



Lesson 23: *Ever-Increasing Glory* 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

2 Corinthians 3:7 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! 10 For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. 11 And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

3:12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Read the Old Testament account in Exodus 34.

The remarkable comparison and contrast

▲ *The ministry of law*

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▼ *The Law was scripted on stone*

2 Corinthians 3:7 engraved in letters on stone,

▼ *The Law was convicting and condemning*

2 Corinthians 3:7 the ministry that brought death — 9 the ministry that condemns men

▼ *The Law was given with glory*

2 Corinthians 3:7 came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, — 10 what was glorious — 11 what was fading away came with glory,

► *That was a frightening glory* ► *That was a fading glory*

▲ *The ministry of liberation*

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▼ *Liberty comes by the Spirit*

2 Corinthians 3:8 the ministry of the Spirit

▼ *Liberty comes with the cancelation of condemnation and the clearing of the conscience*

2 Corinthians 3:9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

▼ *Liberty comes with greater glory*

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► *This is a fresh glory* ► *This is a flourishing glory*

The removal of the covering

▲ *The veil remembered*

2 Corinthians 3:12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away.

▲ *The veil remains*

2 Corinthians 3:14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

▲ *The veil is removable*

2 Corinthians 3:16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

The radiance of the Christian countenance

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

▲ *The Spirit releases us* — Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

▲ *The Spirit recreates us* — we...are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

▲ *The Spirit reintroduces us* — And we, who with unveiled faces

▲ *The Spirit reflectivates us* — And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory,

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

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Moses and the Glory-Glow

Exodus 34

Exodus 34:1 The LORD said to Moses, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. 2 Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. 3 No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain."

34:4 So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. 5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

34:8 Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 "O Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes," he said, "then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance."

34:10 Then the LORD said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you. 11 Obey what I command you today.

34:27 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." 28 Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.

34:29 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. 30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. 32 Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

34:33 When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. 34 But whenever he entered the LORD'S presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35 they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

Some notes

- ▶ Exposure to the presence and power of the LORD brought a reflective radiance to Moses' face — it was frightening to the Israelites, so Moses veiled his face.
- ▶ That reflective radiance/glory upon Moses' face was fading over time, symbolizing for Paul the temporary nature of the power and purpose of the Law of Moses.
- ▶ That veil, according to Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 3, symbolized a separation from God — a separation in relationship, and a lack of spiritual understanding.
- ▶ Paul declares, then, that only the saving gospel of Jesus Christ and the accompanying work of the Holy Spirit can remove the veil that separates people from God.
- ▶ When the veil is removed by the gospel and the work of the Spirit, we see the Lord clearly, and the glory of God shines through, revealing what God is doing in us.
- ▶ Our glorious salvation produces a far greater work in our own lives and a far greater glory to God than the work of the Law ever could have accomplished.

