curse."

Whatever you may think of these approaches, you will note they are totally absent in the Word of God. That is, God never moved any holy man to speak in this way. Explanations for transgression, the inability to understand the things of God, and a failure to love and concentrate on the truth are simply not approached in that way.

The following is the real explanation for why people cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. The Spirit will use Israel as the premier example of **not** understanding – a people who lived under an inferior covenant that was established on inferior promises.

THEIR MINDS

"*But their minds . . .*" Other versions read, "*their thoughts,*"^{DARBY} and "*their senses.*"^{DOUAY}

There is a great deal of emphasis these days on emotional matters. A lot of the modern praise and worship movement is rooted more in the fragile and unstable emotional, or soulish, makeup of men. **However, when**

explaining why Israel could not gaze upon the glory attending the Old Covenant, the Spirit will not speak of their emotional makeup, but of their "*mind*" – their rational and cognitive constitution.

The "*mind*" has to do with the domain of thought – the powers of reasoning, and understanding. It involves the exercise of the part of man that is in the image of God – the part that can purpose, will, and motivate. **Deficiency in this party of our being is the worst inadequacy of all.**

Jesus declared that even the Law required that God be loved "*with all thy mind*" (Matt 22:37). One of the indictments against Israel was that their "*thoughts*" were not the thoughts of God: "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts*" (Isa 55:8-9). Under the Old Covenant David was given to see that the wicked are condemned because "*God is not in all his thoughts*" (Psa 10:4).

Paul is reasoning in the Spirit. In the flesh, it was Israel's eyes that could not bear to gaze upon the face of Moses. That condition, however, reflected a problem of far greater proportions.

WERE BLINDED

"*. . . were blinded . . .*" Other versions read, "*were hardened,*"^{NASB} "*were made dull,*"^{NIV} "*were made hard,*"^{BEBE} "*were rendered dull,*"^{NAB} "*were closed,*"^{NJB} "*his people's minds and understanding were veiled and blinded too,*"^{LIVING} and "*their minds were grown*

However, when explaining why Israel could not gaze upon the glory attending the Old Covenant, the Spirit will not speak of their emotional makeup, but of their "mind" – their rational and cognitive constitution.

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hard and calloused [they had become dull and had lost the power of understanding]. ^{AMPLIFIED}

Note carefully Paul says. He does not say Israel was blind, but that they were “*blinded*.” They were not dull, but were “*made dull*.” They were not hard, but were “*hardened*.” They were not a people with weak understanding but “*lost the power of understanding*.”

It was the glory that blinded their minds, just as surely as the blinding light of Christ’s glory blinded Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:8-9). **Just as the dazzling glory of Moses face was too much for their natural eyes, so the holy and spiritual law given to them was too much for their minds.** It had the same effect upon their reasoning powers as the glory of Moses’ face had upon their eyes. This was because the Law had the glory of God in it, even though it was nothing to compare with the astonishing glory that is seen “*in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor 4:6).

A marvelous thing is seen in this text. It is alluded to elsewhere in other ways. For example, it was through the commandment that Paul says “*sin revived and I died*” (Rom 7:9). Sin, “*by the commandment*” became “*exceeding sinful*” (Rom 7:13). This perfectly parallels the subject of this text. **It was through the glory attending the giving of the Law that the minds of Israel were blinded!** The very same glory that drew Moses to inquire for further revelation, caused Israel to retreat in fear, crying out, “*let not God speak with us, lest we die*” (Ex 20:19).

AN APPLICATION

Why is it that so many “church folk” demand that less of the Word be spoken, and that not much time be spent

in dialog about “*the things of the Spirit*” (Rom 8:5; 12 Cor 2:14). Why are discussions about the Scriptures themselves in so little demand? **It is because they are “blinded” by the glory of the truth.** It is actually abrasive to them, and thus they do not want to hear it. God therefore passes judgment upon them, **imposing spiritual blindness upon them**, because they have not “*received the love of the truth that they might be saved*” (2

should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess 2:10-12).

Spiritual ignorance is not the manner of the kingdom over which Jesus is presiding. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the New Covenant! Wherever it persists, it reveals hearts that are fundamentally corrupt. Oh, the curse of a blinded mind –

Just as the dazzling glory of Moses face was too much for their natural eyes, so the holy and spiritual law given to them was too much for their minds. It had the same effect upon their reasoning powers as the glory of Moses’ face had upon their eyes.

