

The Greater Glory Of Christ
2 Corinthians 3:7-18 **August 14, 2022**



Every Christian father has hopes for their children. Hopes that they live happy, productive lives. That if they marry, that they might marry a godly spouse and be blessed with children.

But when all is said and done – the prayer every godly father pleads with God about is – please save my children. I have shared the way of salvation – please Lord make it live in their hearts – only You can do that.

Now, I want you to think about **six** fathers.

I want you to think about what they might have told their children about the way of salvation.

The first is **Adam**.

Kids, we blew it. I blew it in the garden and ruined it for everyone. And you have walked in my footsteps. Cain – you even killed your brother. *But God's grace is greater than our sin.* He promised a Seed who will crush the serpent. *Trust that God will send that Seed and you will live.*

The second is **Noah**.

Kids, we blew it. Our whole world blew it. Evil ran rampant – so God destroyed this world in a flood. Even after the flood, I blew it again – I got drunk and Ham you dishonoured me. *But God's grace is greater than our sin.* He has made a covenant not to destroy this world by a flood again – because the Seed He promised to Adam is yet to come. God was gracious to spare us – and the Seed

will come through us – but you have to trust in the Seed to find eternal life. *Trust that God will send that Seed and you will live.*

The third is **Abraham**.

Kid, we blew it. Wow – Babel shows how much we blew it. I mean, I was a moon worshipper, I lied about my wife, I tried to bear the son of promise through my slave. Isaac, I watch you walking in my footsteps. *But God's grace is greater than our sin.* He promised a Seed – and Now He has chosen me and you and our descendants as the ones the Seed will come through. *Trust that God will send that Seed and you will live.*

The fourth is **Moses**.

Kids, we blew it. I was becoming proud and wooed by Egypt. I blew it with anger and failing to trust God. God graciously gave us His Law but we thanked Him by making a golden calf and whining. *But God's grace is greater than our sin.* The Law became a teacher to show us we need a Saviour. That Saviour is the Seed promised to Adam and to Abraham. We see shadows of Him in the sacrifices, priests and the Tabernacle. *Trust that God will send that Seed and you will live.*

The fifth is **David**.

Kids, we blew it. I blew it so many times – Bathsheba, Uriah, numbering the nation. And now you have blown it – Absalom you even instigated a coup against me – our nation has blown it. I am so deeply ashamed. *But God's grace is greater than our sin.* He has promised a Kingdom that will never end – because He will send an eternal King. That King is the Seed promised to Adam and Abraham. *Trust that God will send that Seed and you will live.*

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David – in one sense had exactly the same message – *Trust that God will send that Seed and you will live.*

Each one knew a bit more about the Seed – but even for Moses and David – the Seed remained veiled in shadows and mystery.

Some of their children and descendants trusted – most did not.

The sixth father is **Murray Hudson**. He has a different message.

Abby, Penny, Willow, Eddie – kids, we blew it. I have messed up, mum has messed up, you have messed up. *But God's grace is greater than our sin.* God promised a Seed and He came. In the fulness of time God kept His promise. Jesus, God's own Son – God Himself came to live a perfect life. In Him we see the full glory of the Father and as we behold Him we become like Him. He died as a substitute for all who will place their faith in Him. Death was not the end – He rose and all in Him will rise. *Trust that God has sent His Seed and you will live.*

Which of these men do you want as your Dad?

Yeah I know we all want Muz as our Dad – but perhaps the real reason you should want him is the message of salvation he can give is so much greater than that of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David.

Promise, shadow and mystery – are now blazing reality.

We don't just say – trust the Seed will come – we get to say – Christ has come in the fullness of glory – Hallelujah!

Murray's New Covenant ministry – is so much greater than any man or woman who lived before the cross.

Murray can preach and see the spiritually dead come to life in Christ.

It is not that he has any power or ability in him – it is that the gospel of the New Covenant is energised by the power of the Holy Spirit to bring the spiritually dead to life.

This is a mark of New Covenant ministry.

We are working our way through the book of 2 Corinthians.

Paul wrote this book because a group of men – self-styled super apostles – turned up in Corinth preaching a twisted man-centred version of the gospel.

And they sought to discredit the ministry of Paul.

2 Corinthians is Paul's defence of his ministry.

I have titled the series on this book – **crucified leadership**. And I want to sum up this book this way:



A saint with character shaped through adversity is a saint God can use

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In this book, Paul gives the Corinthians and us a long series of:



1:1-2 God's church - God's leaders

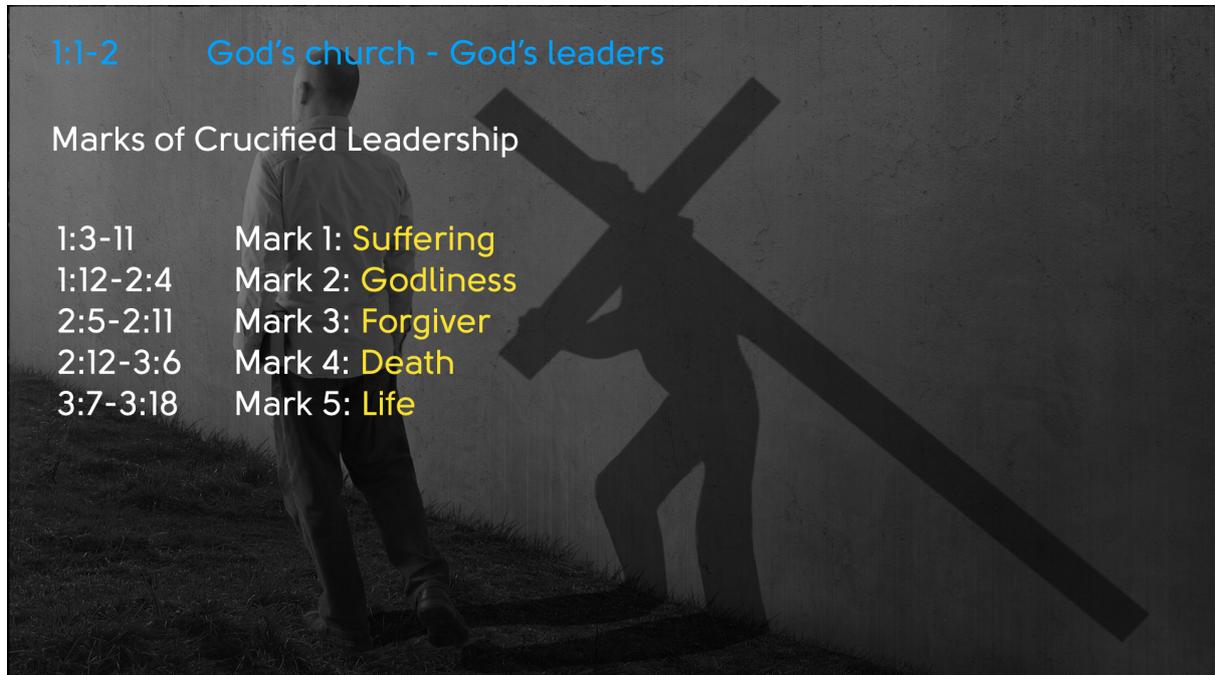
Marks of Crucified Leadership

Marks of crucified leadership.

Leadership in the church is not like leadership in the world.

