

2 Corinthians 3 Commentary

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2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

[A Third Chart](#)

Overview of Second Corinthians

2Co 1:1-7:16 Character of Paul	2Co 8:1-9:15 Collection for the Saints	2Co 10:1-12:21 Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation Gratitude	Confidence	Vindication
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

INTRODUCTIONS TO SECOND CORINTHIANS:

- **IRVING JENSEN** - [Introduction and study tips](#) - excellent preliminary resource - scroll to page 1877 (Notes on both 1-2 Cor begin on p 1829)
- **JOHN MACARTHUR** [2 Corinthians Introduction](#) - same as in the Study Bible
- **JAMES VAN DINE** [2 Corinthians - Author, Purpose, Outline, Argument](#)
- **CHARLES SWINDOLL** - [2 Corinthians Overview](#)
- **MARK SEIFRID** - [The Message of Second Corinthians: 2 Corinthians as the Legitimation of the Apostle](#)
- **J VERNON MCGEE** - [2 Corinthians Introduction](#)
- **DAN WALLACE** - [2 Corinthians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline](#)
- **DAVID MALICK** - [An Introduction To Second Corinthians](#)

2 Corinthians 3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?

- **Are we beginning:** 2Co 2:17 5:12 10:8,12 12:11,19 1Co 3:10 4:15 10:33
- **letters of commendation:** Ac 18:27 1Co 16:3
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Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?

2 Corinthians 3:2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

- **You are our letter:** 1Co 3:10 9:1,2
- **in:** 2Co 7:3 11:11 12:15 Php 1:7
- **known:** Ro 1:8 1Co 9:2 1Th 1:8
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You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

2 Corinthians 3:3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

- **a letter of Chris:** Ex 31:18 Rev 2:1,8,12,18 3:1,7,14,22
- **cared for by us:** 1Co 8:5-10
- **living:** 2Co 6:16 Jos 3:10 1Sa 17:26 Ps 42:2 84:2 Jer 10:10 Da 6:26 Mt 16:16 1Th 1:9 Heb 9:14
- **not:** Ex 24:12 34:1
- **but:** Ps 40:8 Jer 31:33 Eze 11:19 36:25-27 Heb 8:10 10:16
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being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Henrietta Mears - The teachers of Jewish law of Paul's day carried letters of introduction with them. They were Paul's chief

troublemakers. They tried in every way to fight him. We hear them asking, "Who is this Paul?" "What letters of recommendation from Jerusalem does he have?" How foolish this question was to Paul! Did he need a letter of recommendation to a church he himself had established? He answers, "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody" (2 Cor. 3:2). The lives of true Christians at Corinth served as letters to recommend both Paul the servant and Christ the Lord. Living epistles are read when Bible Epistles are not. Remember your life is an open letter. Christian lives are about the only religious books the world reads. They do not study God's Word, but they do study God's people. This gives us a great opportunity for good, for we may lead people to Christ.

Tablets (4109) plax refers to "anything flat or broad," such as gold plates, land, even tombstones (*Liddell-Scott*). Any flat, broad surface, as a plain, the sea, a mesa, a tableland. In the NT flat stone to inscribe on, tablet; plural, of stones engraved with the law tables, tablets. In the NT, generally, a flat stone on which inscriptions could be made, a table, tablet of wood or stone for inscriptions as the two tables of the decalogue given to Moses. **Liddell-Scott** - "a flat surface, flat land, a plain, Aesch.; the ocean-plain, Pind.; Eur.: the flat top of a hill, table-land, Soph. 2. a flat stone, tablet" In Hebrews 9:4 it has the literal sense of stone tablets (cf. Ex 32:19; Dt 9:17), the tablets on which the finger of God wrote the Ten Commandments (Ex 31:18+). The only other use is 2Co 3:3 (used twice) figuratively describing the fleshly tables of the heart upon which the Holy Spirit writes "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on **tablets** of stone but on **tablets** of human hearts." (cf. Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:26). Thus by the new covenant the Law is not external but internalized by the Holy Spirit in the individual.

PLAX - 3x - tables(1), tablets(2). 2 Co. 3:3; Heb. 9:4

SEPTUAGINT - Ex. 31:18; Ex 32:15; Ex 32:16; Ex 32:19; Ex 34:1; Ex 34:4; Ex 34:28; Ex 34:29; Dt. 4:13; Dt. 5:22; Dt. 9:9; Dt. 9:10; Dt. 9:11; Dt. 9:15; Dt. 9:17; Dt. 10:1; Dt. 10:2; Dt. 10:3; Dt. 10:4; Dt. 10:5; 1 Ki. 8:9; 2 Chr. 5:10;

2 Corinthians 3:4 Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.

- **such:** 2Co 2:14 Php 1:6
- **toward:** Ex 18:19 1Th 1:8
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Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

- **that:** 2Co 2:16 4:7 Ex 4:10 Joh 15:5
- **but:** 2Co 12:9 Ex 4:11-16 Jer 1:6-10 Mt 10:19,20 Lu 21:15 24:49 1Co 3:6,10 15:10 Php 2:13 4:13 Jas 1:17
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Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

2 Corinthians 3:6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

- **also made us adequate:** 2Co 5:18-20 Mt 13:52 Ro 1:5 1Co 3:5,10 12:28 Eph 3:7 4:11,12 Col 1:25-29 1Ti 1:11,12 4:6 2Ti 1:11
- **the new:** 2Co 3:14 Jer 31:31 Mt 26:28 Mk 14:24 Lu 22:20 1Co 11:25 Heb 7:22 Heb 8:6-10 9:15-20 12:24 13:20 *marg:
- **not:** Ro 2:27-29 7:6
- **for:** 2Co 3:7,9 De 27:26 Ro 3:20 4:15 7:9-11 Ga 3:10-12,21
- **but the:** Joh 6:63 Ro 8:2 1Jn 1:1