Thess 2:10). Under the Old Covenant that imposed blindness is described by Isaiah. “*For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned*” (Isa 29:10-12).

Under the New Covenant, such blindness is described by Paul. “*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they*

a mind that God renders incapable of perceiving His truth! This is why the Gospel, **when perceived**, is seen as announcing personal salvation. “*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*” (Eph 1:13).

That very same Gospel proves to be the basis of condemnation to others, who are blighted by its glory as Israel was blinded by the smaller glory of the Law. Truth withers the reasoning powers of unbelievers. “*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*” (Acts 13:46).

THE SAME VEIL REMAINS

“^{14b} . . . for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament . . .”

Having a heart for Israel as he does, Paul brings the matter up-to-date, showing that the blindness of reference did not terminate at Sinai. Nor, indeed, did it cease after Jesus had been

enthroned for those who remained aloof from the Lord.

In this “*instruction in righteousness*,” the Apostle is explaining

why Corinth had lapsed into carnality, and why divisions were among them (1 Cor 3:1-3). This is why they had been so indifferent concerning the fornicator that was once among them (1 Cor 5:1-6). This is the reason for them suing one another at the law (1 Cor 6:6). It is why they were indifferent about causing their brethren to stumble (1 Cor 8:11-13). This condition accounted for them questioning Paul's apostleship (1 Cor 9:1-2). It was why they had not taken the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner (1 Cor 11:28-30).

It is imperative that holy men and women rise up in this generation who can properly account for the unbelief that pervades our society. Those who are offering fleshly explanations for this condition ought to be expelled from the pulpits and teaching desks of the land.

UNTIL THIS DAY

"... for until this day..." Other versions read, "until this very day,"^{NASB} "Indeed, to this very day,"^{NRSV} "For, until this present day,"^{NAB} "and even to this day,"^{NLT} and "Even now."^{LIVING}

Nearly six hundred years after

five years after Isaiah, Jeremiah declared the same condition existed: "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not" (Jer 5:21).

In Jesus' day, this veil remained over the hearts of many of the people. This is why He said, "Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word" (John 8:43). It is why He spoke in parables to the general populace, only opening the truth to His disciples. As He Himself said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark 4:11-12).

To put it another way, wherever this veil is present, God has not given people a heart to perceive or ears to hear. As Moses well said, "And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto

tender heart, who received any degree of understanding.

THE SAME VEIL

"... remaineth the same veil..."

Other versions read, "the selfsame veil,"^{DOUAY} "the same covering,"^{GENEVA} "a veil,"^{NLT} and "a thick veil."^{LIVING}

That is, the reason for the rejection of and failure to understand something coming from God is always the same! Israel is the premier demonstration of this circumstance. The very day the Jews in Corinth "opposed Paul and became abusive" (Acts 18:6), it was for exactly the same reason that drove Israel's plea to Moses that God speak no more with them (Ex 20:19). When "the Jews which believed not" in Thessalonica were "moved with envy," setting the whole city in an uproar because of their opposition to Paul (Acts 17:5), it was because the "same veil" remained.

We should not be naive about our times. **When the Gospel is rejected, and men prefer rules and regulations to the truth that makes man free, it is because of "the same veil."** There is always a reason why the truth is not received, and it is never good.

UNTAKEN AWAY

"... untaken away..." Other versions read "remains unlifted,"^{NKJV} "remains... it has not been taken away"^{NIV} "is still there,"^{NRSV} "rests thereon,"^{Montgomery} and "not being lifted [to reveal]."^{AMPLIFIED}

Moses could remove the veil from his face – and he did when he went in before the Lord (Ex 34:34). But the veil with which Israel, and all unbelievers, now contend **cannot be removed by themselves.** It must be "taken away." That is something that can only occur through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is now administrating the Kingdom.

Notice the transition in thought. When the Old Covenant was given, a veil had to be imposed because of the aloofness of the people. **That is, the Old Covenant performed its function accompanied by obscurity and a lack of understanding.** Now, however, since the door of salvation has been swung open

It is imperative that holy men and women rise up in this generation who can properly account for the unbelief that pervades our society. Those who are offering fleshly explanations for this condition ought to be expelled from the pulpits and teaching desks of the land.

Moses' death, Isaiah affirmed this veil still obscured the fading glory from Israel. He said it this way: "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isa 6:9-10).

At least one hundred and twenty-

all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (Deut 29:2-4).

