

Title: From Glory to Glory
Text: 2 Corinthians 3: 1-18
Date: Sept 10, 2020
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Lord willing, Sunday we will see Moses come down out of the mount with the old covenant law written on tables of stone. We will see a type of Christ in that. So this time I want to hear what the Spirit of God says in 2 Cor 3 concerning the old covenant and the new covenant.

Proposition: The law that God writes on the heart of his child is not the old covenant law of works but the new covenant law of grace—he turns us from the glory of the old covenant to the glory of the new.

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Divisions: By contrast the Spirit of God shows us here that the new covenant law of grace excels the old covenant law of works in glory—1) In the way each were written 2) In what each minister 3) In the duration of each

THE WAY THE COVENANTS WERE WRITTEN

2 Corinthians 3: 3: *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*

The new covenant law of grace excels the old covenant law of works by the way they were written.

Moses wrote the old covenant of law of works in ink in a book and then on tables of stone. “Ink” refers to when Moses wrote the old covenant law in a book in Exodus 24 the first time Moses came down out of the mount Sinai. The tables of stone refer to God writing the ten commandments on those stone tablets

The new covenant law of grace is written *by Christ by the Spirit of the living God in fleshy tables of the heart*. Christ creates a new heart. He writes the everlasting covenant of grace on the heart.

Hebrews 8: 6: But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7: For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

So the new covenant law of grace excels the old in how it is written: by Christ, by the Spirit of God, in fleshly tables of the heart.

BY WHAT THE COVENANTS MINISTER

2 Corinthians 3: 6: Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; Not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

The new covenant law of grace excels the old covenant law of works by what each minister. The letter of the old covenant killeth. The Spirit is given through the new covenant and the spirit giveth life. The old covenant law is **V7: the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones**; the new covenant **v8: is ministration of the spirit**; The old covenant law is **v9: the ministration of condemnation**; the new covenant law is **v9: the ministration of righteousness**.

The old covenant ministered a law in letter only. The letter killeth. It ministered condemnation and death. It said, "This do and live." Break and die. It kills and condemns in three ways.

One, a natural man has already broken the whole law of God in Adam. He is condemned by it already. We have already died under the law when we hear it for the first time.

Two, a natural man is spiritually dead so he does not hear the law reach to the thoughts and intents of the heart. He thinks he keeps the old covenant law. We think we have life by the works of the law by nature. Truth is, we are dead and condemned. The law kills us. Paul said, "I was alive without the law once." He thought he had kept the law and lived by it. If a man meets God in that state of condemnation, God will sentence him to the second death. This is one reason Christ said, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

Three, the letter of the law is used of men to kill those around them. Men use the new covenant law this way if they have it only in the letter. A sinner only hears the letter say condemn and kill all who disobey. So men use the law to bite and devour one another. Natural man has no faith, no love, no mercy, no longsuffering. It is a religion of accusing others and excusing self. Natural religion uses the new covenant the same way if they only have it in the letter.

But the spirit giveth life and ministereth righteousness. As his gospel is preached, Christ gives life. He said,

John 6: 63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

Christ gives life by giving discernment to hear the old covenant law condemn me for breaking the whole law of God. It kills my self-righteous self. Paul said, "When the commandment came sin revived and I died." But he gives life and faith to behold Christ is the Righteousness I need. He fulfilled the old covenant law by his obedience unto death giving it everything it demanded on behalf of his people—on my behalf personally! Scripture says, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."—Christ took away the first old covenant of works and establishes the second covenant of grace in our hearts. He magnified and honored the law. Christ fulfilled it in every jot and tittle. That is why he called it the new testament

written in his blood. HIS MERCY TO SUCH A WRETCHED SINNER CREATES A MERCY-LOVING BELIEVER!

It is not the old covenant law that God writes on our hearts. He writes on our hearts the new covenant law of grace. God writes the covenant of grace on our hearts, not the law of sin and death; it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 32: 39: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

This new covenant has statutes. Christ said if a man loves me he will keep my commandments and my commandments are not grievous. The law of this new covenant that Christ writes on our hearts has two precepts.