- **gives life**, Joh 5:21 Ro 4:17 1Co 15:45 Eph 2:1,5 1Pe 3:18
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who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,

- **if the ministry of death:** 2Co 3:6,9 Ro 7:10
- **in letters engraved on stones:** 2Co 3:3 Ex 24:12 31:18 32:15,16,19 34:1,28 De 4:13 5:22 9:9-11,15 De 10:1-4 Heb 9:4
- **came:** De 4:8 Ne 9:13 Ps 19:7,8 119:97,127,128,174 Ro 7:12-14,22 Ge 3:21
- **that:** Ex 34:29-35 Lu 9:29-31 Ac 6:15
- **which:** 2Co 3:10,11,14 Ro 10:4 1Co 13:10
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But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,

2 Corinthians 3:8 how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?

- **the ministry of the Spirit** 2Co 3:6,17 11:4 Isa 11:2 44:3 59:21 Joe 2:28,29 Joh 1:17 7:39 Ac 2:17,18,32,33 Ro 8:9-16 1Co 3:16 12:4-11 Ga 3:2-5,14 Ga 5:5,22,23 Eph 2:18 2Th 2:13 1Pe 1:2 Jude 1:19,20
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FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:8](#)

how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?

2 Corinthians 3:9 For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

- **ministry of condemnation:** 2Co 3:6,7 Ex 19:12-19 20:18,19 Ro 1:18 8:3,4 Ga 3:10 Heb 12:18-21
- **ministry of righteousness:** 2Co 5:21 Isa 46:13 Jer 23:6 Ro 1:17 3:21,22 4:11 5:15-21 10:3-10 1Co 1:30 Ga 5:4,5 Php 3:9 2Pe 1:1
- **much more:** 2Co 3:10,11 1Co 15:41 Heb 3:5,6
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FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:9](#)

For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

2 Corinthians 3:10 For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.

- **had:** Job 25:5 Isa 24:23 Hag 2:3,7-9 Ac 26:13 Php 3:7-8 2Pe 1:17 Rev 21:23,24 22:5
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FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:10](#)

For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.

2 Corinthians 3:11 For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

- **if:** 2Co 3:7 Ro 5:20,21 Heb 7:21-25 8:13 12:25-29
- **much:** 2Co 3:6 4:1
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For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

2 Corinthians 3:12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

- **we use:** 2Co 4:2,3,13 Joh 10:24 16:25,29 1Co 14:19 Col 4:4
- **boldness,** 2Co 7:4 10:1 Ac 4:13,29-31 9:27,29 14:3 Eph 6:19,20 Php 1:20 1Th 2:2 1Ti 3:13
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FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:12](#)

Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

2 Corinthians 3:13 and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.

- **not like Moses:** Ex 34:33-35
- **would not look intently:** 2Co 3:18
- **at the end of what was fading away** Ro 10:4 Ga 3:23,24 Eph 2:14,15 Col 2:17 Heb 10:1-9
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FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:13](#)

and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.

2 Corinthians 3:14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

- **at the end of what was fading away:** 2Co 4:3,4 Ps 69:23 Isa 6:10 26:10-12 42:18-20 44:18 56:10 59:10 Jer 5:21 Eze 12:2 Mt 6:23 13:11,13-15 Joh 9:39-41 12:40 Ac 28:26,27 Ro 11:7-10,25
- **veil:** 2Co 4:6 Isa 25:7 Mt 16:17 Lu 18:31-34 24:25-27,44-46 Joh 8:12 Joh 12:46 Ac 16:14 26:18 Eph 1:17-20
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FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:14](#)

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;

- **veil:** Ac 13:27-29

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FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:15](#)

But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;

2 Corinthians 3:16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

- **whenever:** Ex 34:34 De 4:30 30:10 La 3:40 Ho 3:4,5 Ro 11:25-27
- **the veil:** Isa 25:7 29:18 54:13 Jer 31:34 Joh 6:45,46
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but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

- **the Lord:** 2Co 3:6 Joh 6:63 1Co 15:45
- **where:** Ps 51:12 Isa 61:1 Ro 8:2,15,16 Ga 4:6 2Ti 1:7
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Now the Lord (*kurios*) is (present tense) the Spirit (*pneuma*), and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty (*eleutheria*)

- The **Lord** is Jesus Christ (see previous verse 2Co 3:16) and the **Spirit** of the Lord is the Holy Spirit (although not everyone agrees with the interpretation). The Spirit of Christ turns a person to the Lord Jesus Christ, taking the veil from their heart so that they can "see" Christ in the New Covenant (cf Acts 26:18+), at the same time bringing them into the broad pastures of spiritual **liberty** in Christ. The false teachers at Corinth were apparently holding forth the Law as the way to change one's life (cf Gal 3:3+), but Paul teaches that it is only the **Spirit of the Lord** Who can transfer one from a life of legalistic bondage and into a life of liberty.

Freedom (liberty) is not the right to do as you please

But the power to do as you should!

Paul describes this **liberty** declaring "For the law of the **Spirit** of life in **Christ Jesus** has **set you free** (*eleutheroo*) from the law (the principle) of sin and of death." (Ro 8:2+)....For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again (contrast the reaction of the sons of Israel in Ex 34:29), but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The **Spirit Himself** bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Ro 8:15, 16+)...."Because you are sons, God has sent forth the **Spirit of His Son** into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave (bondage), but a son (liberty); and if a son, then an heir through God." (Ga 4:6, 7+)

"Give me liberty, or give me death!"

-- Patrick Henry

THOUGHT - Christ's death has purchased our liberty. Are you living fully in the freedom of the Holy Spirit? Or are you still trying to live the Christian Life in your own strength? (SEE progressive sanctification; [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word; The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#))

Allow the green light of grace to shine brighter
than the amber light of caution or the red light of don't.]