Behold the remarkable strength of unbelief! At the time Paul wrote this, the unbelief had continued uninterrupted for over 1,500 years – "until this day!" Only here and there did anyone arise with a

and the “acceptable time” has arrived, it is essential that the veil be removed. **The New Covenant cannot function with the presence of obscurity and a lack of understanding.** It is not that kind of covenant.

The next verse (15) will confirm that the veil is no longer over Moses’ face, but has not been transferred to the heart of the people. I will expound this more fully when we cover that text.

IN THE READING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

“ . . . in the reading of the old testament . . . ” Other versions read, “at the reading of the old covenant,”^{NASB} “when the old covenant is read,”^{NIV} “when they hear the reading of the old covenant,”^{NRSV} “at the reading of the old agreement,”^{BBE} “whenever the old covenant is being read,”^{NLT} “when the Scripture is read,”^{LIVING} “during the reading of the book of the ancient covenant,”^{Weymouth} and “at the public reading of the Old Testament.”^{Montgomery}

If this refers to the general reading of Moses and the Prophets, this is the only place in Scripture where the “Old

It is possible, therefore, for an individual or group of individuals to be subjected to the reading of God’s Word without realizing any benefit from it.

Testament,” or “Old Covenant,” is applied to that section of Scripture (Genesis through Malachi). I do not doubt that this is, indeed, what is intended by this expression. It is proper because the Covenant made with Israel at Sinai was the context in which the rest of the Jewish Scriptures were written. The rebukes of the Prophets were all owing to Israel breaking the covenant that had been made with them. Their promises of a coming Savior, or Messiah, were all driven by the acute sense of a need for a Savior that was ministered by the Law.

However, now, Paul affirms, although the Jews gave themselves to the reading of Scripture, it had no profit for them. A veil was over their hearts. **It is possible, therefore, for an individual or group of individuals to be subjected to the reading of God’s**

Word without realizing any benefit from it. That is not an ideal situation, but it is a very real one. Although essential, the reading of Scripture itself has no transforming power. It must be heard by ears that can hear, and hearts that are tender.

Contemporary Experience

Many of us have encountered a similar situation. We have sat in Sunday School classes, and listened to sermons in which some of the Scriptures were read. Yet, no apparent profit was realized from that reading. All manner of explanations may be offered for this circumstance. However, we find in this text **the reason** why ignorance prevails among those who profess a relationship to God. **Where there is a continued lack of spiritual understanding, a veil is present.** It is there because of the nature of the people.

DONE AWAY IN CHRIST

“^{14c} . . . which veil is done away in Christ.”

With the skill of a spiritual surgeon, the apostle removes every excuse for failing to understand the truth of God. **In the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, no provision has been made for remaining in a state of fundamental ignorance.** There is, in the covenant itself and the message that heralds it, a transforming glory. It is a glory that is not hidden to those who have received the love of the truth.

WHICH VEIL

“ . . . which veil . . . ” Other versions read, “This veil of misunderstanding.”^{LIVING}

This veil is one that prohibits understanding, comprehension, and

perception. It stops the individual from seeing the glory that is so abundant in the Gospel message, and the New Covenant that is presently being mediated by Jesus. In Christ Jesus, we have been subjected to a transcendent glory. Even so, a veil is out of place in this Covenant. This is a covenant blessing, insight, and comprehension. It is one in which participation is realized, and consequent transformation. Even the “law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Eph 2:15) is seen with great clarity. For those who are coming to Christ, that fading glory persuades them of their absolute lack of righteousness, and need for a Savior. For those in Christ, the Old Scriptures become a source of comfort and patience (Rom 15:4). They are an effective source of admonition (1 Cor 10:11), and make us “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim 3:15). This is how they are seen in Christ.

Ponder some of the statements made of the transcendent glory found in the New Covenant. It will assist us in understanding the inferiority of the glory attending the Old Covenant, as well as the passing away of primary ignorance in Christ.

- ☛ “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead **by the glory of the Father**, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4).
- ☛ “And that He might make known **the riches of His glory** on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory” (Rom 9:23).
- ☛ “Having predestinated us unto the

adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of **the glory of His grace**, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6).

- “That he would grant you, according to **the riches of his glory**, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph 3:16).
- “But my God shall supply all your need according to **His riches in glory** by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19).

exists, the very nature of the covenant has been violated, and a condition of unbelief is uncovered. This may appear too strong for some, but it is an accurate representation of the case.