The head of the church is a crucified Saviour so the leaders of His church must exhibit crucified leadership.

Last week we looked at the fourth mark – **death**.

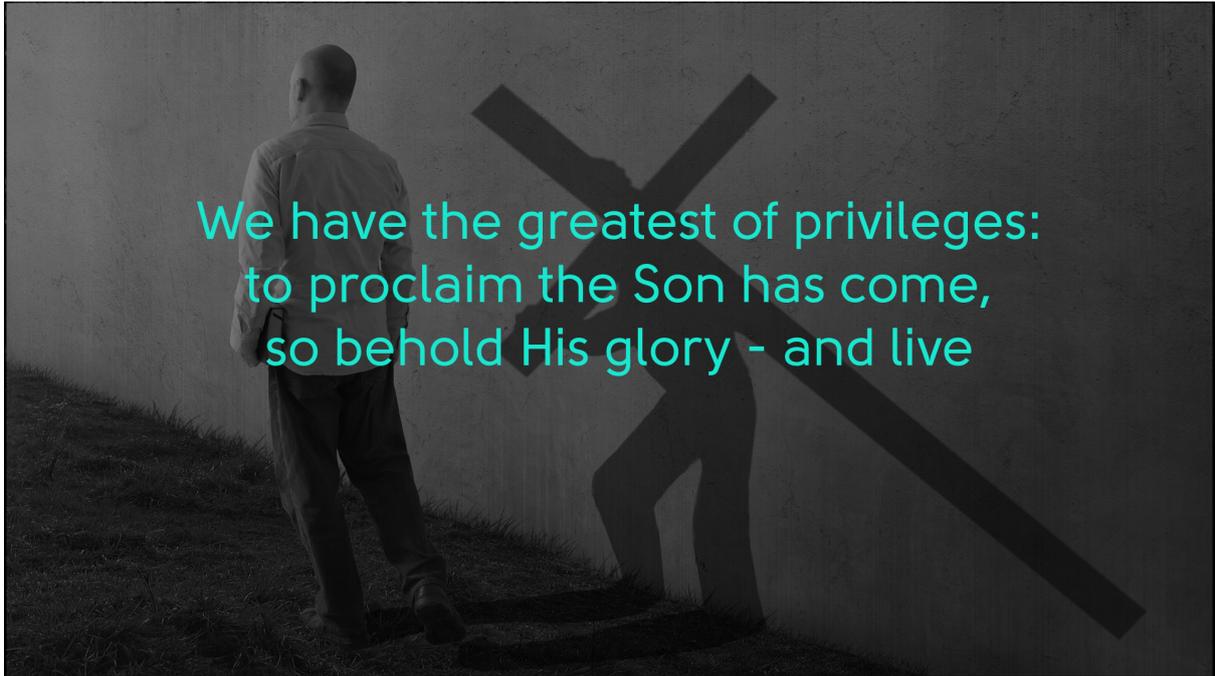


This week's mark is intimately related to it:

Life.

Last week Paul said – when you are looking at a leader – the question you need to ask is – has he died to self, does he have an aroma of death and through his ministry do the dead come to life?

What we are going to see this morning is this:



We have the greatest of privileges: to proclaim the Son has come, so behold His glory – and live.

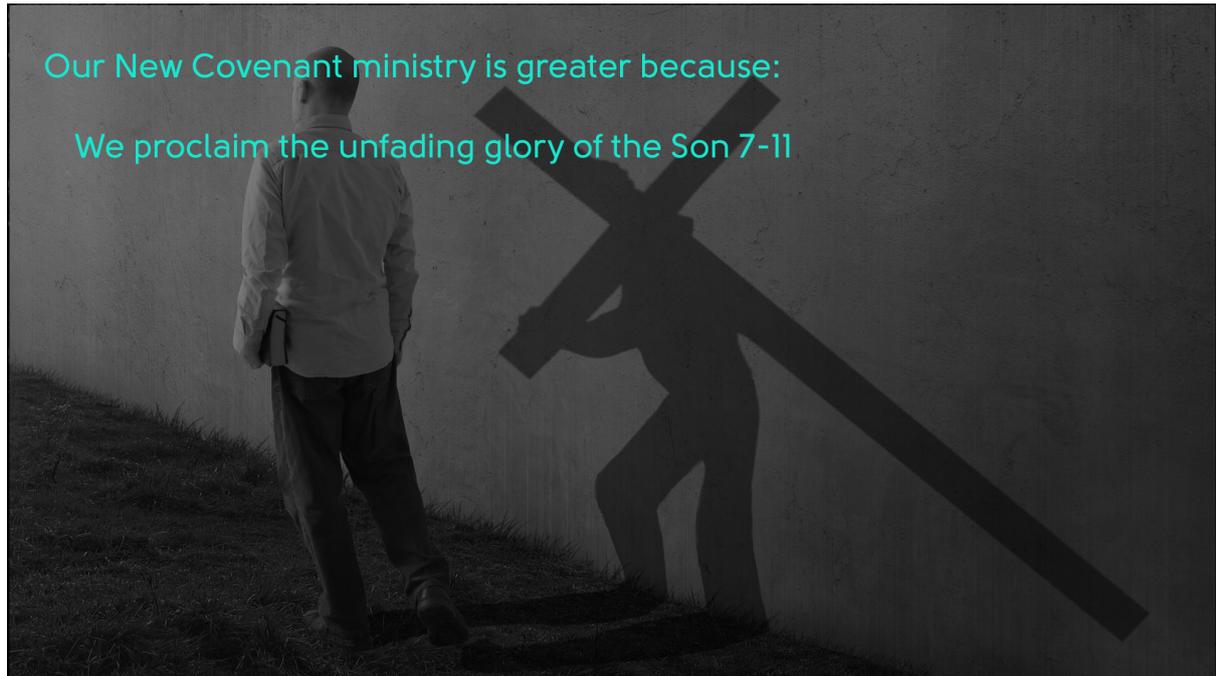
We have the greatest of privileges: to proclaim the Son has come, so behold His glory – and live.

The ministry of the super apostles – was tainted. They had compromised the gospel and the result was their ministry did **not** bring life. In that respect, their ministry was more Old Covenant than New Covenant.

Paul is a New Covenant minister and one of his great credentials is that his ministry actually brought the spiritually dead to life. The church in Corinth was living proof of this.

Paul makes this clear in two points.

First – Our New Covenant ministry is greater because:



We proclaim the unfading glory of the Son 7-11

Look with me at 2 Corinthians 3:7–11:

Now if the ministry that brought death, chiseled in letters on stones, came with glory, so that the Israelites were not able to gaze steadily at Moses's face because of its glory, which was set aside, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry that brought condemnation had glory, the ministry that brings righteousness overflows with even more glory. In fact, what had been glorious is not glorious now by comparison because of the glory that surpasses it. For if what was set aside was glorious, what endures will be even more glorious.

Paul wants us to know how much greater New Covenant ministry is than Old Covenant ministry.

You read these verses:

Verse 6	The letter kills
Verse 7	The ministry of the Old Covenant brings death
Verse 9	This ministry brings condemnation

And you might think – wow – Paul was not a fan of the Old Covenant.

That is not entirely true.

What is more accurate is to say – Paul is not a fan of the Old Covenant – the Law – **as a means of salvation.**

The Old Covenant was *never* supposed to provide a way of salvation. It showed we need saving, it pointed to Christ in its symbols and shadows. Its sacrifices did cover sin until Christ came.