-- Charles Swindoll

The Holy Spirit. He is the source of power. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). Where He works – there is fruit.

Vance Havner - The Liberty of the Lord 2 Corinthians 3:17.

Of course we must understand this to mean, "**Where the Spirit of the Lord is in control, there is liberty.**" He indwells every

believer, but not every believer has come out into the glorious liberty of the children of God. He is present in the churches, even where two or three gather in Christ's Name (**ED: IN TRUTH WHERE ONE IS PRESENT, HE IS PRESENT**), but often He is hindered. He is often **resident** where He is not **president**!

But wherever He is recognized and obeyed there is no longer a spirit of bondage (**ED: AS UNDER THE OLD COVENANT**). In church history the great revival periods have been the blessed liberations in which the Spirit has loosed all bonds and the church has recovered her early freedom. In local churches, what glorious liberty follows when the Spirit is Lord! Read *How Christ Came To Church* and transformed both A. J. Gordon ([ONE BIO](#)) and his Boston pastorate. And the individual Christian "gets loose" only when he is controlled by the Spirit. "Lord" and "liberty" may seem contradictory, but the free man is a controlled man. He has the liberty of the Lord. We have "deliberations" aplenty these days, but what we need is liberation!

F B Meyer - Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor.

The margin of the Revised Version gives the alternative, yoked. The people were attracted by the charms of the women of Moab; but what they entered for pleasure, became clasped on them as a yoke. "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin" (John 8:34, r.v.).

Sin is slavery.— The drunkard loathes his chains, vows not to yield again; but sinks deeper into the mire with every ineffectual struggle. The libertine is bound with passions, his heart is a dungeon, his conscience a scourge. We are promised pleasure and gratification; but when once the syrens have prevailed and got us in their power, they cast off their disguise, and work their horrid will.

The only deliverance is through the anointed priest.— Phinehas interposed, and he was Aaron's grandson, on whom the anointing oil rested. And this illustrates a remarkable expression in Isaiah 10:27, "The yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing." Is not that the anointing of the Holy Ghost? **It is only through the Holy Spirit that we can be made free with the freedom of the Son of God. Where He is there is liberty.** (2Co 3:17) "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." (Gal 5:16-17+)

We must die to the sin that enchained us — There could be no half-measures. Phinehas took a spear. Whatever the cursed thing is which has crept in to enslave, it must be slain before the Lord. Is there some secret evil in your soul, eating out its strength? Ask the Faithful High Priest to deal with it, that your soul may cast off its bondage, and rise into the liberty of the sons of God.

R C Sproul - By nature humanity stands in bondage to sin. We are bondservants to our own evil impulses and fallen nature. Yet we are told that where the Spirit of the Lord is—where the Spirit of the kyrios is—there is liberty. Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31–32).

Jesus addressed those words to people who were not free, but were in abject bondage. But the irony is this: A person's only freedom is to become a slave to Jesus Christ. Freedom from Christ means slavery to self. But one enslaved to Christ knows the royal liberation that only Christ can bring. So Paul, in citing his own credentials, looks to his highest virtue—that he is a slave to Jesus Christ.

J H Jowett - The Holy Spirit as Emancipator 2 Corinthians 3:4–18

In the Holy Spirit I experience a large emancipation. **'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'** I am delivered from all enslaving bondage—from the bondage of literalism, and legalism, and ritualism. I am not hampered by excessive harness, by multitudinous rules. The harness is fitting and congenial, and I have freedom of movement, and "my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Mt 11:30)

And I am to use my emancipation of spirit in the ministry of contemplation. I am to "behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." (2Co 3:18) My thought has been set free from the cramping distractions devised by men, and I am now to feast my gaze upon the holy splendours of my Lord. It is like coming out of a little and belittling tent, to feast upon the sunny amplitude of the open sky! I can "cease from man," and commune with God.

And the contemplation will effect a transformation. "We are changed into the same image from glory to glory." The serene brightness of the sky gets into our faces. The Lord becomes "the health of our countenance," and we shine with borrowed glory.

Don Fortner - 2 Corinthians 3:17

What liberty is this? Being brought into the family of God, we are brought into the sweet liberty of grace here and shall be brought

into “the glorious liberty of the children of God” in the world to come. But what is that liberty that is ours in Christ?

Acknowledged Facts

Honesty compels us to acknowledge certain facts. We are not here freed from the raging lusts of our sinful hearts; for we still carry about a body of sin under which we groan. We are not freed from Satan's temptations; for he still roars against us and hurls his fiery darts at our souls. We are not freed from temptations, trials, and troubles; for we still live in this world of sin and woe. It must be confessed, too, that we are not freed from inward fears; for our shameful unbelief begets many. Blessed be his name, we are not here freed from the chastisement of our wise, kind, and ever-gracious heavenly Father; for then we would never know many sweet visits of his love under the rod, by which he causes us to know and love him. And we are not yet freed from sickness and death; for the stroke of death we must feel, often preceded by painful and long illness. Our blessed Saviour has promised to make even our sicknesses good by his grace and has taken death's sting away by his blood and righteousness.

Blessed Liberty

From these things we are not yet at liberty, though chosen in eternal love, redeemed by Christ's precious blood, and saved by almighty grace. What, then, is that liberty that is given to our souls in and with Christ Jesus by the Spirit of the Lord?

God the Spirit, discovering to our souls the glory of the Lord Jesus and our interest in him, has brought us into liberty. Sweet and blessed liberty it is! Who can apprehend, let alone describe, the vastness of this liberty? We have access to the Throne of Grace at all times and upon all occasions. Having received the Spirit of adoption, we cry “Abba, Father!” We lift our hearts to heaven and confidently call the Lord God himself our Father! The Spirit bears witness with our spirits, that we are children of God. We are freed from the burden of sin's guilt and the fear of its punishment. O sweet, sweet liberty!