DONE AWAY IN CHRIST

“ . . . is done away in Christ.” Other versions read, “is taken away in Christ,” NKJV “because it is removed in Christ,” NASB “because only in Christ is it taken away,” NIV “since only in Christ is it set aside,” NRSV “because only through Christ is it taken away,” RSV “it not being revealed to them that it is done away in Christ,” ASV “which in Christ is annulled,”

- It is legally removed by the Lord Himself – “done away.” KJV
- Because it is contrary to the nature of the New Covenant, and there is no further place for it, it is “taken away.” NKJV
- It can no longer be seen on the landscape of redemption – it has been “removed.” NASB
- Because a superior covenant with a superior glory is now in place, the former covenant with its glory has been “taken away.” RSV
- Although once valid as a means of approach to God, it has not been “annulled.” DOUAY
- Because the Law has no utility in making men righteous, or obtaining Divine approval, in those matters it has become “useless.” YLT

Remember, it is the “veil” that is “done away.” It is the covering of the glory that has been obviated. The concealment of the covenantal glory no longer exists. Ignorance has been dashed to the ground, and now it is “the knowledge of God” that becomes the critical factor.

- “Who being **the brightness of His glory**, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb 1:3).
- “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for **the spirit of glory** and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pet 4:14).

This is a glory that is not intended to be veiled, while the glory that accompanied the giving of the Law HAD to be veiled. While men tend to take refuge in a religion of mystery, Jesus came to bring one of understanding, confidence, and assurance. It is wholly inappropriate for the veil of ignorance to remain in those who are in Christ Jesus. In fact, it is here declared that the veil is “done away in Christ.” **There is no place for it in the Lord Jesus!** Wherever, therefore, that veil

DOUAY “And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ,” NLT “which in Christ is being made useless,” YLT “it is only in Christ that it is to be abolished,” Weymouth “Only in union with Christ is that veil removed,” Williams and “in Christ it is made void and done away.” AMPLIFIED

Remember, it is the “veil” that is “done away.” **It is the covering of the glory that has been obviated.** The concealment of the covenantal glory no longer exists. Ignorance has been dashed to the ground, and now it is “the knowledge of God” that becomes the critical factor. The statement, “they shall all know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Jer 31:34) is nothing less than the affirmation that the veil is “done away in Christ.”

Notice the strength of this text as represented by the various translations. In this text, something is presented that is firm and sure. There is not the slightest ambiguity in the statement, but it is characterized by spiritual clarity. It is fuel for faith, and fodder for hope.

The expression “done away” is taken from the Greek word καταργείται (ka-tar-gei-tai). Lexically it means “to render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative . . . deprived of strength, made barren . . . caused to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, influence, and power;” THAYER “cause to be idle or useless . . . destruction by means of a superior force coming in to replace the force formerly in effect, as light destroys darkness;” FRIBERG “To render ineffective, nullify, cancel; destroy, abolish, do away with;” UBS “to cause to come to an end, to cause to become nothing, to put an end to;” LOUW-NIDA and “to leave unemployed or idle . . . to occupy the ground uselessly, comber it.” LIDDELL-SCOTT

This word is used twenty-one times in Scripture. These texts confirm the strength of the word, and leave no doubt about what it means in our text. Although the listing is lengthy, it will be profitable for you to briefly consider it. I have highlighted the word translated from the Greek word and employed in each text. There is a consistency in the translations that is very apparent.

- “Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why **cumbereth** it the ground?” (Luke 13:7).
- “The last enemy that shall be

destroyed is death" (1 Cor 15:26).

- ☛ "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is **done away** in Christ" (2 Cor 3:14).
- ☛ "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be **destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom 6:6).
- ☛ "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall **fail**; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall **vanish away**" (1 Cor 13:8).
- ☛ "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be **done away**" (1 Cor 13:10).
- ☛ "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of **none effect**" (Gal 3:17).
- ☛ "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath **abolished** death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10).
- ☛ "Having **abolished** in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph 2:15).
- ☛ "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God **without effect**?" (Rom 3:3).
- ☛ "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall **destroy** both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body" (1 Cor 6:13).
- ☛ "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall **destroy** with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess 2:8).