But it could not save.

With that in mind, I do need to detour for a moment.

Many of you will have been raised in or exposed to a theological system that does teach – you can be saved through the Old Covenant.

So, what Paul says – may confuse those raised in that system – so I want to address it briefly.

The system I am mainly talking about is **classic Covenant Theology**.

Here is how it understands the relationship between Old and New Covenants.



While I disagree with it – I do want to be clear – this is a very good system of theology.

It orders the covenants and the story of God's redemption by saying there is one overarching covenant called – *The Covenant Of Grace* – which has two administrations – the Old and New Covenants.

Because the Old and New are just two parts of this one main covenant, there really is not a huge difference between them.

It is almost as if the Old Covenant blends seamlessly into the New Covenant.

For example, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* says:

There are not therefore two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.

That is a fancy way of saying that the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are just different ways God provided His plan of salvation.

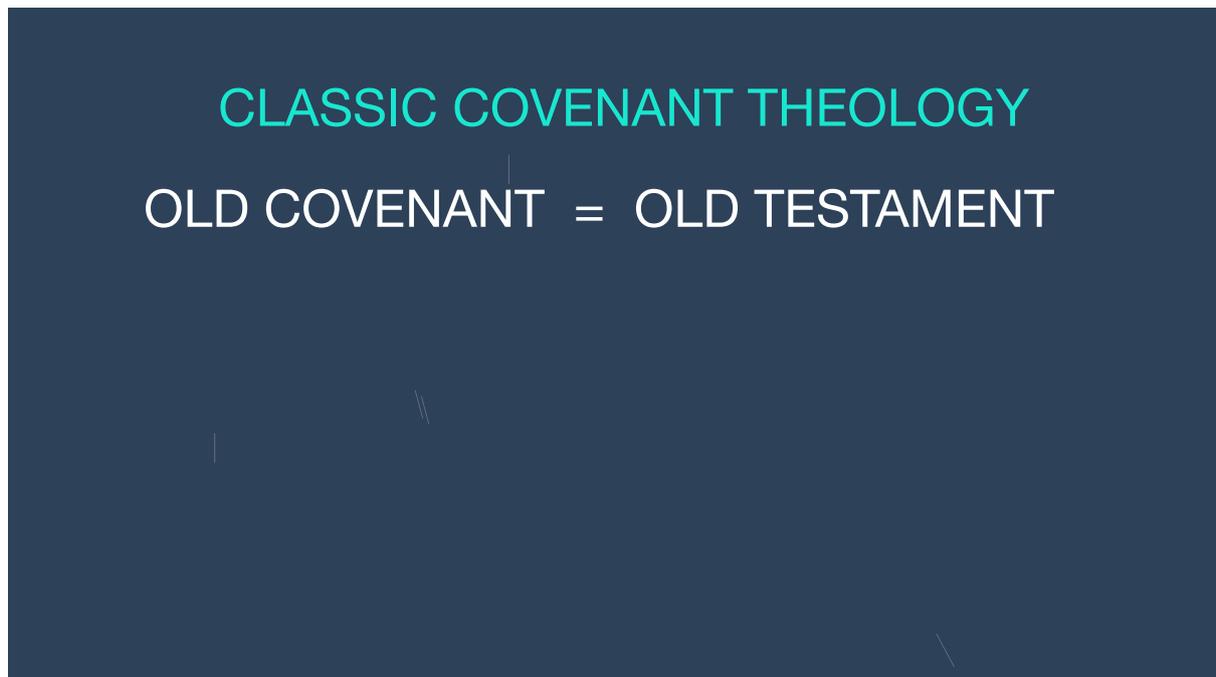
The Confession also says:

The covenant was for that time sufficient and efficacious ... by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation.

By ordering the covenants this way – it of necessity teaches that the Old Covenant – **was** sufficient and efficacious to save.

So, you can see the difficulty with this morning's passage.

The way theologians – like those who hold to the Westminster Confession – get around this is to give a very *broad* definition to the 'Old Covenant.'



Classic Covenant Theology views the **Old Covenant** and the whole **Old Testament** – Genesis to Malachi – as basically meaning the same thing.

CLASSIC COVENANT THEOLOGY

OLD COVENANT = OLD TESTAMENT

Noahic

Abrahamic

Mosaic

Davidic

When you see 'Old Covenant' they say it means – everything in the Old Testament – not just the covenant with Moses – but also those with Noah, Abraham and David.

CLASSIC COVENANT THEOLOGY

OLD COVENANT = OLD TESTAMENT

MOST OTHER THEOLOGIES

OLD COVENANT = MOSAIC COVENANT
OR MOSAIC LAW

Most – not all – but certainly most of the other theological systems view Old Covenant as **only** referring to the Mosaic Covenant or to the Mosaic Law.

Even classic covenant theologians admit – broadening the Old Covenant this way flows from their theology – not directly from any text.

I would argue that the Bible is very clear – when you see *Old Covenant* or *First Covenant* – it means the Mosaic Covenant or the Mosaic Law.

In our passage, Paul seems to use – Tablets of Stone, Ministry of Moses, Old Covenant as synonyms.

Interestingly, although churches, theologians and pastors use the term ‘Old Covenant’ a lot – verse 14 in our passage, is the **only** place where this term – ‘Old Covenant’ is actually used in the Bible.

Nowhere in the Old Testament is it called – Old Covenant – because it only becomes Old – when the new comes.

Jeremiah speaks of the covenant made on the day the Lord led them from Egypt that will be replaced by a New Covenant.

The writer of Hebrews speaks of – the *first* covenant – but very clearly both of them mean what Paul means by the **Old Covenant**.

Hebrews is clear.

Hebrews 8:6–9:

Jesus ... is the mediator of a better covenant. ... For if that **first** covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one. ... See, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant ... not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.

Hebrews 8:13:

By saying a new covenant, he has declared that the **first** is obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old is about to pass away.

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Hebrews 8:13:

By saying a new covenant, he has declared that the **first** is obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old is about to pass away.

It is the Old Covenant only because a New one has come.

Paul and the writer of Hebrews specifically contrast the New Covenant with the Mosaic – the covenant given on Sinai after God brought them out of Egypt.

Nowhere do you find a contrast – the whole Old Testament replaced by the New Covenant.

It is only this covenant with Moses as a way to righteousness that is fading away, becoming obsolete.

Crucially, the covenants with Noah, Abrahamic and David – are clearly not obsolete and have not passed away.

It is a theological decision to make the Old Covenant mean more than the covenant with Moses.

So, how are we to understand the covenants? For what it is worth – here is my very imperfect understanding.



If you need to know – I am what is called a *Progressive Covenantalist*.

I think this lets the text speak for itself without imposing a theological framework on the text.

I understand the guiding structural principle is **not** a covenant of grace but the **promise** of God to redeem – which was made in eternity past and never changes.

All of the Old Testament covenants are – covenants of promise – built on the promise of a Seed who will save.

