

2 CORINTHIANS: DEFENDING GOD'S SERVANT TO HIS CRITICS
Part VI: The Superiority Of A Biblical Christian Ministry To Any Other Ministry
(2 Corinthians 3:7-18)

I. Introduction

- A. 2 Corinthians was written "to defend the authenticity of " Paul's "apostleship and his message" to a church of believers who were susceptible to heeding false teachers who critiqued him, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552.
- B. Paul's critics tried to get people subject to the Law, so Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 noted the vast superiority of a Biblical Christian ministry to that of the Law, and thus to any other ministry, what motivates us today:

II. The Superiority Of A Biblical Christian Ministry To Any Other Ministry, 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.

- A. After introducing the topic of his ministry of the spirit that gives life versus the ministry of the letter of the Mosaic Law that only could kill in that men under the Law had no power to keep it due to their sin natures and the absence of the Holy Spirit's enabling (2 Cor. 3:6 with Rom. 8:3a), Paul contrasted the **limited glory of the great prophet Moses' ministry under the Mosaic Law** with the **vast glory of godly Christian ministries**:
 - 1. When Moses ministered the tables of the law that only produced death in that Israel was not given the spiritual power to keep God's Law (2 Corinthians 3:7a), since that ministry was nevertheless glorious in upholding God's righteousness, Moses' face would shine whenever he had been in the Lord's presence, frightening the people of Israel, 2 Corinthians 3:7b with Exodus 34:29-30.
 - 2. However, even that glorious ministry was going to be done away, for it was to be replaced by the ministry of the spirit in the dispensation of the Church era, making the Biblical Christian ministry far more glorious than even the ministry of the great prophet Moses, 2 Corinthians 3:8-11.
 - 3. For this reason, Paul's team was so edified by this hope of having a more glorious ministry than even the great Moses, they exercised great boldness in ministry effort in contrast to Moses himself who would put a veil over his face so that the people of Israel could not see "the fading away of the transitory glory reflected in his countenance," 2 Corinthians 3:12-13; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Cor. 3:13.
 - 4. In addition, the minds of the people of Israel were blinded in the time of Moses even as they were in Paul's day due to sin, and a veil akin to that which had been over Moses' face remains over the minds of Israel today to be done away when the nation believes in Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:14-15. That day for Israel will occur in the Great Tribulation and Second Coming of Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:16; Zechariah 12:10-13:1.
- B. Besides the existence of a difference in glory between the dispensation of the Law and that of Grace, there is a difference in liberty, with the ministry of death under the Law binding men and the ministry of the spirit that gives life under grace freeing them, 2 Corinthians 3:17:
 - 1. Paul added that "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17a NIV), **NOT** identifying the **Person of Christ** as the **Person of the Holy Spirit**, but **affirming** the **deity** of the **Holy Spirit** and the **One Essence** of the **Triune God**, 2 Cor. 3:17a; *Ibid.*, ftn. to 2 Cor. 3:17; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 562.
 - 2. Thus, where the Spirit of the Lord exists, and He exists in the ministry of the spirit Paul and any godly Christian ministers today, there is liberty from the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Law, 2 Corinthians 3:17b.
- C. Besides the difference in glory and the difference in liberty from the Law's jurisdiction between Moses' ministry and that of a godly believer today, there is a colossal difference in ministry results, 2 Cor. 3:18:
 - 1. Moses' ministry involved his spending time beholding God's glory only to have it fade since his ministry was to be supplanted by the ministry of the spirit, cf. 2 Cor. 3:13 with Ex. 34:33-35. However, Paul taught that all we true believers in Christ are now always beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord revealed in Christ through the Holy Spirit's ministry to us [via God's Word,] 2 Cor. 3:18a [with 1 Cor. 2:9-13].
 - 2. Though the glory would fade from his face as Moses left God's presence, his ministry coming to an end so that he would cover his face to hide that fact (2 Cor. 3:13), believers in Christ not only see God's glory remain, but are themselves being transformed into the same glorious image of Christ from one level of glory to the next (*Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to 2 Cor. 3:18) from the Lord Who is the Spirit, what immense glory will become evident at the rapture of the Church, 2 Corinthians 3:18b NIV with 4:17-18.

Lesson: *The ministry of the spirit by godly Christians is far superior to that of even Moses, for its glory not only does not fade like Moses' glory did, but it keeps increasing in the believer's transformation into Christ's likeness!*

Application: *May we be encouraged to minister by the Holy Spirit's power in a ministry that not only gives life to others when they believe the Gospel, but which also is transforming us as God's messengers into Christ's image!*