- ☛ "And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to **bring to nought** things that are" (1 Cor 1:28).
- ☛ "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have **put down** all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24).
- ☛ "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might **destroy** him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14).

texts, there are things that are intended to come to an end in Christ Jesus! Think of what is included in this category – things God has determined will end: death, the body of sin, temporal knowledge, the partial, the enmity, the belly and the meats that feed it, the wicked one, the competing wisdom of this world, all competing rule authority and power, the devil, and the wisdom of this world.

What Is Done Away?

What is it that Paul affirms is "done away?" Whatever it is, it has been consigned to a state from which its recovery is not possible. It is among the things that has served its purpose, and is

This is "the veil" that necessitated the various statutes and ordinances that attended the Law. They were provided to enforce the Law upon a people who stood afar off, were filled with fear, and plagued with ignorance.

- ☛ "Do we then **make void** the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom 3:31).
 - ☛ "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be **done away**" (2 Cor 3:7).
 - ☛ "For if that which is **done away** was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious" (2 Cor 3:11).
 - ☛ "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**" (2 Cor 3:13).
 - ☛ "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that **come to nought**" (1 Cor 2:6).
- As soundly confirmed in these**

therefore no longer valid before God.

He is speaking about the "the veil" that prohibits one from seeing the full glory that is being revealed. If men cannot see, it is not because of the veil but because of blindness! This is "the veil" that necessitated the various statutes and ordinances that attended the Law. They were provided to enforce the Law upon a people who stood afar off, were filled with fear, and plagued with ignorance.

Twenty-two times in Ezekiel's prophecy he points to as time when the people would finally see that God was "the Lord." **Twenty-two** times he said, "ye **SHALL** know that I am the Lord" (Ezek 6:7; 7:4,9; 11:10,12; 12:20; 13:9,14,21,23; 14:8; 15:7; 20:38,42,44; 23:49; 24:24; 25:5; 35:9; 36:11; 37:6,13). The Old Covenant was one in which God was **not** known. The people did **not** have a heart to know him, and the Old Covenant could **not** change that situation. Because they did **not** know the Lord, they did **not** love Him – even though the Law plainly commanded them to do so. This is why

God promised through Moses, *“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live”* (Deut 30:6). This is a detailed view of the veil being done away *“in Christ,”* where the circumcision of the heart is actually experienced.

The Old Covenant Relied Upon Men

The Old Covenant was one which relied upon men – therefore it was *“weak through the flesh”* (Rom 8:3). It had nothing whatsoever to do with faith or believing, but was a system of doing (Gal 3:10-12). It consisted of procedures, routines – things done by rote, without the heart and without understanding. As it is written, *“stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation”* (Heb 9:10).

Now, these were the ultimate

Divine acceptance are not achieved by a religious system – however astute it may appear. **Routines and procedures are required because of either ignorance or waywardness – and neither are acceptable in Christ Jesus.** This is because redemption addresses both of these areas. It brings illumination that dispels ignorance (Heb 10:32), and the spirit of power that overcomes waywardness (2 Tim 1:7). Under the New Covenant grace effectively teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12).

What About Children?

I understand that when we are addressing the matter of children – whether in fleshly years or in the faith, there is a need for *“tutors and governors.”* **This is because the juvenile state is one in which guidance is necessary.** Thus it is written, *“Now I say, That the*

thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal 4:3-7).

It simply is not possible to produce a line of reasoning that justifies a state of continued ignorance of weakness. Spiritual blindness and moral weakness have both been outlawed in the Kingdom of God. No provision – absolutely none – is made for their continuance. In Christ people are **expected** to grow up, and when they do not, they are faulted for it. That is why it is written, *“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat”* (Heb 5:12).

If it is argued that this is too stern, and that people are unable to meet such a requirement, the Holy Spirit dispels all doubt in the next chapter of Hebrews. He calls upon those who wear the name of Christ to **stop lingering** in the vestibule of truth – on the elementary things – and **go on to perfection** (Heb 6:1-3). The reason for doing so is clearly stated: *“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame”* (Heb 6:4-6).

A Different Principle

Commensurate with *“newness of life”* we live under a different principle. Because God has sent forth His Spirit into our hearts (Gal 4:6), **we are now tutored from within – by the Holy Spirit, whom we are not to quench or grieve.** Under this circumstance, and by its very nature, spiritual life advances – not by procedure but by growth.