GOD'S PROMISE TO REDEEM IN ETERNITY PAST

Creation (Gen 2)

Fall (Gen 3)

Divine Promise of Salvation by Faith (Gen 3)

Covenants Of Promise (Preparatory)

Noahic - Promise and Recapitulation

Abrahamic - Promise and Shadows of Land, Seed, Blessing

Mosaic - Promise and Shadows of Law

Davidic - Promise and Shadows of King

Covenant of Fulfilment (Final and Enduring)

New - Reality and Substance

Each one adds a bit more detail – but none changes or adds to the basis of salvation.

Notably, the covenant to Abraham makes the promise of salvation by faith explicit to Israel.

So, in places like Romans 4 – Paul is clear – salvation for Abraham came by faith – in fact salvation came *before* the covenant given to him – it came before he was circumcised. It was based on the promise given by God in the garden.

Abraham was saved the same way we are – by faith alone – in the promise of God.

But clearly all of these covenants had shadows and pictures of the One who will save.

Noah had the Blood Sacrifice – Abraham had Land, Seed, Blessing – Moses had the Law and David had the Kingdom.

And finally, the promise becomes reality in the New Covenant.

However, the Mosaic Covenant – the Law – as a way to righteousness is eclipsed by Christ – and so when the reality came – that entire covenant became obsolete.

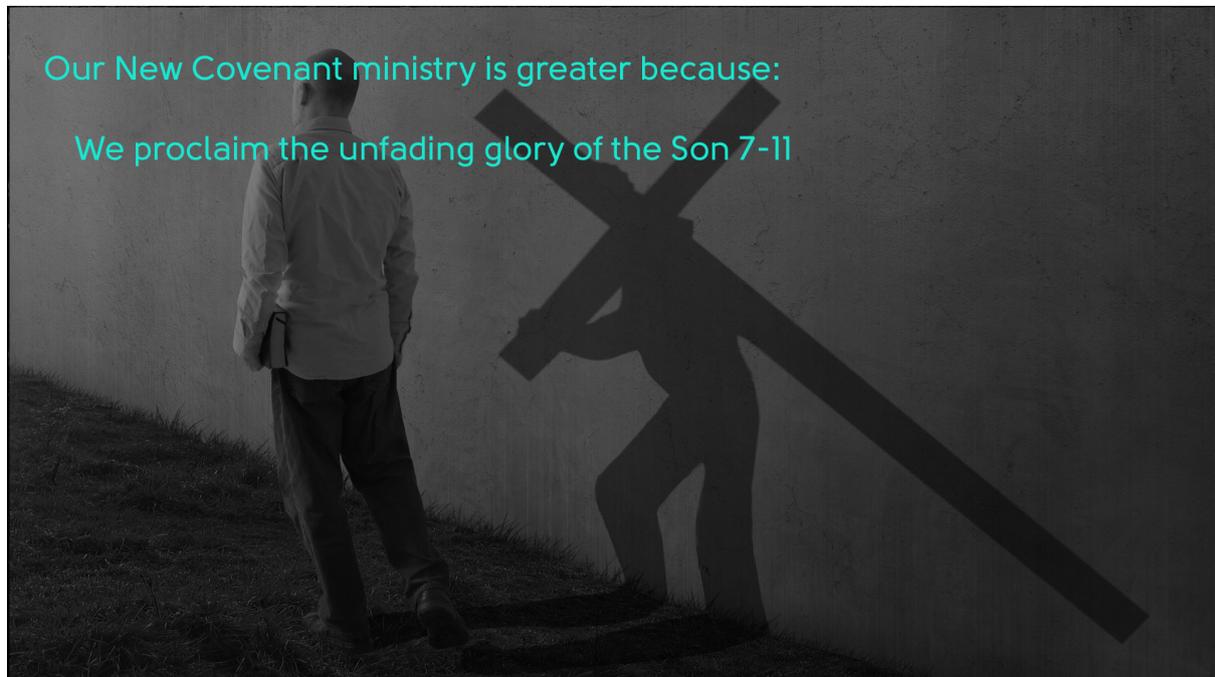
We still learn from the Law about the standard of God and the righteousness of God – but now we do so through the lens of Christ.

Perhaps the way I could sum it up is this – **you can be saved under the Old Covenant – but not by the Old Covenant.**

In days Israel lived under the Law – they could be saved – by faith – not by Law.

I know this can be complex, but the point for us to note is that salvation in the Old Testament was very clearly **never** meant to come through the Mosaic or as Paul calls it – the Old Covenant.

Look, I don't want to get side-tracked into a sermon series on the covenants. This is an incredibly complex area.



So let me remind you of why this is important for us this morning.

If you understand the Old Covenant and New Covenant to be both ways of salvation – you might miss the point Paul is making.

All you need to understand is that Paul is saying the Old Covenant cannot save – but the one that replaces it – the New Covenant – can save. And that is one major reason why the New is so much greater than the Old.

Notice that Paul makes his point by describing the ministry of Moses – as one that had only partial glory and even that faded away.

It had some glory – but **not** saving glory.

John 1:17:

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Don't think that the Law had no grace. It **was** a gift of grace to help show them their need of a Saviour and point to the Saviour.

But it was not a saving grace. But when Christ came – His New Covenant has a grace that saves.

Think about it this way. In Deuteronomy 5:1 we read what Moses said to Israel:

Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Israel, listen to the statutes and ordinances I am proclaiming as you hear them today. Learn and follow them carefully."

Moses was given a covenant of Law.

He then reminded them of the Law by giving the Ten Commandments again.

His message was – Israel – listen to the Law and keep the Law.

But could anyone keep the Law? – no. No one could keep the Law.

Galatians 2:21:

If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

The law could not save.

It showed – you can't save yourself – you need a Saviour.

Now they could be saved – but not by the Law. Remember – the Jews of Moses day had the Covenant with Abraham – faith in that promise was how they could be saved.

But the point here is that the Law tells us we need to be holy.

Leviticus 11:45:

For I am the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God, so you must be holy because I am holy.

The Law showed us what holiness is – but the fact is that no one can meet that standard.

We need something other than the Law to save.

In a sense – the Old Covenant builds on the promise to Adam and Abraham.

The Seed that comes will be sacrifice and Priest. He will shed His blood to pay for sins. He will be a perfect mediator.

So, Paul is clear – while the Old Covenant tells us more about the One to come – the shadows can't save. The blood of bulls and goats can't save. The imperfect priests – can't save – Someone greater has to come to actually save us.

So, in summary – **the letter kills – but the Spirit gives life.**

OLD
COVENANT →

The Old Covenant was not designed to save – but to point to the Saviour.

So, it had to become obsolete – when the Saviour came.

NEW
COVENANT

When the substance, the reality in Christ came and the New Covenant in His blood was established – the Old faded away – its reason for existence was done.

So let me summarise the different kinds of ministries these men had under these covenants.

Moses	Paul
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Could only preach to Israel	Could preach to Israel and to Gentiles
Ministry showed needed a Saviour	Ministry showed Saviour had come
Most in Israel hardened their heart only a remnant had faith	All in the church turned their heart and all have saving faith
Ministry of death	Ministry of life
Partial glory that fades	Full glory that does not fade

MOSES	PAUL
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Moses was not sent to preach to any other nation.

God did not tell Moses – conquer the Promised Land by converting all those pagan Philistines.

And even if Moses could go to the Philistines – his message would be what? Get circumcised, join Israel, submit to the Law – and when you fail to keep the Law – trust in Messiah to come.

Paul preached to Jews and Gentiles – the gospel is for all nations.