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty!” God's law, being magnified and made honourable by Christ, justice is satisfied and everlasting righteousness is ours. Justice no longer terrifies. The accusations of Satan are all answered. Conscience is appeased. This is liberty; is it not? Having passed from death to life, we have peace with God through the blood of the cross. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit!”

This liberty is ours, child of God, because of our oneness with Christ. We can no more be brought into the bondage of sin, and guilt, and death, and law than he can. This blessed liberty ought to sustain our souls and cheer our hearts in the face of every temptation, every sorrow, every trial, and every affliction!

Shout, my soul, and echo to the apostle's words, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty!” All the liberty of grace and all the liberty of glory too! Liberty to adore, worship, love, trust, and live forever with God our Saviour; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who opened our prison doors and brought us out of the deep pit wherein was no water and no light!

Change Made

Then God the Spirit reveals Christ in the chosen, redeemed sinner, causing the heaven-born soul to behold with open face, as in a mirror, “the glory of the Lord” a marvellous change takes place. Looking to our dear Saviour by faith, we are changed into his image. Beholding Christ in his glory, admiring him, being ravished with his love, we imitate the One we love. Constrained by his love for us and the love he has created in us for him, saved sinners seek to be made like the Saviour, and are made like him. O wondrous liberty!

Blessed Lord Jesus, be it my portion here to behold your face in righteousness, until I awake in your likeness in glory in complete and everlasting satisfaction (Psalm 17:15). Truly, this is “the glorious liberty of the children of God!” (Discovering Christ Day by Day)

LIBERTY

“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof” (Lev. 25:10b).

Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ... to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

Creation “itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21b).

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Cor. 3:17b).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1).

“That with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of

maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (1Pet. 2:15b–16).

GOLDEN THOUGHT Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Robert Hawker - Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.—2 Cor. 3:17.

WHAT liberty, my soul, art thou brought into by thine adoption into the family of God in Christ? Not from the assaults of sin; for you still carry about with you a body of sin under which thou groan. Not from the temptations of Satan; for he is still levelling at you many a fiery dart. Not from outward troubles; for the world you are still in, and find it a wilderness state. Not from inward fears; for your unbelief begets many. Not from the chastisement of thy wise and kind Father; for then many a sweet visit of his love, under the rod, would be unknown. Not from death; for the stroke of it you must one day feel; though, blessed be Jesus, he has taken out the sting in his blood and righteousness. **What liberty then is it, my soul, you enjoy?** What have the Spirit of the Lord, as a spirit of revelation discovering to you the glory of Jesus, and your interest in him, brought you into? Oh! who shall write down the vast, the extensive account of you freedom? Say, my soul, has not the sight of God’s glory in Christ freed you from the curse of the law, from the guilt of the law, from the dominion of sin, from the power of Satan, from the evil of unbelief in your own heart, from the terrors of justice, from the alarms of conscience, from the second death? Say, my soul, does not the sight of Jesus dying for you, rising for you, pleading for you, enlarge your heart and loose you bonds, and shake off all your fetters and all your fears? Does not Jesus in the throne give you liberty to come to him, to call upon him, to unbosom yourself unto him, to tell him all your wants, all your necessities, and to lean upon his kind arm in every hour of need? Shout, my soul! and echo to the Apostle’s words, **“Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:” liberty to approach, liberty to plead, liberty to pray, liberty to praise and to adore the whole Persons of the Godhead, for having opened the prison-doors, and given thee freedom in Christ Jesus.** (The Poor Man’s Morning Portion)

Spurgeon - 2 Corinthians 3:17

Do you understand how it is that the very guilt of the sinner is taken away? Here I stand today a guilty and condemned traitor; Christ comes for my salvation, he bids me leave my cell. “I will stand where you are; I will be your substitute; I will be the sinner; all your guilt is to be imputed to me; I will die for it, I will suffer for it; I will have your sins.” Then stripping himself of his robes, he says, “There, put them on; you shall be considered as if you were Christ; you shall be the righteous one. I will take your place, you take mine.” Then he casts around me a glorious robe of perfect righteousness; and when I behold it, I exclaim, “Strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed”, with my elder brother’s garments on. Jesus Christ’s crown is on my head, his spotless robes are round my loins, and his golden sandals are the shoes of my feet. And now is there any sin? The sin is on Christ; the righteousness is on me. Ask for the sinner, Justice! Let the voice of Justice cry, “Bring forth the sinner!” The sinner is brought. Who does the executioner lead forth? It is the incarnate Son of God. True, he did not commit the sin; he was without fault; but it is imputed to him: he stands in the sinner’s place. Now justice cries, “Bring forth the righteous, the perfectly righteous.” Whom do I see? Lo, the Church is brought; each believer is brought. Justice says, “Are these perfectly righteous?” “Yes they are. What Christ did is theirs; what they did is laid on Christ; his righteousness is theirs; their sins are his.”

John MacArthur - 2Co 3:17-18 - One of the most important truths the Holy Spirit unveils for us is the glory of the New Covenant.

The Old Testament contains many veiled statements, types, prophecies, and parables. The Israelites didn’t understand most of those things because the Old Testament didn’t have plainness of speech. Its glory was veiled and was even described as fading away (2 Cor. 3:13–14).

In contrast to the Old Covenant, the present New Covenant age is characterized by the clarity of all the key doctrinal and practical passages in the New Testament. This progress from the veiled glory of the previous era to the unveiled glory of the present era occurred when the Holy Spirit came in the Book of Acts. All that God wants us to know and do is clearly brought into focus now because of the teaching ministry of the indwelling Spirit.