The law of faith. By God's grace and power we indeed keep this statute. By God's power and grace, we believe on Christ who fulfilled the law for us. We believe our Substitute redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. We believe Christ made us the righteousness of God in him. Through faith God imputes Christ righteousness to us and we are complete in him.

The law of love, also called the law of Christ. Christ creates in us a love for Christ and a love for our brethren. He constrains us by his love for us. Love and faith are the fruit of the Spirit, meaning we do not create it within ourselves but God.

Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Faith which works by love is a superior rule of life than law. It is walking in newness of spirit rather than the oldness of the letter. It makes us deal with one another by these two statutes.

Faith in Christ. Paul is saying that because he has experienced Christ do this for him, he believes his sufficiency is Christ, not himself. Faith trusts our brethren to Christ. My brother is righteous in him, without sin. My brother is one with Christ. Faith believes Christ is Prophet, Priest and King of his church. He is the Head of his people, filling all in all through the gospel. Faith believes that through the preaching of the gospel Christ is able to grant a new spirit, granting faith and repentance. So we trust Christ. We preach the gospel and wait on Christ to work in the hearts of his people—in the lost and those he is chastening. Paul said, "Our sufficiency is of Christ, not of us. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the power may be of God and not of us."

Love to brethren. Newness of spirit uses spiritual discernment. The letter tells me what is lawful. The letter killeth. But newness of spirit discerns if Christ is chastening and his child is broken and contrite by grace.

For example, the woman caught in adultery. The letter of the law said, "The law says stone her, what do you say." Newness of Spirit saw her ashamed, saw her penitent, having defended her from all her accusers, he said, "Does no man condemn you, neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

After the council in Jerusalem concerning the Gentiles, the letter of that law would have said, “No Gentile believer has to be circumcised.” Newness of spirit said, “But Timothy let’s circumcise you so the Jews can hear the gospel without making this an issue.”

Paul showed the difference in this letter to Corinth. The letter says “Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn...Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” But in newness of spirit he said, “But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me.”

The letter condemns no matter the circumstances with no mercy and no love, no forgiveness; justice makes no room for mercy. But newness of spirit has one touchstone: it believes Christ who justified our brethren from all our sins and works by love, even as Christ loved us. It looks at each circumstance and says what will bring glory to Christ? Newness of spirit asks what should I do that will show I really believe that the excellency of the power is of Christ and not of me? What will keep all eyes on Christ, promote unity, and put no confidence in the flesh?

The new covenant is a covenant of grace. It far excels the letter. The new covenant excels the old in how it is written, as well as in what it ministers: life, righteousness, a new spirit.

IN THE DURATION OF EACH COVENANT

The new covenant of grace excels the old in duration. As you read the next passage pay attention to the word glory. Both covenants had glory. But the Spirit of Christ converts his child from the glory of the old covenant to the glory of the new. And the glory of the new covenant, as you will see in verse 18, is the glory of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3: 7: But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: 8: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9: For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 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 stedfastly 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. 15: But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16: Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. 18: But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, [from glory of the old law to glory of the new covenant of grace] *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord...4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This is the hope Christ’s ministers have. This is why we use great plainness of speech, boldness. We have experienced this mercy and power of God. Therefore, we faint not. We renounce the hidden things of dishonesty. We preach not ourselves. We preach not man’s works. But we preach Christ Jesus the Lord.

We know Christ is the Mediator whose glory it is to minister this new covenant:

Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament,...

Christ takes the vail off our hearts by turning our new hearts to him. He makes us see that Christ is the glory of this new covenant. The LORD is that Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. He gives us his image. He converts us from the glory of the old covenant to the glory of the new covenant of grace. He turns us from the glory of that old covenant which is done away to the glory of the new which is everlasting. Christ is the New Covenant with all its Glory. God said of Christ, "I have given thee for a covenant of the people" (Is 49: 8). Christ is the Covenant. Paul said, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God" (2 Cor 1: 20).

2 Corinthians 5: 17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Amen!