At best Moses could only show them they needed a Saviour.

But, Paul, Paul could point to the cross and say the Saviour has come. Hallelujah!

What was the result? Under the preaching of Moses and the prophets – most in Israel rejected God. They failed to keep the Law, they hardened their hearts, turned to idols, they wanted other gods.

The outcome was only a tiny remnant were the true Israel.

But in the New Covenant people – the church – every last one is saved.

So, one became a ministry of death – and one is truly a ministry of life.

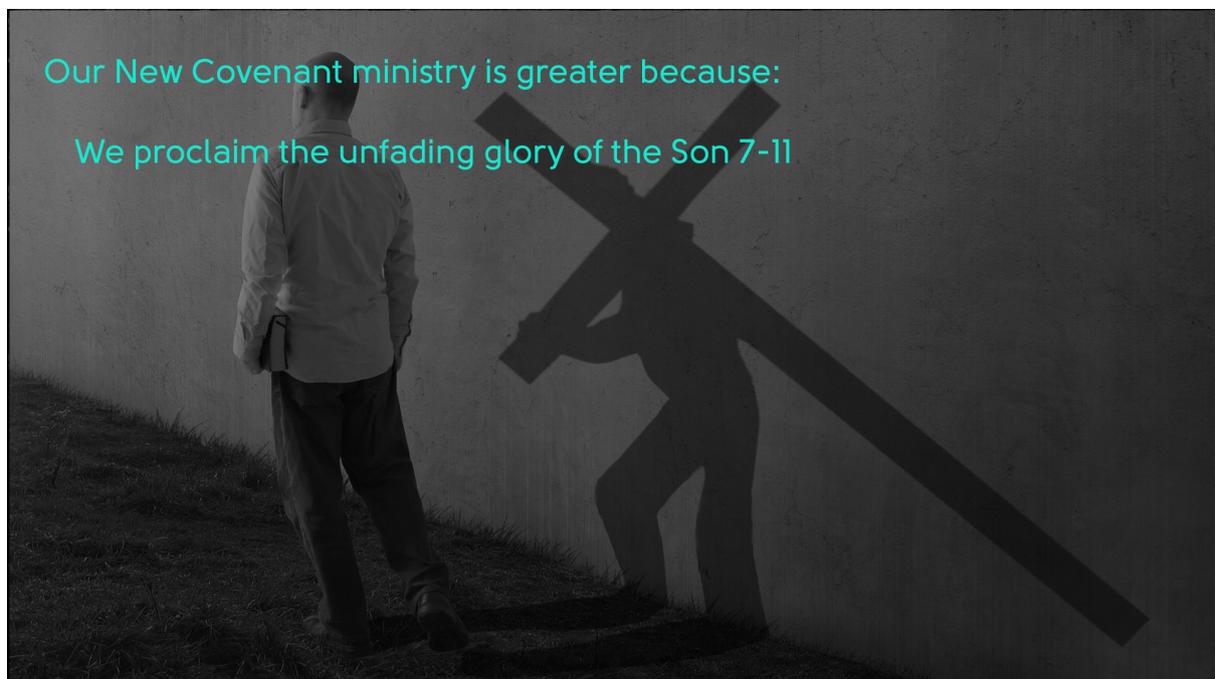
One had a partial glory and even that glory was designed to fade – and one had a full glory that was designed to never fade.

Augustine described these two covenants this way:

The New is in the Old concealed – the Old is in the New revealed.

Now if you missed all of that – if you are totally confused – all you need to know is this – **the New Covenant – the covenant you and I live under – is exponentially greater because – Christ has come – it can bring life – it can save.**

So, Paul sums up why the New Covenant is greater in two points.



First – **we get to proclaim the unfading glory of the Son.**

All the fading shadows, all the vague allusions are gone – replaced by the unfading, blazing glory of Christ.

In the Law – they had glimpses of the One to come.

They had vague shadows of Christ seen through sacrifices and priests and Temples.

But this was designed to fade and be replaced by a full unfading blazing glory.

Paul shows us this through the events of Moses' ministry in Exodus 32-34.

Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the Law. He is up there longer than Israel expected so they decide they better make their own god. They built a golden calf.

When Moses came down the mountain and saw this – he smashed the tablets of the Law.

He then pitched a tent outside the camp and there he spoke to face to face with God.

Moses tried to get out of leading the people.

God told him– nice try – but you still have to lead this stiff-necked mob of people.

Moses says – OK but please let me see Your glory – I beg you.

God says – you can't see My face and live.

At first you think – what! Isn't Moses already speaking with God face to face?

'Face to face' is a common idiom that means he spoke "intimately." Moses had been speaking with God as a man speaks to a friend – not seeing the face and the full glory of God.

That is why God could say – you can't see My face – My glory – and live.

But here is what I will do – I will hide you in the crevice of a rock and cover you with My hand and after I pass by you can see My back.

Moses got to glimpse the trailing edge of the glory of God.

God then cuts a new set of the Ten Commandments and after 40 days and 40 nights, He sends Moses down the mountain.

Now listen to Exodus 34:29–35:

Exodus 34:29–35:

As Moses descended from Mount Sinai—with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands as he descended the mountain—he did not realize that the skin of his face shone as a result of his speaking with the Lord. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone! They were afraid to come near him. But Moses called out to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community returned to him, and Moses spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he commanded them to do everything the Lord had told him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever Moses went before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out. After he came out, he would tell the Israelites what he had been commanded, and the Israelites would see that Moses's face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil over his face again until he went to speak with the Lord.

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Paul draws on a couple of things from this.

First, Moses was exposed to a fraction of God's glory – he saw the back of God – but it was enough to make his face shine.

Moses didn't then preach – trust in Messiah to come. No, he said – keep everything the Lord told us in the Law.

Clearly, the Law has some glory. The sacrifices, the priesthood, the Temple, the Festivals, the Sabbath – all of these were shadows of Christ.

And it showed Israel they needed a Saviour.

In Galatians 3:24 – Paul says the Law was given as a tutor to show us our need of a Saviour.

But here is the thing – **this glory was partial – not enough to save – and it was designed to fade – to be superseded when the full glory came.**

What is the full glory?

Christ is the full glory of God. Hebrews 1:3:

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature.

Colossians 1:15:

He is the image of the invisible God.

Jesus said – if you see the Son – you have seen the Father.

The shadows and types that could not save were replaced by the reality that could save.

The light illuminated the shadow and the shadow was gone.

This glory is unfading.

There will never be a – ‘newer’ new covenant. There will never be a better way of salvation.

Here is what Paul is saying.

Moses’ could not look at the face of God – but only the back of God. Even that was enough for His face to reflect a miniscule fraction of the glory of God.

And Israel didn’t even get to see the back of God – all they got was the remnant of God’s glory left on Moses’ face.

Even that was enough that it caused fear on those who saw it.

This bit of fading glory on Moses’ face was meant to show the covenant Moses brought has a partial glory that would fade and disappear.

When?

John 1:14:

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In the rest of John’s gospel – and in 1 John – we find that the place the glory of God is perfectly displayed is the cross – and when we place our faith in what Jesus did on the cross – spiritually we see the full glory of God – in Christ – and that glory cannot fade.

You can’t compare these two glories.

Imagine a totally dark night. Then in the darkness one little light appears – an Eveready torch with small bulb and a 12 volt battery. It gives a bit of light for a time.