The Spirit guides and enlightens New Covenant believers as they read and study God’s Word. Therefore, there is no longer any need, for example, to unscramble the pictures and prophecies regarding Christ. Thus Paul can say, “We use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12KJV). He goes on to say in verses 17–18, “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

Those verses describe the essence of the Christian life: becoming like Jesus Christ. The only way to do that is to know well the unveiled glory of the New Covenant and allow the Holy Spirit to change you more and more into the Savior’s image.

Ian Paisley - Glorious Liberty -2 Corinthians 3:17

The religion of the Bible is the pioneer of liberty. The Lord Jesus said: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" John 8:32.

True Liberty is not freedom to do whatever you like; true liberty is freedom to do whatever you ought to do, i.e. what God commands.

This is the liberty which is ours when the Spirit of God operates on our souls.

I. Liberty From the Chains of Sin

Not a son of Adam's race has escaped the chains of sin. We were born in chains and in slavery. Sin has dominion over us as children of a fallen race.

But the Breaker of Chains (**ED**: SEE [Christ The Breaker](#)) has appeared giving liberty from the chains of sin. Now are we the sons of God!

here the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty from the chains of sin.

II. Liberty From the Curse of Sin

Sin has cursed us all to hell itself. We are cursed by sin in life and in death and to all eternity if the curse be not dealt with.

The Cross of Christ has swallowed up that curse (Gal 3:13+) and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty from the curse of sin.

III. Liberty From the Condemnation of Sin

In God's sight the justified man is no longer a sinner. Christ has become accountable in law for his guilt. In Christ he is no more a sinner but is as spotless as the Throne of God. Christ was made sin. I am made righteous.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty from the condemnation of sin. (Ro 8:1+)

IV. Liberty From the Control of Sin

Sin's control can only be smashed by the Saviour. He can break every fetter. Hear it today, the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty from the control of sin. (A Text A Day Keeps the Devil Away)

QUESTION - [Why is there liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is \(2 Corinthians 3:17\)?](#)

ANSWER - For many citizens, **liberty** is as cherished as life itself, prompting the American revolutionary Patrick Henry to declare, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" The apostle Paul said, "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where [the Spirit of the Lord](#) is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17NKJV). He was likely drawing a connection to Jesus Christ's words at the start of His ministry when He opened the scroll of Isaiah and read this:

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD" (Luke 4:18–19NKJV; cf. Isaiah 61:1–2).

The Greek word translated "liberty" in 2 Corinthians 3:17 means "personal freedom from servitude, confinement, or oppression." Jesus came to set us free spiritually. To the children of God, Christ says, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). When a person receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the Spirit of the Lord takes up residence in that individual (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Believers are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13–14) and made alive by the Spirit of the Living God (2 Corinthians 3:3, 6).

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty because those who are in Christ—those born of God's Spirit (John 3:5–6)—are freed

from the [law of sin and death](#) (Galatians 4:3–7). Paul told the Romans, “And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death” (Romans 8:2NLT; see also Romans 7:4–5). “We have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit” (Romans 7:6NLT).

Liberty and *freedom* are words Paul often used to sum up the experience of salvation in Christ. He said Christians no longer live in bondage as slaves to sin: “Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace” (Romans 6:14NLT). Paul warned believers not to fall back into slavery to the law: “So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law” (Galatians 5:1NLT).

In Jesus Christ, believers are set free from the guilt, influence, and punishment of sin (Romans 8:1–6). Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6), and He told His hearers who believed in Him, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32NLT).

The biblical concept of liberty is quite different from the world’s idea of freedom. Christian liberty is not the worldly freedom to do whatever we want. Such freedom inevitably leads to another kind of slavery—that of serving our own passions and lusts (see 2 Peter 2:19). But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the liberty to deny the flesh and our own selfish desires for the purpose of obeying God, pleasing Him, and bringing glory to His name (Romans 6:16–18; 1 Corinthians 7:22–23).

The ultimate liberty is freedom from death through the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ (John 17:2–3; 1 John 5:11–12). Believers can live free from the fear of death and the sting of death because our Lord Jesus Christ gives us victory over these foes (1 Corinthians 15:53–57).

Before we received the Spirit of the Lord, our lives were characterized by servitude to sin, the law, and death. Now that we are alive in Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, we have a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4). We are set free to serve God in the fullest sense of liberation. One game-changing, life-transforming aspect of our spiritual freedom is knowing that this present world is not our real home (Hebrews 11:13; 13:14; Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:15–17). There is liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is because, as God’s children, we live with the future expectation of glory. We have God’s promise of freedom from death and decay in our eternal heavenly home (Romans 8:21). GotQuestions.org

C H Spurgeon on Spiritual Liberty...

Liberty is the birthright of every man. But where do you find liberty unaccompanied by religion? This land is the home of liberty, not so much because of our institutions as because the Spirit of the Lord is here — the spirit of true and hearty religion. But the liberty of the text is an infinitely greater and better one, and one which Christian men alone enjoy. He is the free man whom the truth makes free. Without the Spirit of the Lord, in a free country, ye may still be bondsmen; and where there are no serfs in body, ye may be slaves in soul. Note —

I. WHAT WE ARE FREED FROM.

1. The bondage of sin.

Of all slavery there is none more horrible than this. “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me” from it? But the Christian is free.

2. The penalty of sin — eternal death.

3. The guilt of sin.

4. The dominion of sin.

Profane men glory in free living and free thinking. Free living! Let the slave hold up his fetters and jingle them, and say, “This is music, and I am free.” A sinner without grace attempting to reform himself is like Sisiphus rolling the stone up hill, which always comes down with greater force. A man without grace attempting to save himself is engaged in as hopeless a task as the daughters of Danaus, when they attempted to fill a vast vessel with bottomless buckets. He has a bow without a string, a sword without a blade, a gun without powder.

