

## Exegetical Notes – 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

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### 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

#### Verses 7-11

***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, transitory though it was,<sup>8</sup> will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?<sup>9</sup> If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!<sup>10</sup> For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.<sup>11</sup> And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!***

- In this passage, Paul compares the glory of the Law of Moses, the OLD Covenant between God and His people, with the glory of the NEW Covenant which comes to us from God through Jesus. His point is that the Old Covenant was temporary, but the New Covenant is eternal. Therefore, the glory of the Old, and it had its glory, is nothing compared to the New Covenant in Jesus.
- To make his point, Paul refers to Exodus 34:29-35. There, we are told that when Moses came down from the mountain carrying the tablets of the Law, his face shone reflecting the glory of God with whom he had been. This reflected glory so disturbed the people of Israel, that Moses covered his face with a veil after he had been in God's presence so as not to disturb those who saw it. Whenever Moses was in the presence of God, his face reflected the glory of God afterward. But that reflected glory faded as time passed. It was a "transitory" reflection. But it could not free us from our bondage to sin. Jesus did that through his death and resurrection.
- The purpose of the law was to show us how far we had fallen from the glory of God and how badly we needed a Savior (see Romans 7:7-13).
- Paul's point is that the Law was good and served its purpose. But the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus is more glorious than the Old because the purpose of the Old was completed in the New! The New Covenant in Jesus brings salvation to those who believe, and it will last forever.

### Verses 12-15

***<sup>12</sup> Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. <sup>13</sup> We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.***

- In Exodus 34:29-35, Moses bends to the people. They are afraid or uncomfortable when they see God's glory reflected on Moses' face. So, Moses covers his face with a veil for their sake. Moses also covers his face because the reflected glory of God on him fades away with time. It is temporary.
- Paul declares that Christians are not to be ashamed of the glory of God which should shine through them. We should gladly walk in the light of God's glory knowing that the light in which we walk will not fade. The Spirit does not depart from Christians but abides in them.
- Moses declares that to the people of Israel, this wonderful reality is not understood. They do not accept Jesus as God's Messiah. So the veil which Moses wore now covers their hearts. They do not know the all-surpassing glory of the New Covenant in Jesus.

### Verses 16-18

***<sup>16</sup> But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.***

- When someone comes to the Lord through Jesus, the veil is lifted from their hearts. They recognize what God has done for them in Jesus.
- They are set free from the punishment for sin, death.
- They are transformed, sanctified, by the abiding presence of God. The Holy Spirit of God fills them and transforms them, over time, to become more and more like God.

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