It is not designed to drive out the darkness – but to give hope that one day a light will come that will end darkness forever.

Then God says let there be light – and a blazing sun appears – and drives out the darkness – and that sun never fades.

And you can’t even see the little bulb in the full glare of the sun.

Barnett captures the sense well when he says that the glory of the New Covenant “outglorified and thus deglorified” the glory of the Old Covenant.

That is the Old Covenant and the New.

Dying bulb compared to unfading blazing sun.

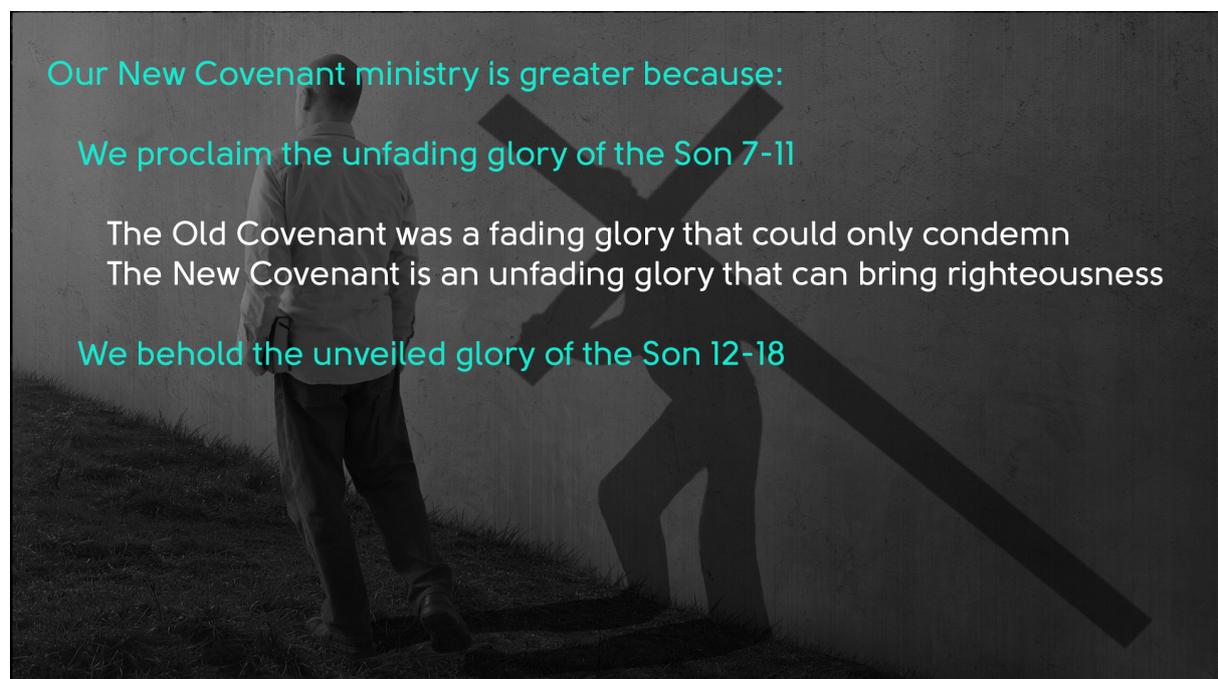
Shadows of the Son of God – and the Son come in the flesh.

You have this dim, vague, dark picture – then it comes into full focus and full light.

A ministry of letters on stones that can only condemn – is replaced by a ministry of Spirit on hearts that can actually make someone righteous.

You have sacrifices of bulls and goats, human priests, the demands of the Law – all of which cannot save – but then the One they point to – the One who can save comes – and the Law is ended.

Today, we get to preach Christ not Law – no ministry can be more glorious – because Christ actually saves and His glory never fades.

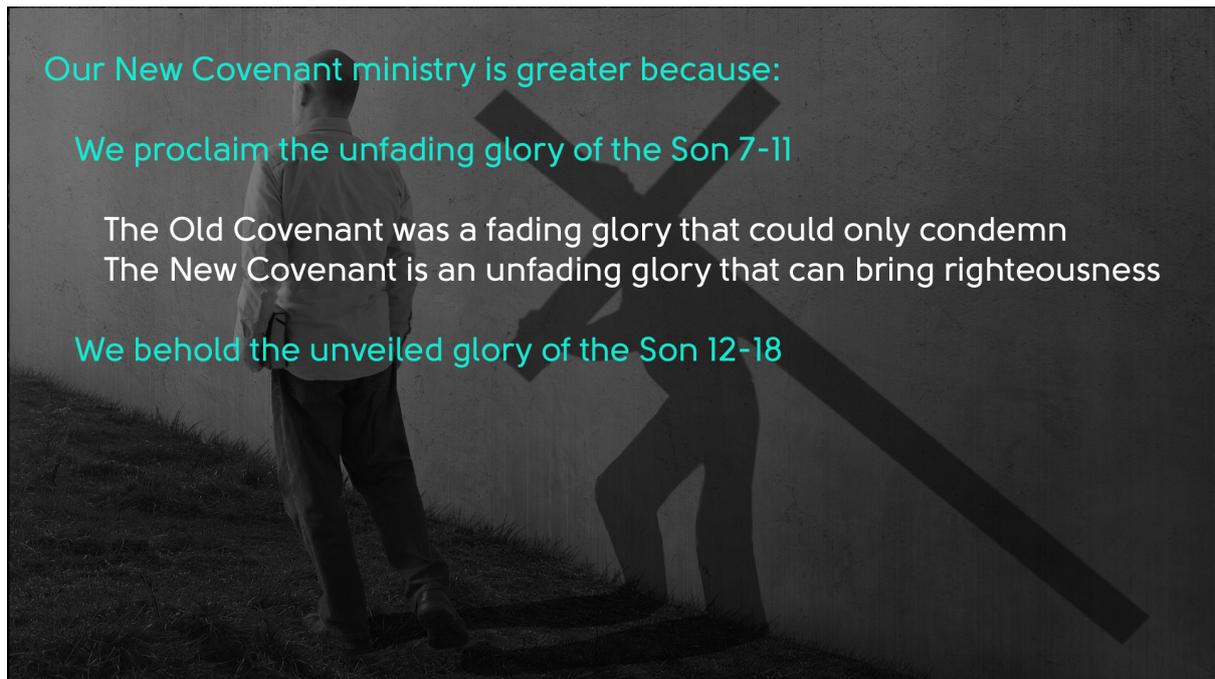


**The Old Covenant was a fading glory that could only condemn
The New Covenant is an unfading glory that can bring righteousness**

Moses would have cut off his right arm to have what you have. A gospel that saves.

You don't just have shadows – Law on tablets of stone – the blood of bulls and goats – imperfect priests – a Temple – you can tell people of Christ – the glory of the Father – who saves.

There is a *second* reason **our New Covenant ministry is greater:**



We behold the unveiled glory of the Son 12-18

2 Corinthians 3:12:

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness.

Since we have the privilege of proclaiming the unfading glory of Christ – it makes us bold. We can see people saved and they are transformed.

Moses could not be bold about his ministry. In fact – he veiled his face.

Verse 13:

We are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from gazing steadily until the end of the glory of what was being set aside.

When you read Exodus 34 – let's be honest – the veil seems a bit strange.