5. Slavish fear of law.

Many people are honest because they are afraid of the policeman. Many are sober because they are afraid of the eye of the public. If a man be destitute of the grace of God, his works are only works of slavery; he feels forced to do them. But now, Christian, “Love

makes your willing feet in swift obedience move." We are free from the law that we may obey it better.

6. The fear of death.

I recollect a good old woman, who said, "Afraid to die, sir! I have dipped my foot in Jordan every morning before breakfast for the last fifty years, and do you think I am afraid to die now?" A good Welsh lady, when she lay a-dying, was visited by her minister, who said to her, "Sister, are you sinking?" But, rising a little in the bed, she said, "Sinking! Sinking! Did you ever know a sinner sink through a rock? If I had been standing on the sand I might sink; but, thank God! I am on the Rock of Ages, and there is no sinking there."

II. WHAT WE ARE FREE TO.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," and that liberty gives us certain rights and privileges.

1. To heaven's charter.

Heaven's Magna Carta is the Bible, and you are free to it — to all its doctrines, promises, etc. You are free to all that is in the Bible. It is the bank of heaven: you may draw from it as much as you please without let or hindrance.

2. To the throne of grace.

It is the privilege of Englishmen that they can always send a petition to Parliament; and it is the privilege of a believer that he can always send a petition to the throne of God. It signifies nothing what, where, or under what circumstances I am.

3. To enter into the city.

I am not a freeman of London, which is doubtless a great privilege, but I am a freeman of a better city. Now some of you have obtained the freedom of the city, but you won't take it up. Don't remain outside the Church any longer, for you have a right to come in.

4. To heaven.

When a Christian dies he knows the password that can make the gates wide open fly; he has the white stone whereby he shall be known as a ransomed one, and that shall pass him at the barrier.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

- **with:** 2Co 3:13
- **as in:** 1Co 13:12 Jas 1:23
- **the glory:** 2Co 4:4,6 Joh 1:14 12:41 1Ti 1:11 *Gr:
- **are:** 2Co 5:17 Ro 8:29 12:2 13:14 1Co 15:49 Ga 6:15 Eph 4:22-24 Col 3:10 Tit 3:5 2Pe 1:5-9
- **from:** Ro 8:4,7
- **the Spirit** 2Co 3:17
- [2 Corinthians 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Romans 8:28-30+ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed ([summorphos](#)) to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Philippians 3:20-21+ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE CLICK [2 Corinthians 3:18](#)

BEHOLDING MEANS GAZING NOT GLANCING!

But we all, with unveiled ([anakalupto](#)) **face** ([prosopon](#)), **beholding** ([katoptrizomai](#) - [present tense](#) continually, daily beholding) **as in a mirror the glory of the Lord** - **But** (de) is not the most accurate rendering for there is really not a contrast with the previous passage. **But** (de) is better translated with the word "**and**" because it links this passage with the liberty just described in 2Co 3:17+ (as in ESV, NIV, NLT, NET). **We all** is in essence an "invitation" that flings open the gates of liberty not just to a few select, privileged souls, but to **all** saints, **all** saved souls! That should evoke a "Hallelujah" dearly beloved! **Unveiled face** is another way of describing one who has been born again by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+). Stated another way, every genuine follower of Jesus has an **unveiled face**! (Another "Hallelujah!") **Unveiled** is in the [perfect tense](#) which pictures a past completed action (our day of salvation = past tense salvation [see [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)] = justification [[see justified](#)] - described in 2Co 3:16 = "whenever a person turns to the Lord" and Col 1:13+ = "past tense deliverance") with lasting effect. In other words the veil was taken off the day that the Spirit of the Living God "invaded" and indwelt our spiritually dead bodies, making these wrecks His worship center, His temple, and opening the eyes of our heart to see Jesus as our Lord and Savior (Acts 26:18+ Acts 16:14+) enabling us to continually behold (and understand something of) **the glory of the Lord** in Word of the Lord (1Jn 2:20, 27+) And don't miss the word **face** ([prosopon](#)) --- now that the veil is removed in (belief in) **Christ**, we have unfettered freedom ([entrée](#)) to approach God as our Everlasting Father seated in His throne room (see Ro 5:2+). We can daily have a "face to face" encounter with the God of the universe! (cf the privilege of Moses - Dt 34:10+). "The **mirror** is the Gospel, which is called the Gospel of **the glory of Christ**, 2Co 4:4+." (Vincent)

Beholding ([katoptrizomai](#)) **as in a mirror the glory of the Lord** - **Beholding** is [present tense](#) signifying continually beholding the glory of the Lord and in the [middle voice](#) signifies a reflexive sense (yourself) and could be rendered "you yourself look in the mirror." **Beholding** ([katoptrizomai](#)) has been translated with two different meanings, one to behold God's glory and the other to reflect God's glory. Consider the immediate context where Paul describes both senses for Moses' face becomes radiant after his "up close and personal" encounters with Jehovah and then reflects that glory to the children of Israel. This would seem to justify both translations, for as was true with Moses, how can a New Covenant believer reflect God's glory if he has not been in the presence of God's glory? The English translations reflect both renderings, either beholding or reflecting God's glory. Below are representative translations of each view...

And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] **continued to behold** [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord... (Amplified Version, cf ESV, NAS, KJV)

Now, as for us, we all, with uncovered face, **reflecting** as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (Wuest's Translation, cf NIV)

The New Living Translation seeks to avoid any argument by incorporating both interpretations...

So all of us who have had that veil removed **can see** and **reflect** the glory of the Lord.

