

"The New Covenant"

Part 4

2 Corinthians 3:6-18

Introduction: We have been looking at Paul's defense of the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:6-18. The Judaizers had infiltrated the church at Corinth and they were attempting to mix Law with grace. They were trying to pull the Corinthians into ceremonialism. Last week we considered how the religious Jews realized they could not keep the moral part of God's Law so in an attempt to please God they focused upon the ceremonial part of the Law. But the ceremonies and the animal sacrifices were not pleasing to God. His is not what God desired. The ceremonies and the sacrifices were never given for salvation. The Law was never given for the purpose of salvation. It was given to show man his true sinful condition and to help him see his need of Jesus Christ.

Last week in our study we looked at 2 reasons why the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.

I. The New Covenant Brings Life

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:6

II. The New Covenant Brings Justification

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:7-9

III. The New Covenant is Eternal

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:10

The glory of the Old Covenant could not even compare with the glory of the New Covenant.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:11

The Old Covenant was glorious even though it would fade away so the New Covenant had to be far more glorious because it would never fade away.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:12

Because of promises of the New Covenant Paul declared that he had a hope which far exceeded the hope of anyone under the Old Covenant and for this reason he used great "plainness of speech". The phrase "plainness of speech" means "free and confident".

Paul was not shy about preaching the New Covenant/The Gospel.

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

¹⁷ *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith*

Paul knew the importance and the power of the Gospel. He knew that when the Gospel was permitted to enter into the heart of man that man was then forever changed. He understood that the Gospel had the power to set man free from the POWER, PENALTY, and the PRESENCE of sin. The Old Covenant could never do this so for these reasons Paul was bold to preach the message of the New Covenant which was the Gospel.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:12-13

Here in verse 13 we get some very interesting information. We can see here that Moses put a vail over his face NOT because his face shined brightly BUT because the glory faded and he did not desire for the Israelites to see the fading glory. This was all done for a prophetic purpose.

There is within this a prophetic picture. This was a picture of how Israel would be blinded to the fading of the Old Covenant and the bringing in of the New Covenant. The fading glory on the face of Moses was veiled just as the fading glory of the Old Covenant was veiled from the Jews.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:14-15

Here we see that their minds were blinded and Paul stated that even until his day the hearts of the people of Israel were blinded when the Old Testament is read.

Now some people will say that their blindness was all from God. They then point to Romans 11.

Romans 11:7-10

⁷ *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*

⁸ *(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*

⁹ *And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:*

¹⁰ *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.*

Looking at these verses it appears as though their blindness was the fault of God. But if this was the case then we would have some major problems with what Peter wrote.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Here we see that it is God's will that NOBODY should perish. So if the blindness of Israel is the fault of God then that would mean that God was working against His own will. This would make no sense at all.

Now let me show you something that will clear all of this up.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:14 again.

The word "blinded" here is very important. Let me show you how Vines defines this word.

1. *to make the heart dull*
2. *to grow hard, callous, become dull, lose the power of understanding*

I show you this to help you to see that their minds BECAME dull. You see the definition tells us the word means "to GROW hard, BECOME dull, LOSE the power of understanding. So when I look closely at the definition I can understand that something happened which caused them to LOSE THE POWER OF UNDERSTANDING. What happened to these people of Israel?

Romans 1:18

¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness:*

The people of Israel whom Paul is speaking of here were exposed to the Truth of the New Covenant. This Truth was delivered to them in many ways.

1. **Through the prophets.**

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

³² Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

³³ But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

2. Through the birth of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 2:1-6

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

² Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

³ When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

⁵ And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

⁶ And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

3. Through the life and works of Jesus Christ.

John 21:25

²⁵ And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

4. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Remember what the religious leaders did with the Truth of the resurrection?

Matthew 28:11-15

¹¹ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

¹² And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

¹³ Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

¹⁴ And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

¹⁵ So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Acts 4:1-3

And as they [Peter and John] spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

² Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

³ And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

Now let us get back to 2 Corinthians 3. The Jews were guilty of suppressing the Truth which had been delivered directly to them. It was for this reason that their minds had become dull and they had hindered their power to understand.

Application:

This shows the danger of people rejecting the Truth of the Gospel today. When people first hear the Gospel it is fresh and the heart and the mind are made alert through the hearing. But if the Gospel is rejected the mind BECOMES dull and it becomes more difficult for the person to respond. Let me show you the responses of the 2 men crucified with Jesus.

Luke 23:39-42

³⁹ And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

⁴⁰ But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

⁴¹ *And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.*

⁴² *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

But all hope for Israel has not been lost.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:16

When one turns from their sin to accept Jesus Christ then the veil is removed and they are then able to see the truth of the New Covenant. This too was pictured in Moses. While he talked with the people he had the veil on but when he TURNED to go back in with the Lord he took the veil off.

Exodus 34:33-34

³³ *And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.*

³⁴ *But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.*

Conclusion:

Now we need to get back to the reason why the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is eternal and the Old Covenant faded away when Jesus established the New Eternal Covenant.

We also need to understand that not all of the Old Covenant is obsolete. The civil part of the Old Covenant which instructed Israel about the laws has faded away and the ceremonial part of the Old Covenant has faded away. But the MORAL part of the Old Covenant is eternal and it has been incorporated into the New Covenant. I remind you of this because there are many who would desire to cast away the Ten Commandments. They are all reinforced in the New Testament except for the Sabbath for it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Paul wanted the believers at Corinth to understand that the New Covenant was better than the Old for the Old Covenant was now obsolete and the New Covenant is eternal.

Hebrews 8:13

¹³ *In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old[obsolete]. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

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PM Service

There will not be a 3rd covenant because the New Covenant will never pass away. With that said I will leave you with something Paul had stated earlier.

2 Corinthians 3:12

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness[boldness] of speech: