

### 3:4-6

Paul is, again, speaking about his and Timothy and Titus' effectiveness as ministers. Now, we are going to see that Paul is building off of the "living letter" premise of 2:17-3:4.<sup>1</sup>

Paul is going a little further here. He is saying that they are actually better than the letter the Jews of the Old Testament had.<sup>2</sup>

### 3:7-8

So the "letter that kills" of verse 6 is the letter Moses brought down from Mount Sinai. Maybe you should go home today and read Exodus 34:29-35 where we find Moses, 1,500 years beforehand, coming down from Mount Sinai for his second time with stones he etched. Paul is actually saying that the letters produced by the Spirit of God on hearts of flesh are superior—far superior—to the letters Moses wrote on stone (look at verses 2 and 3 again).

Imagine Paul having the audacity to say "you are more to be desired than the voice of God immediately transferred to stone!" Why can Paul say such a ridiculous thing? Because even though Paul's voice to them in the Corinthian streets is nothing compared to the voice of God to Moses out of Heaven, the tapping and etching stones of Moses on stone are nothing compared to the hammering power of the Holy Spirit upon the heart.

Christian, where is this powerful, booming voice of Heaven, effectively penned by the third person of the Trinity, forever preserved to the glory of God? He's in You!<sup>3</sup>

### 3:9-11

He says it again. If we all find that we are sinners through the law that we have broken; and if Moses brought us a very obvious manifestation of that law in the Ten Commandments; and if Moses brought that down from Mount Sinai and had so much glory that he had to wear a veil; and if that glory accompanied a ministry of condemnation...then how much more glory accompanies the ministry brought in you by the Holy Spirit? This great ministry, this ministry of glory is in us. Remember, now, how this is written to those who are flesh and blood representations of Paul.

### 3:12-17

**Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech**—"Well, you must have a lot of hope, Paul." Let us not forget that he is not speaking out of some theory. He has already tipped his hand in the first epistle that some of the first converts—a majority of them—were Jews. Imagine a Jew turning away from the "glory of the law come down from Mt Sinai on the face of Moses as he held a ministry of perfection and condemnation" **13 unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.** "Moses couldn't even speak boldly? About what, Paul? About the glory of God!" Don't forget, we have seen "glory" mentioned in verses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. All of the sudden, we know we are dealing with the real and true glory of God.

Now, it is time for us to discuss what the "glory of God" is. Well, context tells us that the "glory of God" radiated from Moses' face and was way too bright. It was brightness, and splendor, and grandeur, and brilliance. It is Heavenly and majesty and magnanimous. It is a display of another world. It took the voice of God from Heaven to the most noteworthy man on earth who would carry the most obvious standard of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Don't forget now, Paul's endurance and adequacy is wrapped up in how Christ has brought Him victoriously out of anguish and difficult times so that He could do what God called Him to do. We could say "Paul was depressed," and that Paul did the will of God in His life and on the other side of it he could say that some were saved to God's glory and others were lost to God's glory as they beheld that victory parade we discussed in the previous chapter.

Then, Paul takes that preaching that he was doing and tells the Corinthians that their mere existence as Gospel-centered, Christ-exalting, Father-consulting believers is a flesh and blood testament to the work of God in their lives. They are better than an endorsement on the back of a book cover. They are living endorsements of the Gospel Paul carried to them.

<sup>2</sup> Yet Jeremiah 17:1 speaks of an etching upon the heart which they did already have. This must also be superior to that. Paul is no dummy when it comes to knowing the Old Testament. He must have known that the agent of the law had already etched its letters and that the Holy Spirit could walk through and do much, much more. We already know the law was etched on the hearts of each person (Romans 2:15).

<sup>3</sup> To what degree did Paul mean this with the positive—the grace of God—in Colossians 1:27?

strictest Judge. So, we see that it is a splendid display from another world. It is a bright display of another world, but it is neither the best nor the brightest display from that world.

“Then, Paul, what is the glory of God? What is the brightest and grandest and most brilliant and obvious and purest and holiest and greatest display of God from Heaven’s shores, from Heaven’s throne, from the portals of glory, from the rocks of the diamond-dust beaches, from the jasper walls, from the River of Life? It is that which has been unveiled in our hearts.

“How was it unveiled in our hearts?” When Gospel truth was etched into them by the Holy Spirit. Because as the Israelites of the Old Testament were kept from beholding God’s glory in the face of Moses, they are yet as of the date of the writing of this letter by Paul still veiled as we read in **verses 14-16.**<sup>4</sup>

So...again, “How was it unveiled in our hearts?” When Gospel truth was etched into them by the Holy Spirit.

“Then what did we see? What is Heaven’s greatest reality? What are they talking about the most in Heaven? What is the grandest thing Heaven has to offer? Is it new knees? Is it a new back? Is it pain-free hands or feet? Is it a clear mind? Is it a house on the crystal lake? What does salvation provide first and foremost? The glory of God? Where? In Heaven. Where, primarily? In the main street where the fruit of the tree of life dangles over? In the transparency of the street of gold? Where do I look first in Heaven’s domain for the glory to which I have been called, for which I have been saved, because of which I was chosen? Where do I look? I have beheld it in my heart by the Holy Spirit? I look inwardly and I find rest. I find comfort. I find pleasure. I find mercy. I find peace, all by the Holy Spirit and I am told that within that work, is the glory of God—the brightest Heavenly reality. What do I see when I look in my heart that is a mere token of what I will see when I look into Heaven—when my eyelids flicker for the first time in that land of glory? What is it? Take a look at **4:4-6**

The greatest richness of Heaven is found in the face of Jesus Christ....

So what?

1. The Gospel is a Person, not a plan. (comparing verses 3 and 6 we find that the “Gospel is veiled,” yet in verse 6 we find the glory which was veiled is actually the face of Christ.)
2. This glory in our hearts is preparing us for the glory in Heaven. See **3:18**. Why do I feel so out of proportion with what is true in the unseen world? Why do I not feel very “glorious” today?
  - a. You are being changed, as am I, to fit into that glory once we arrive. All things. See **4:7-16**.
3. We cannot quit.
  - a. We cannot quit in our exclamation of the Gospel. See **4:1-4**. Paul would say, if I have the Gospel, in which is found the most amazing treasure of God and it is a Person named Jesus, and if that Jesus, Who is God’s greatest Treasure is etched upon the hearts of every believer by the Holy Spirit, then **Every man** (verse 2) among the **lost** (verse 3) must have eyes opened to the Gospel if they will see Heaven or Heaven’s Treasure Jesus or Heaven revealed in themselves through the Holy Spirit, and that has much to do with my preaching. (verse 5).
  - b. We cannot quit in our adjustment to our perspective. See **4:16-18** and the ever-increasing reality that this is just **light affliction for a moment**. In the ions and ages down the hallway of time this will be a glimmer, a flicker, a blip.

---

<sup>4</sup>The One Who etched life and a new director into your hearts is the Lord Himself. Do you need another proof-text for the deity of the Holy Spirit? Do you need another proof that the Holy Spirit is God? “The Lord is that Spirit”—in the context—“the Spirit that wrote upon our hearts.”