The **Pulpit Commentary** feels the [middle voice](#) favors the interpretation of **beholding** as in a mirror rather than **reflecting** as a mirror writing "No other instance occurs in which the verb in the middle voice has the meaning of "**reflecting**," and the words, "with unveiled face," imply the image of "**beholding**." ([2 Corinthians 3](#))

Charles Hodge explains that "The Greek verb means, in the active voice, "to show in a mirror" and in the [middle voice](#) (the form used here) generally "to see oneself in a mirror." This is always the way it is used in the classics. But in Philo it is used to express the idea of seeing by means of a mirror. - see also Hodges four arguments that lead him to favor *beholding* rather than *reflecting* as the best interpretation of **katoptrizomai**), where he concludes "*We are transformed into the Lord's likeness by seeing it, not by reflecting it.*" ([2 Corinthians](#))

William MacDonald has a thought worth pondering that although our faces are **unveiled** positionally because of our entrance into the New Covenant (at the time of our [new birth](#)), we need to daily keep them unveiled as we conduct ourselves worthy of the Gospel ([Php 1:27+](#)) (practicing our position so to speak). He writes that "*We can keep our face **unveiled** by confessing and forsaking sin, by being completely honest with God and ourselves (1Jn 1:7, 9). As a veteran missionary to India once said, we must "drop the veils of sin, of make-believe, all play-acting, all putting up of unreal fronts, all attempts at compromises, all halfway measures, all Yes and No."* ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Our Source of power is in the risen Christ, and we stay connected to Him by **beholding Him in His word** and depending on Him in prayer.

-- Jerry Bridges

Jerry Bridges in "The Practice of Godliness" (a book I highly recommend) lists principles related to taking on God's character and alludes to [2Cor 3:18](#) in his discussion of the second principle of godly character - the power for a godly life comes from the risen Christ "**Beholding** the Lord's **glory** in His word is more than observing His humanity in the gospels. It is observing His character, His attributes, and His will in every page of Scripture. And as we observe Him, as we maintain this relationship with Him through His Word, we are transformed more and more into His likeness; we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to progressively manifest the graces of godly character. So it is this relationship with Christ, expressed by **beholding** Him in His word and depending upon Him in prayer, that enables us to draw from Him the power essential for a godly life. The Christian is not like an automobile with a self-contained power source; rather, he is like an electric motor that must be constantly connected to an outside current for its power. Our source of power is in the risen Christ, and we stay connected to Him by **beholding** Him in His word and depending (ON HIS SPIRIT AND) on Him in prayer. ([The Practice of Godliness. Page 61](#) - One reviewer wrote "*I meant to read this book for several years before I actually got around to it. I can't believe I waited--it's one of the best Christian books I have read.*")

Oswald Chambers - A Christian worker is one who perpetually looks in the face of God and then goes forth to talk to people. The characteristic of the ministry of Christ is that of unconscious glory that abides.

J Vernon McGee explains that "the **Word of God** is the **mirror** that we are to look at, and we are **beholding** Him—just looking at Christ. That is the reason we need to stay in the **Word of God** and behold the Lord Jesus. As you behold Him, you are transformed. In other words, the **Word of God** does more than regenerate you (we are regenerated by the Spirit of God using the **Word of God**). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1Pe 1:23). Also the **Word of God** transforms us. Oh, this is so important! I wish I had spent more time looking in the mirror, **beholding** Him more. My friend, in the **Word of God** we see Him. He is not a super star; He is not just a man. In the **Word of God** we see the unveiled Christ. Oh, how wonderful He is!

Are being transformed (metamorphoo) into the same image (eikon) from glory (doxa) to glory (doxa), just as from the Lord (kurios), the Spirit (pneuma) - Being transformed is [present tense](#) signifying the fact that the one who continually beholds is continually being transformed. In other words it describes transformation as a process, progressive sanctification (present tense salvation), not an arrival (we call that glorification or future tense salvation). **Being transformed** is divine passive indicating the power for transformation is from the Spirit. This transformation is from inside out and is not a superficial fluctuation of fashion or conduct but a vital change revealing a new life. **The same image** is the image we are **beholding** which is the "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God." (2Cor 4:4+)

We cannot transform ourselves any more than we could save (justify) ourselves. Just as we began this race by faith, we must continue to run by faith, trusting in the Spirit's power to transform us. Is this just "let go and let God?" I think not, for we do have a responsibility continually "behold God's glory", which is most clearly revealed in His Word of Truth (Php 2:16±, cf 1Jn 1:1±, Mt 4:4±, 1Pe 2:2±). As we take in His Word and live out His Word (obeying in the power of His Spirit), we proceed from glory to glory, growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2Pe 3:18±).

Just as we are changed "from glory to glory," we receive "grace upon grace" (Jn 1:16) (ministered by the Spirit of Grace Who enables our metamorphosis for glory to glory!). Only God's power (grace) can effect this supernatural transformation of the redeemed into His glorious image. (cp 1Jn 3:2,v3, cf Phil 3:21) Thus, we are gradually being restored to the full image of God in which we were created (Ge 1:26,27), being "renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col 3:10), for we indeed are predestined "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Ro 8:29).

Warren Wiersbe notes that "When the people of God look into the **Word of God** and see the **glory of God**, the **Spirit of God** transforms them to be like the Son of God ([Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

R Kent Hughes writes "How much we allow the **knowledge of Christ** to fill our being will determine how much of the old dead things will fall away and how much new life will spring forth. We must know Jesus for that expulsive force to work within us. We must look long and intently at Jesus. ([John: That you May Believe. Preaching the Words](#))

The secret of Christian holiness is heart-occupation with Christ Himself.

As we gaze upon Him we become like Him.

--H A Ironside

QUESTION - [What is the meaning of "from glory to glory" in 2 Corinthians 3:18?](#)

ANSWER - "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18, NASB).

With those few words—"from glory to glory"—Paul sums up our entire Christian life, from redemption and sanctification

on earth, to our glorious eternal welcome into heaven. There is a great deal of content packed into those few words. It's all so important that Paul labors at great length, from 2 Corinthians 2:14 through the end of chapter 5, to open his readers' eyes to a great truth. Let's see why that truth matters so much.

