

## “The Glory of the New Covenant” 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

**Theme:** The ministry of God’s Spirit through the New Covenant is more glorious and enduring than the ministry of condemnation in the Old Covenant.

**Introduction:** Religion has forever been a means by which men have sought to find a way to please God. Through rituals, ceremonies, and various traditions, men have sought to demonstrate to God they are sincere enough, sacrificial enough, or sorry enough to merit His favor. Even those things prescribed by God through His Law can lose their purpose of being a means by which sin is exposed and can become a means of salvation. To many, the Law has become a means by which they believe they can be saved. Yet, such a perversion of the Law actually results in the Law becoming a means of condemnation as people fail miserably to conform. What God intended to be a tool to show men their hopelessness because of sin has become a means by which they become proud and self-dependent. As a result, those who seek salvation through the works of the Law are set in their sin and unable to ever be freed from it. Our text contrasts the bad news contained in the Old Covenant and the good news in the New Covenant. We are informed that **“the ministry of God’s Spirit through the New Covenant is more glorious and enduring than the ministry of condemnation in the Old Covenant.”**

### I. The Evidence of the Glory of the Law – 3:7

#### A. The Revelation of God’s Glory

1. Paul continues to contrast the condemnation produced by false teachers and their legalism with the true life available to them through the Gospel of the New Covenant.
2. Paul acknowledges that the Law was given by God and is therefore glorious – **“But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory ...”**
3. Paul calls the Law **“the ministry of death”** because to seek righteousness through it will result in condemnation – **Galatians 2:16**.
4. Paul points out that the purpose of the Law was not to provide a means of righteousness but to disclose to us God’s absolute perfection and His righteousness, which we are unable to achieve.
5. God Himself **“engraved on stones”** the Law – cp. **Exodus 31:18; 32:15-16**.
6. Because the Law is God’s disclosure of His expectations—the

communication of what is consistent and compatible with Him—it *“came with glory.”*

7. In disclosing God’s holy standard, sinners exposed by the Lord were to be driven to the Savior – *Galatians 3:24; Hebrews 4:12-13.*

#### **B. The Reflection of God’s Glory**

1. Because God Himself gave the Law to Moses, Moses’ exposure to God and His glory caused the reflection of God’s glory in the face of Moses – *“... so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face ...”* – cp. *Exodus 34:29-35.*
2. However, it was a glory that was never a permanent glory – *“... fading as it was ...”*
3. It was visible in the face of Moses because of the glory of God revealed when the Law was given, but even as the manifestation of the glory of God faded in the face of Moses, the glory of the Law faded as men were brought under condemnation by it.

## **II. The Exceeding of the Glory of the Law – 3:8-9**

#### **A. The Revelation of God’s Grace – v. 8**

1. Paul’s point continues as He contrasts the temporary glory of the revelation of God’s holiness, justice, and demands with the glory of the transformation that comes through the Spirit – *“... how with the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?”*
2. If there is glory to be found in the Law which condemns men, will not the revelation of the grace of God through the Holy Spirit *“be even more with glory?”*
3. The Old Covenant reveals God’s holiness, justice, wrath, and judgment – all of which are glorious.
4. Yet are not the elements revealed in the New Covenant even more glorious – God’s compassion, mercy, grace, and forgiveness?
5. These attributes are those that drive the greatest, most intense, and passionate worship of the Lord.

#### **B. The Righteousness through God’s Grace – v. 9**

1. Paul states, *“For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.”*
2. The old covenant is called the *“ministry of condemnation”* since

its purpose was to convince the sinner that he is condemned because of his inability to keep the law.

3. The new covenant is called the *“ministry of righteousness”* because it is how the righteousness of Christ is made available to us by faith.
4. If the old had glory (and it did), the new does indeed *“abound in glory”* – [ΠΕΡΙΣΣΕΥΩ] – overflow or exceed capacity.
5. We don’t gain just barely enough righteousness to make it into Heaven, but we clear the gate by far because the righteousness entitling us to enter is not ours but Christ’s.

### III. The Eclipsing of the Glory of the Law – 3:10-11

#### A. The Preeminence of the Glory of the New Covenant – v. 10

1. The Old Covenant was never intended as a suitable covenant for redemption – but only as a means by which the need for redemption was confirmed.
2. It was a great tool used by God and did what it was intended to do, and thus, it had glory – *“For indeed what had glory ...”*
3. But compared to the glory of the New Covenant, the glory of the Old Covenant is eclipsed – *“... in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.”*
4. *“surpasses”* [ὑπερβάλλω] – “to attain a degree that extraordinarily exceeds a point on a scale of extent, go beyond, surpass, outdo.”<sup>1</sup>
5. The New Covenant *“surpasses”* the Old Covenant in many ways:
  - a) *It provides a better Mediator* – cp. [Hebrews 8:6](#)
  - b) *It provides Internal transformation* – [Hebrews 8:10](#)
  - c) *It provides direct access to God* – [Hebrews 4:15-16](#).
  - d) *It provides the complete forgiveness of sins* – [Hebrews 10:14](#)
  - e) *It provides an eternal inheritance* – [Hebrews 9:15](#).

#### B. The Permanence of the Glory of the New Covenant – v. 11

1. When it had done its job, the Old Covenant’s glory faded—similarly to Moses’s face—*“For if that which fades away was with glory*

---

<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1032.

...

2. *“... much more that which remains is in glory”* – the New Covenant is permanent – never fading away.
3. This is the Gospel message that was ratified by the blood of Christ and is the eternal covenant.

**The ministry of God’s Spirit through the New Covenant is more glorious and enduring than the ministry of condemnation in the Old Covenant.**