You can't help but ask – why did Moses put a veil on?

Paul tells us.

Moses veiled his face so Israel would not see the fading of the partial glory.

Israel got a fraction of glory. The bit left on Moses' face after he saw the back of God.

It represents the partial glory of the Law, the shadows of sacrifices, priests, Temples and types.

But even this minor glory was designed to fade. It was temporary. It was intended to be superseded by the greater glory.

Moses did not want them to see this fading glory – that the shiny new thing they just got – the Law – was a partial glory – it could not save and was going to fade.

But, crucially the veil also represented what was happening spiritually.

Verse 14:

But their minds were hardened. For to this day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains; it is not lifted, because it is set aside only in Christ.

The physical veil demonstrated a spiritual veil.

Moses goes in the tent and takes the veil off – it shows he can understand the truths God is saying.

But his veil shows Israel can't.

The idea is that the physical veil on Moses showed there was a spiritual veil on Israel's hearts.

Israel looked and could not even see the bit of glory left on Moses' face.

Israel heard the Law preached and could not grasp the bit of glory in the types and shadows.

Israel hears the Law – and they don't say – great – I know that Messiah is coming. No they say – that won't save us – we need to build our own god – we need to take a god from the nations.

So, Israel as a whole hardened their hearts. Yes, a remnant, a few – softened their hearts – but most did not.

We see this again and again in the Old Testament.

Isaiah was sent to preach to Israel – but God said his preaching would make them:

Keep listening, but not understand; keep looking, but not perceive. Make the minds of these people dull; deafen their ears and blind their eyes; otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, understand with their minds, turn back, and be healed. Isaiah 6:9–10.

In Isaiah 29:11–12 He says:

For you the entire vision will be like the words of a sealed document. If it is given to one who can read and he is asked to read it, he will say, "I can't read

it, because it is sealed.” And if the document is given to one who cannot read and he is asked to read it, he will say, “I can’t read.”

Crucially, in Romans 11:7–8 Paul says:

What then? Israel did not find what it was looking for, but the elect did find it. The rest were hardened, as it is written, **God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear, to this day.**

Hear that! Israel looks – most hearts were hardened – God gave most of them a spirit of stupor – blind eyes and unhearing ears – only the elect – the remnant in Israel – were enabled to see – to have faith and be saved.

I can’t answer why God chose to harden most hearts in Israel.

My personal suspicion is that if most of Israel could be saved by faith in the shadows and signs of the Old Covenant it would detract from the glory of Christ – but we are not told for certain.

The fact that the veil – the hardening – is only designed to be lifted when Christ comes – I think makes this likely.

The idea is that everything is building up to the revelation of the great glory – Christ.

And the understudy – the preparatory movements of the Law and the Prophets – could not have too much greatness or it would detract from the glory of Christ.

Verses 15-16:

Yet still today, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts, but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

Christ came.

Israel still looked to the Law – not Christ – and when the Law of Moses was read – the veil remained. They will never find the full glory of Christ in the Law.

The Law was not designed to save either before or after the coming of Christ.

But when someone trusts in Christ – when God opens blinded eyes – the veil is removed. Now they can see the full glory of Christ.

Verse 17:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

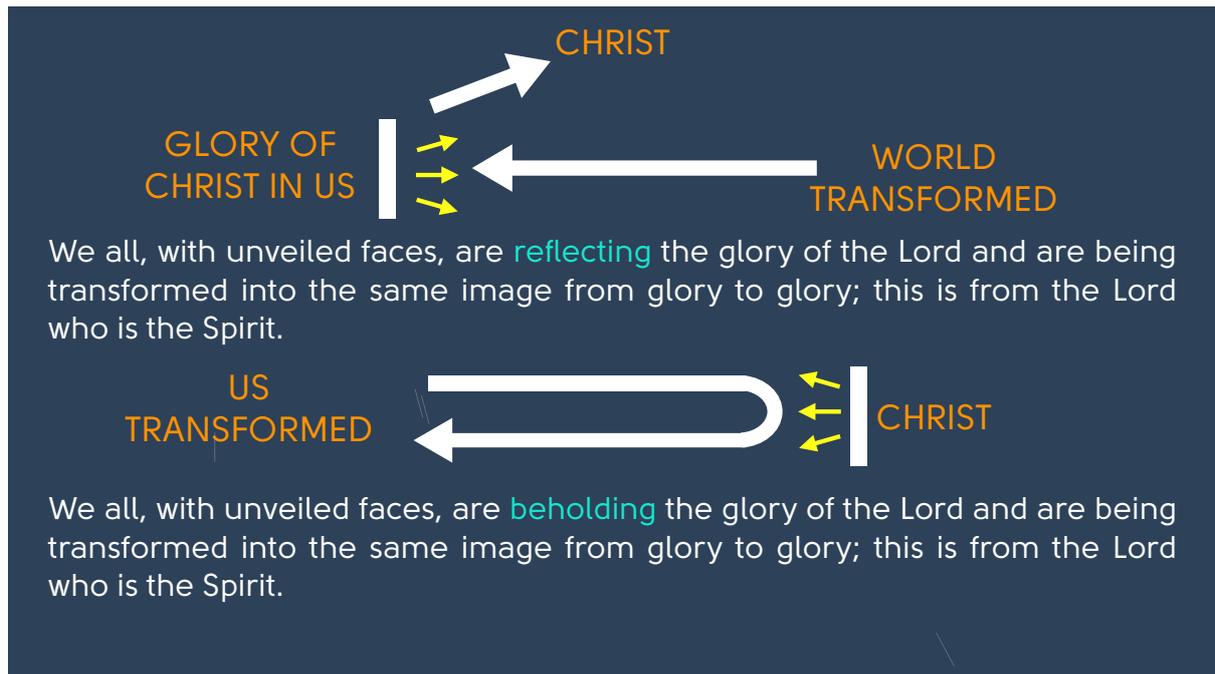
It is not that we can remove the veil ourselves. No one is smart enough to work out who Jesus is for themselves.

No – the Spirit of the Lord frees us from the veil over our hearts. He opens our blinded eyes.

And when we have freedom from the veil – **we can see Christ.**

Verse 18.

We all, with unveiled faces, are **looking as in a mirror** at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.



There are two possible ways to understand this verse.

This word looking as in a mirror – can mean *reflecting* as in a mirror – or *beholding* as in a mirror.

Depending on your translations – some will have – *reflecting* – or as most have it *looking* or *beholding*.

What is the difference?

If it is reflecting – the idea is – we look on Christ – we are transformed – and then we reflect Christ to the world – and the world looks at us – and unlike Moses, our faces are not veiled so the world sees Christ's glory in us and some in the world are converted and transformed.

The idea is we become Christ's light to the world.



We all, with unveiled faces, are beholding the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

That is possible – but the more common use of this word is beholding or looking intently – and this fits the context better.

Paul has moved from veils faces more to removing the veil on our hearts.

The idea is this – Moses never got to look on the face of God. God said – you can't see My face and live.

No man can see the full glory of God and live.

In fact, even the minor glory on Moses' face terrified the Israelites.