The same Greek word for "**glory**" is used twice in the phrase *from glory to glory*, yet each usage refers to something different. The first "glory" is that of the [Old Covenant](#)—the Law of Moses—while the second is that of the [New Covenant](#), the gospel of Jesus Christ. Both have astonishing splendor.

The Old Covenant was given to Moses directly from God, written by God's own finger (Exodus 31:18). That root of our Christian faith is glorious indeed; it's the glory we're coming "from." Yet the New Covenant, the glory we're going "to," far surpasses that of the Old.

The transformation is *from* the glory of the Law. Like the stone it was written on, the Law was inflexible and absolute, applying to all Israelites without much regard for individual circumstances (Hebrews 10:28). Though holy, good, and righteous in itself (Romans 7:12), the Law was, for us sinners, the letter that kills us (2 Corinthians 3:6). The Law was an external force to control behavior. In addition, stone, despite its strength, is earthly and will eventually wear away. The Law was merely a temporary guardian (Galatians 3:23–25) until something better came along.

The transformation is *to* the glory of the New Covenant, which far surpasses the Old in every way. It forgives us of our sin and gives us sinners life (John 6:63). It is written on believers' hearts by the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3), so our obedience to God springs up from within us by God-given desires rather than by threats of legal punishment. In place of a cold set of writings as a guide for pleasing God, we now have Father, Son and Holy Spirit making their home with us, fellowshiping in loving intimacy, teaching us everything we must know and do (John 14:23; 16:13). That position in Christ is as permanent, eternal, and spiritual as God Himself, rather than temporary and earthly.

Paul is intent on directing Christians to focus on the spiritual glory of the New Covenant rather than physical glory of the Old, as many Jews in his day refused to do. He compared the two types of glory by recalling how Moses absorbed and reflected God's glory for a time after being in his presence (2 Corinthians 3:7–11, 13; cf. Exodus 34:29–35). Though Moses' glow had a spiritual cause, there was nothing spiritual about the effect—any person, regardless of his relationship with God, could see the glow on Moses' face, which he covered with a veil.

Not so the glory of the New Covenant. That can be seen only with a believer's spiritual eyes—what Paul is doing his best to open, so that we discern the gospel's glory. So he writes, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

But, as we move from glory to glory, there's something even more important about the glory of the New Covenant that Christians must understand: its supernatural power to transform us. And that brings us to God's ultimate purpose and destination for every believer, to transform us into the image of his own beloved Son (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:28–30; Philippians 3:20–21).

Before he finishes with the topic of being transformed from glory to glory, Paul presents yet one more astonishing claim: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

This is the invitation the Lord makes to all Christians, to have our lives radically transformed here and now, by opening our eyes to see the glorious journey He is taking us on "from glory to glory." GotQuestions.org (BOLDING ADDED)

Sadhu Sundar Singh (the great Christian evangelist of India) once knocked on the door of a village home, and a little girl answered, running back to call her mother. Her mother asked, "Who is it?" The girl replied, "I don't know, but he has such a lovely face, I think it must be Jesus." ([John: That you May Believe. Preaching the Words](#))

**The face is a mirror of the heart—
do people see Jesus in yours?**

TRUE ILLUSTRATIONS OF MEN WHO WERE TRANSFORMED FROM GLORY TO GLORY

(1) ADONIRAM JUDSON (SHORT BIOGRAPHY) - was "The sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him (Jesus) in every place." (2Cor 2:14) Many years ago when the great missionary Adoniram Judson was home on furlough, he passed through the city of Stonington, Connecticut. A young boy playing about the wharves at the time of Judson's arrival was struck by the man's appearance. Never

before had he seen such a light on any human face. He ran up the street to a minister to ask if he knew who the stranger was. The minister hurried back with him, but became so absorbed in conversation with Judson that he forgot all about the impatient youngster standing near him. Many years afterward that boy—who could never get away from the influence of that wonderful face—became the famous preacher **Henry Clay Trumbull** (Read [The life story of Henry Clay Trumbull, missionary, army chaplain, editor, author - 1905](#)) (See also his fascinating book [The Blood Covenant](#)). In a book of memoirs he penned a chapter entitled: "What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson." That lighted countenance had changed his life. Even as flowers thrive when they bend to the light, so shining, radiant faces come to those who constantly turn toward Christ! ([Read the original story in context of H C Trumbull's life story](#))

(2) Here is a modern example of the impact of 2Cor 3:18 in a man being transformed from glory to glory.You must listen to this testimony by Joyhn MacArthur before a group of College students - If nothing else listen to the first 15 minutes. You will not regret it!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urXa0biUUB4&t=1013s>

(3) John MacArthur wrote this note about a man transformed from glory to glory - It is said of **Robert Murray McCheyne**, a godly Scottish minister of the last century, that his face carried such a hallowed expression that people were known to fall on their knees and accept Jesus Christ as Savior when they looked at him. Others were so attracted by the self-giving beauty and holiness of his life that they found his Master irresistible. It was also said of the French pietist **Francois Fenelon** that his communion with God was such that his face shined with divine radiance. A religious skeptic who was compelled to spend the night in an inn with Fenelon, hurried away the next morning, saying, "If I spend another night with that man I'll be a Christian in spite of myself."

(4) Dr W H Houghton, pastored the Calvary Baptist Church in NYC and later served as president of Moody Bible Institute. When Dr. Houghton became pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle in Atlanta, a man in that city hired a private detective to follow Dr. Houghton and report on his conduct. After a few weeks, the detective was able to report to the man that Dr. Houghton's life matched his preaching. As a result of Houghton's faithful life as God's "Poima - Workmanship", that man became a Christian.