

"The New Covenant"

Part 6

2 Corinthians 3:6-18

Introduction: Tonight is our 6th study in this section in which Paul is stating why the New Covenant is so much better than the Old Covenant. In this section we were able to see how Israel has been blinded to the New Covenant.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:12-15

In the Old Testament following the giving of the Law when Moses came down the mountain and back into the camp his face was shining after being exposed to the glory of God. When he came into camp he covered his face while he spoke with the people of Israel and when he went back to speak with God he uncovered his face. Now Paul tells us here in 2 Corinthians 3:13 that Moses veiled his face because he did not want Israel to see that fading of the glory on his face.

This was a picture of how Israel would be blinded to the fading of the Old Covenant and the introduction of the New Covenant. Paul also told us in verse 13 that Israel BECAME BLIND. The word "blinded" is defined this way:

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

As Israel continued to cling to the ceremonies and their rituals of the Old Covenant they also at the same time continued to harden their hearts. They were blinded to the Truth that Jesus was the fulfillment and the end of the Law.

Romans 10:1-4

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

² *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

³ *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

⁴ *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

But Israel is not without hope for God has left the door of grace open to them.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:16

If the people of Israel are willing to turn to the Lord and accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah then God will remove the veil and they will then see clearly and understand the New Covenant. Now for those of us who have placed our face in Jesus Christ there is no veil but instead there is the ability to be able to look into God's Word and understand how the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. So there is given to us the ability to see the spiritual Truth of the Word of God.

James 1:22-25

²² *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

²³ *For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

²⁴ *For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

²⁵ *But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

Now as we gather around the Bible and we study the Word of God there is then a process which takes place. God uses the Word and the Holy Spirit and He begins to chisel away at our lives.

Philippians 1:6

⁶ *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

²⁹ *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

God started a work in us and the ultimate goal is to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ. That means that God is working in us so that Jesus Christ will be seen in every situation which we face in this life. This now brings us to where we are tonight in our study.

I. **The Glory of the Lord in the Life of the Believer.**

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:18

There is a contrast in this verse between we who are believers and those of Israel who have not received Jesus Christ as their Messiah. The "we all" here in this verse includes all who are saved. The statement "open face" refers to a face that is not veiled which means we are able to see clearly as opposed to Israel who has the veil over their eyes. Paul says here that as we "behold as in a glass" this means "just as we were looking into a mirror" we are able to see the glory of the Lord. As we continue to study the Bible we are constantly exposing ourselves to the glory of the Lord. Let me show you an event in the Old Testament and then we can draw some parallels for the verses. I want us to look at Numbers 21 and it is in this chapter that we read the account of the fiery serpents.

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ *And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.*

⁵ *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.*

⁶ *And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.*

⁷ *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.*

⁸ *And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.*

⁹ *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

When the people of Israel fell into the sin of complaining God sent fiery serpents to bite the people and many of them died. When they cried out to Moses and confessed their sin, Moses took the matter to the Lord and God gave the remedy for the snake bites. They were to make a brazen serpent and lift it up on a pole and then when the people were bitten they were to GLANCE at the brazen serpent and they would live.

This was a picture of Jesus Christ and the cross.

John 3:14-16

¹⁴ *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*

¹⁵ *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

We see from the words of Jesus Christ that the serpent on the pole was a picture of Jesus Christ on the cross. But, why did God use a snake to represent Jesus Christ?

It was through the snake that Satan lured Adam into sin so the snake represents sin. When Jesus was nailed to the cross He took the sins of the world upon Him and so He became sin for us. Thus God placed a snake upon the pole as a picture of the death of Jesus Christ.

Now I want to borrow from the words of John Phillips for a moment. Phillips says, ***"If it is a GLANCE that SAVES then it is the GAZE that SANCTIFIES."***

The more we gaze upon Jesus Christ the more like Him we become. Let me show you something in Revelation that is very interesting.

Revelation 4:6-9

⁶ *And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.*

⁷ *And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.*

⁸ *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

⁹ *And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,*

Here is a scene in heaven where we are able to see the Throne of God. There is surrounding the Throne of God 4 beasts or 4 cherubims/angels. Now each of the angels has a different appearance.

- ✓ **One was like a lion.**
- ✓ **One was like a calf (the word means "ox").**
- ✓ **One was like the face of a man.**
- ✓ **One was like a flying eagle.**

Now if we were to take the time and look through each of the Gospels we would see something very interesting. These angels and their faces each represent Jesus Christ as He is presented in the Gospels.

- ✓ **Matthew presents Jesus as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.**
- ✓ **Mark presents Jesus as an Ox stooping under the load and the weight of the world's sins.**
- ✓ **Luke presents Jesus in all of His humanity and so He is seen as a man.**
- ✓ **John presents Jesus as an Eagle who soars above the heights as the Son of God.**

Now you may wonder what this has to do with 2 Corinthians 3:18 and so I will tell you. These cherubims who are surrounding the Throne of the Lord and constantly *GAZING* upon Jesus Christ in all of His glory and therefore they each reflect something of the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Now let us pull all of this together.

As we spend time in God's Word there is a supernatural work that takes place in our lives.

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:18 again.

The word "changed" here is very important. It is in the present tense and it means "transformed". The idea which Paul is stating here is that as we *GAZE* upon our Lord we are constantly and currently being transformed into His very image. This is the process of sanctification. We are in the process of being transformed into the very likeness of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 13:12

¹² For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

This is a slow process which we go through and we will not see the completion until we stand before our Lord face to face.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 John 3:2-3

² *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

³ *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Conclusion:

Notice 2 Corinthians 3:18 again.

Paul reminds us at the end of this verse it is the Spirit of the Lord who does this work within our lives. So as we continue to study the Word of God at every service we can be sure the Spirit is working in our lives and making us like our Savior.

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

¹³ *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*