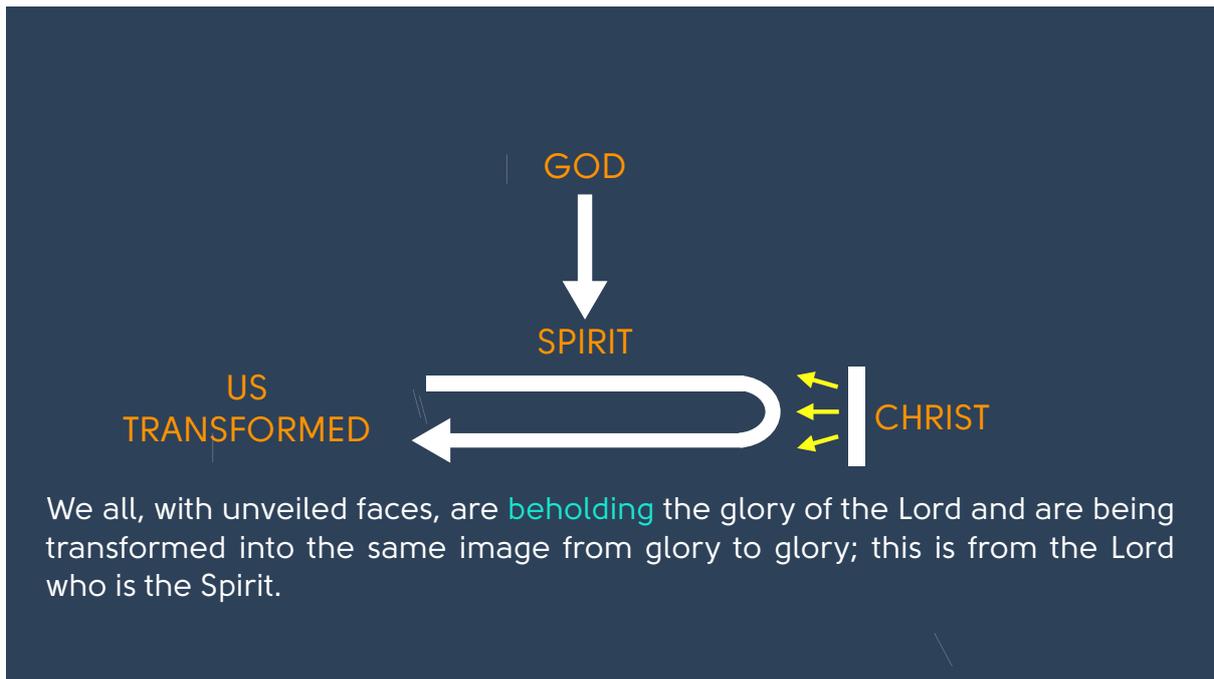
But, when we are saved – the veil is removed and we have the freedom to gaze on the full glory of God in Christ – and because we are in Christ we don't die – and we are transformed.

If you look down to 4:6 – we have the full knowledge of God's glory by looking on the face of Jesus Christ.

John 1:18 says:

No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—he has revealed him.

We can do something Moses could not – see the face of God in Christ.



This occurs through the Trinity. God sends His Spirit who enables us to see Christ and not die – and as we see Christ we are transformed into the image of the Son.

The more you behold Christ, meditate on Him, love Him – the more like Him you become.

So, why is the New Covenant greater?

Our New Covenant ministry is greater because:

We proclaim the unfading glory of the Son 7-11

The Old Covenant was a fading glory that could only condemn
 The New Covenant is an unfading glory that can bring righteousness

We behold the unveiled glory of the Son 12-18

The Old Covenant showed Christ as a veiled mystery that hardened hearts
 The New Covenant shows Christ as an unveiled reality that transforms hearts

Because with unveiled faces we can behold the full glory of God in the Son.

The Old Covenant showed Christ as a veiled mystery that hardened hearts

The New Covenant shows Christ as an unveiled reality that transforms hearts

Israel just had the Law to teach them about God's holiness.

We have Christ and we have the cross.

They had do not murder.

We have – be greater than the Scribes and Pharisees – don't even be angry with your brother or sister.

They had love your neighbour and hate your enemy.

We have love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

And the more we behold Christ by His Spirit showing us His glory through His word – the more we are transformed from the lesser glory of Law to the greater glory of Christ – by the work of the Lord who is the Spirit.

And one day the unfading glory of Christ will not just fill the hearts of the church – but fill all of creation. Revelation 21:22–23:

I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

I am so thankful I live after the cross. Instead of vague shadows and illusions – I can tell my kids about the real deal – Christ and Him crucified.

Instead of pointing to a serpent on a stick. I get to say to my kids and to the world – the Saviour has come. Look on Him and live.

My ministry, your ministry is so much greater than Moses' – because our message is so much greater.

We need to tell this message to the world – Christ has come – and when we do – we have the greatest of privileges – seeing the spiritually dead come to eternal life.

The Greater Glory Of Christ **2 Corinthians 3:7-18 August 14, 2022**

Main Point: We have the greatest of privileges: to proclaim the Son has come, so behold His glory – and live.

Optional Theological Questions:

We hold all of these are excellent theological systems.

Classic Covenant Theology (that found in the Westminster Confession of Faith)

This has more continuity between the Old and New Covenant – which usually leads to paedobaptism.

1689 Federalist Theology (that found in the 1689 Confession) and Progressive Covenant Theology (eg outlined in Kingdom through Covenant)

These have more discontinuity between the Old and New Covenant – which usually leads to believer's baptism.

All clearly teach the same way of salvation – before and after Christ – but how that is revealed and through what covenant or covenants differs.

Since the areas of agreement are great – we do not want division over an issue like this – so only discuss these theological questions if it can be done in a cordial spirit of unity in the main thing – salvation in Christ.

1. How was someone saved before the coming of Christ?
2. What was different for Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David?
3. The sermon outlined two main ways of organising the progress of redemption.

The covenant of grace (Classic Covenant Theology)

The promise to redeem (1689 Federalism and Progressive Covenant Theology)

What is the difference?

Is there a difference in how each understands the term – Old Covenant? What is the justification each gives for their understanding?

What did the New Covenant replace? What ended and what continues?

Is there a difference in how each understands the place of the Mosaic Law?

Since the theological systems and way of salvation are not hugely different – does it matter? Why or why not?

4. Other than baptism and the Law – are there other areas of difference that might flow from these theologies? Eg the nature of the church, when the church began, etc.

Passage Questions:

1. What is the main contrast between the Old and New Covenant ministries Paul is making?
2. What kind of grace did the Old Covenant have?
3. Could it actually save or not?
4. What do these statements mean?

You can be saved under the Old Covenant – but not by the Old Covenant.

In days Israel lived under the Law – they could be saved – by faith – not by Law.

5. Why was the Old Covenant partial?
6. Why was it fading? What made it obsolete?
7. Augustine described these two covenants this way:

The New is in the Old concealed – the Old is in the New revealed.

What did he mean?

8. What is the difference between the ministries of Moses and Paul?
9. What is the place of the Law of Moses (if any) today?
10. Why did Moses veil his face?

What significance did it convey – in terms of the Old Covenant and in terms of salvation?

11. Why did God harden the hearts of Israel?
12. What can open blind eyes?
13. How do we behold the glory of God in the face of Christ today?
14. How does this transform us into the image of Christ?

Application Questions:

1. Why is our ministry greater than Moses'?
2. Why can we minister with boldness?
3. What helps you see the glory of Christ and draw near?