When men attempt to enhance or mature spiritual life by procedures and routines, they have reverted to a system of Law. Will such an approach work? **Indeed, it will not. It is destined to failure – total and absolute failure – because the pinnacle of all Law as a means to righteousness has been**

A person with a penchant for lifeless routine can make no improvements on the First Covenant. Rest assured, no “forty days of purpose,” “lenten season,” or other routines can do what the Law “could not do.”

routines! They were all revealed and enforced by God, with every point of them being spelled out. The people were told when and how to fulfill them. Sacrificial accompaniments were provided in detail. The priestly attire, and precisely what he was to do were specified. **A person with a penchant for lifeless routine can make no improvements on the First Covenant.** Rest assured, no “forty days of purpose,” “lenten season,” or other routines can do what the Law *“could not do.”* That ought to be abundantly apparent – but within the contemporary church it is not apparent at all. **The “veil” cannot be taken away by such approaches, no matter how worthy they may appear.** And, if the veil is not *“done away,”* nothing else is really of any consequence.

People cannot be saved or sanctified by a mere routine! Holiness and

heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father” (Gal 4:2).

But this is not intended to be a perpetual state. So far as being in Christ is concerned, immaturity is not to last for any significant length of time. In fact, leaving the state of childhood is actually associated with coming into Christ. Therefore the Galatian text continues, *“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore*

There is a Reason why some cannot Understand the Scriptures– by Given O. Blakely

“done away.” It is futile to try and extract life from something God has annulled. It cannot be done – He will not allow it to be done!

Do not imagine that such an approach is not all around us. There remain people who insist that salvation comes by following a routine – a series of steps. There are others who maintain that the Holy Spirit is received by a particular routine. Still others approach praise as though it consisted of fleshly procedures. Some even say God is worshiped by five different acts, without which worship is impossible. There are still people who claim we are spiritually better by adhering to a system of fasting and regulated diets. Some approach the subject of giving by having a stewardship campaign. Others think that families that live in a slovenly spiritual manner can suddenly be transformed into spiritual dynamos by a retreat. Still others hold classes on recovering from various transgressions, or from grief, or financial incompetence.

It will certainly make no person popular to affirm these are all woefully inadequate. The very best that can be said of them is that they *“profit a little”* (1 Tim 4:8). **But you will not find Jesus suggesting such an approach to life.** Nor, indeed will His *“holy apostles and prophets”* (Eph 3:5) resort to such buffoonery.

After affirming that a mere bodily disciplines can, at best, profit only a *“little,”* Paul goes on to say, *“but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come”* (1 Tim 4:8). **Godliness is not by routine! It is not the result of doing this or that in a disciplined manner.** Godliness is coupled with *“contentment,”* not routine (1 Tim 6:6). It mingles well with righteousness, faith, love, patience, and meekness – not procedures (1 Tim 6:11). Godliness is the result of submitting to the grace of God that effectively teaches us that *“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ”*

(Titus 2:12-13). That differs significantly from the approach of the Old Covenant, in which God said, *“Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD”* (Lev 18:5).

This is something of what is involved in the glory of the Old Covenant fading, and the Old Covenant itself being terminated as a means to righteousness. It has been overshadowed by a greater glory.

As a means to righteous and overcoming the devil, rules and procedures simply do not function in the New Covenant. They have been

does not operate by any other means!

If a person does not participate in the New Covenant, there simply is no other way to have access to God or gain His approval!

Only In Christ

As a master of the assembly Paul nails this down with *“the words of the wise”* (Eccl 12:11). The veil of ignorance is **ONLY “done away in Christ.”** The hardheartedness that results from ignorance, can only be *“done away in Christ.”*

Note, the veil is not done away **“by Christ,”** but **“in Christ”** – and there

As a means to righteous and overcoming the devil, rules and procedures simply do not function in the New Covenant. They have been rendered obsolete and inoperative. They do not work in Christ! The absence of this awareness accounts for the remarkable ungodliness and ignorance that pervades the modern church.

