

"TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH" PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH



The Second Corinthian Letter Chapter 3

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? 2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 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.

DO I ACTUALLY NEED A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU?

☀ *Remember context: Paul has been criticized by someone in the church in Corinth as not being a legitimate apostle. This person has apparently been disciplined, however, the memory of the accusation, Paul's change of plans, and the presence of outside agitators Paul calls "false apostles" (2Cor. 11:13) has made him feel compelled to defend his apostleship, ministry, and reputation. In verses leading up to chapter 3, Paul has written of himself as being in a Triumph led by God, being an order of life to the saved and of death to those who reject the Gospel; and even more not as a peddler of the Gospel, as some were, but offering it freely and sincerely.*

☀ The word "again" tells us what about commending himself?

☀ When might this have happened?

☀ What are letters of recommendation?

☀ What does Paul mean that the Corinthian church is his letter of recommendation written in his heart?

☀ What's the emphasis on "known and read by all men" mean?

☀ What does he mean that they are a letter of Christ?

☀ How has Paul cared for them?

☀ What seems to be the meaning behind "written not with ink but with the Spirit"?

☀ Or "not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts"?

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

- ☀ Was Paul an educated, experienced, and accomplished person?
- ☀ Why then does he deny adequacy?
- ☀ To whom does credit and glory for accomplishment (like evangelizing the city of Corinth) truly go? Why?
- ☀ What other grand adequacy did Paul receive from the Lord?
 - ☀ What would make a person adequate for such things?
 - ☀ Thinking ahead and knowing who some of Paul's opponents were, why do you think Paul mentions the new covenant and that it is...
 - ☀ not of the letter (of what), which kills
 - ☀ but the Spirit which gives life
 - ☀ Why also, do you think Paul takes time to talk about the differences between the old and new covenant?

COMPARISON OF THE OLD COVENANT WITH THE NEW COVENANT

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, ⁸ how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more

- ☀ What's the story of Moses' face and fading glory? (Ex. 34:27ff)
 - ☀ What is Paul's point here?
 - ☀ To whom is this point specifically directed?
 - ☀ What does this say about the old covenant and its ability to save?
 - ☀ OT = ministry of **condemnation**
 - ☀ How was this ministry glorious?
 - ☀ NT = ministry of **righteousness**

does the ministry of righteousness
abound in glory. ¹⁰ For indeed what had
glory, in this case has no glory because
of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹ For if
that which fades away was with glory,
much more that which remains is in
glory.

☀ How is this ministry even more
glorious?

☀ For indeed what had glory (what is this?)

☀ in this case has _____ glory because of
the glory that _____ it.

☀ The glory of what has surpassed it?

☀ What hope is Paul talking about here?

¹² Therefore having such a hope, we
use great boldness in our speech, 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. 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. ¹⁵ But to this day

☀ Since Paul is comparing the old covenant with the new,
what was the hope in Moses' time?

☀ How does this make Paul bold in speech?

☀ Moses put a veil over his face "so that the sons
of Israel would not look intently at the _____
of what was _____."

☀ Exodus 34:29ff — tell the story

☀ Moses' hope was a _____ hope.

☀ Paul's hope is an _____ hope.

☀ Therefore Paul uses great _____

☀ Explain Paul's metaphor of Moses' veil...

☀ Whose minds were hardened?

☀ At the reading of the old covenant their minds are _____

☀ What is this veil?

☀ Where does it lie? (see v. 15)

☀ It is removed in _____

whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over

☀ How is it removed? (see v. 16)

their heart; ¹⁶ but whenever a person

☀ What does the veil symbolize?

turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

☀ And connecting the dots back to v. 6, what does Paul mean when he says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit"?

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where

☀ When men turn to the _____, they find themselves under the _____ which brings _____ (v. 6) and _____ (v. 17)

the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

☀ What else does unveil faces allow us to do? (v. 18)

¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face,

☀ Can you see through a veil clearly?

beholding as in a mirror the glory of the

☀ Who do Christians look to as Savior, Guide, Lord, King, and Example?

Lord, are being transformed into the

☀ And what is the effect of looking to Jesus this way?

same image from glory to glory, just as

☀ Into the same _____

☀ From glory to _____

from the Lord, the Spirit.

☀ What does this mean?

☀ And who is it that appears to be part of this transformation?

☀ "Just as from the Lord, the _____"