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There is no valid excuse for any professed Christ to have a propensity to legalism, law, and self-efforts as a means to righteousness. It is inexcusable for any person in Christ to try and compensate for a lack of faith and hope by indulging in some form of external discipline. There is no way to put the law in the mind and write it on the heart from the outside! You cannot begin with the flesh, and end up by impacting the human spirit for good. To put it in modern terms, you cannot begin with a rock concert and conclude with the conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment. You cannot begin with a book on child-rearing, and end up with citizens of the kingdom of God. That is not the nature of the New Covenant, and God

is a difference. Every version reads the same. It is **the environment of Christ** that removes the veil – being **“IN Him!”** That is, *“in Christ”* there is no place for a veil, just as there is no room for darkness when the sun has risen to its zenith. **There is no place in Jesus where a person can remain in willing ignorance.** This ought to be very evident. If it was our ignorance that alienated us from the life of God in the first place (Eph 4:18), how is it that once a person is *“in Christ”* provision could possibly be made to remain in such a state? The veil is *“done away”* in Christ

This is not a mere formality, as though the veil simply passes away independently of the awareness of the believer. This is speaking of an actual experience. A person comes to see the truth as it really is. The person in Christ can see Jesus in the *“reading of the Old Testament,”* whereas the unbelieving Jews cannot.

CONCLUSION

It may appear as though we have dealt with a very profound subject, but we have not. **This is basic teaching, not advanced tutelage.** The reason it tends to sound unusually profound is the presence of a fundamentally flawed religious culture. In our time we are faced with a “Christianity” that is little more than the contrivance of men. It is a religious system that allows for a lack of “*spiritual understanding.*” It is tolerant

not bring glory to the Lord, but were actually a source of shame (1 Cor 6:5; 15:34).

Jesus had accomplished too much in His death and resurrection for such manners to be found in the people! Satan had been destroyed (Heb 2:14), principalities and powers had been plundered (Col 2:15), and they had been reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18-20). In

more spiritual warmth than the Law that was sounded forth from Sinai. Although they were living under a “*better covenant that was established upon better promises*” (Heb 6), they were producing results that reflected a system that, like the Law, was “*weak through the flesh*” (Rom 8:3).

The perceptive soul will recognize that we are living in a time when the modern church bears the same characteristics as those found in Corinth. The situation, however, is even worse, because there appears to be even less iteration of the things of God in our time than in the Corinthian assembly. We are, in fact, living in “*perilous times.*” **These are times when the shell of religion can be maintained without the evidence of any moral and spiritual power.**

American Christianity, together with that of Europe, is largely noted for “*having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.*” The solemn injunction of the Holy Spirit is this: “*from such turn away!*” (2 Tim 3:5). That is, “*from such people turn away,*”^{NKJV} or “*avoid such men as these,*”^{NASB} or “*have nothing to do with them.*”^{NIV}

This is “*the day of salvation,*” and no place has been made for the “*night*” or “*darkness.*” It is “*the accepted time,*” and no provision has been made for maintaining unacceptable views and manners (2 Cor 6:2). We are “*children of light,*” and are therefore **not** to sleep as though we were of the night (1 Thess 5:5). The New Covenant is one of superior glory – “*rather glorious,*” and therefore makes no provision for words, manners, and deeds that bring no glory to God. This is a covenant characterized by ever increasing glory. Therefore moral, spiritual, and perceptive deterioration are completely out of order. More is revealed in this covenant, and therefore more is expected of those who are part of it.

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of moral lapses and deficiencies, and does not provoke men to crucify the flesh with its lusts (Gal 5:24), or mortify their members that are upon the earth (Col 3:5).

In short, we are facing much the same thing as those who were in Corinth. The church there had been given many advantages, having extended exposure to the premier apostles (Peter and Paul), a leading exhorter of the time (Apollos), and coming behind in no gift (1 Cor 1:7, 12; 3:22). There were prophets even among them (1 Cor 14:29-32,37). **Yet, with all of these advantages, they were conducting themselves as though they remained under the bludgeon of Law.** Their manners did

Christ they had been “*made the righteousness of God*” (2 Cor 5:21). Paul testified to them of the change that had been wrought in them: “*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*” (1 Cor 6:11). He testified to the presence of every resource required to live acceptably before the Lord: “*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*” (1 Cor 1:30).

Yet, in spite of all of these marvelous benefits, they were living under a religious blanket that emitted no

A lifeless church is a contradiction, for the New Covenant is one in which life is ministered. It is “the ministration of the Spirit.” Where there is no spiritual life, the New Testament is not operative.

There is a Reason why some cannot Understand the Scriptures— by Given O. Blakely

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/26/2004. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The fourteenth lesson will cover verses fifteen through eighteen of the third chapter: **"LIBERTY AND CHANGE."** The fading glory of the Old Covenant is explained, and why men are not able to see the glimmers of the Gospel that are purposefully resident in it. The continued unbelief of Israel is explained, and we are introduced to the New Covenant benefits of liberty and change. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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