

REFLECTING THE UNVEILED GLORY OF THE GOSPEL

The Church Prefigured in the OT

Background of 2 Corinthians

- Some in the church of Corinth were following super-apostles or false apostles. These were men who claimed to have spiritual authority. They were impressive, strong, educated, eloquent, and had letters of recommendation that proved their superior qualifications.
- Paul, on the other hand, was unimpressive. His speech was contemptible. His ministry was characterized by weakness, suffering, and persecution.

Background of 2 Corinthians

- These super-apostles looked down on Paul and caused the Corinthians to question Paul's ministry and authority.
- The Corinthians have been duped and Paul must defend his ministry. He compares himself with Moses. "How can you question my ministry, the ministry of the new covenant, since it is far more glorious than Moses' old covenant ministry?"

OT Background of 2 Cor. 3-4

□ ***Exodus 24-34***

- **Chapter 24:** Israel enters into a covenant with God.
- **Chapters 24-31:** God calls Moses to come up to Mt. Sinai to receive the law written on the stone tablets.

OT Background of 2 Cor. 3-4

□ *Exodus 24-34*

- **Chapter 32:** While Moses is on the mountain, the people fashion a golden calf and bow down to it and worship it breaking the first and second commandment.
- Moses then comes down from the mountain and shatters the tablets of stone on the ground symbolizing how the people have broken their covenant with God. The sons of Levi are ordered to kill and 3000 men die.

OT Background of 2 Cor. 3-4

□ *Exodus 24-34*

- **Chapter 33:** God refuses to be in the midst of Israel and Moses again intercedes on behalf of the people. It is during this time of intercession that Moses makes the great request, “show me your glory.”

OT Background of 2 Cor. 3-4

- ▣ **Exodus 33:19-23** And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." ²⁰ But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" ²¹ Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; ²² and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. ²³ "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

OT Background of 2 Cor. 3-4

□ *Exodus 24-34*

- **Chapter 34:** Moses is told to cut two stone tablets and go back up to Mt Sinai. There on Mt. Sinai, God reveals his glory (his back) to Moses and there he renews the covenant with the people.

OT Background of 2 Cor. 3-4

□ ***Exodus 34:29-35***

- When Moses came down from the Mount Sinai the second time, with the second copy of the 10 commandments, his face was shining. We are told that his face shone because of his speaking with God (v.29).
- Aaron and all Israel are afraid of Moses and don't want to come near to him. But Moses calls them to himself and speaks to them commanding them to do all that God had revealed on Mt. Sinai.

OT Background of 2 Cor. 3-4

□ ***Exodus 34:29-35***

- After speaking, Moses covers his face. Now the text seems to communicate that this happened repeatedly. Whenever Moses went in before the Lord, he would remove the veil. He would then come out to the people, with the veil still removed, and relate God's word to them. After speaking to the people, he would again veil his face.

2 Cor. 3-4

□ *Overview of Passage*

- **2 Cor. 3:1-3** Paul does not need letters of commendation like the false apostles, because the transformed lives of the Corinthians bears witness to the legitimacy of his ministry.
- **2 Cor. 3:4-6** Paul's confidence is not in himself but it is in God, the God who has made a new covenant with humanity through Jesus Christ, and who has also made him a minister of this new covenant.
- **2 Cor. 3:7-11** The new covenant is more glorious than the old because, unlike the old, it brings the Spirit and righteousness and it endures.

2 Cor. 3-4

□ *Overview of Passage*

- **2 Cor. 3:12-18** Therefore, Paul is bold about his new covenant ministry and does not veil its glory from others like Moses did. If people don't see the glory of the new covenant, it is not because the glory is veiled, but because a veil lies on their hearts.
- **2 Cor. 4:1-6** Therefore, Paul does not lose heart regarding his ministry but faithfully proclaims the gospel which is the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus.

2 Cor. 3-4

□ *Overview of Passage*

- **2 Cor. 4:7-15** This glorious treasure of the gospel is reflected through the weakness of God's people so that God's grace might spread to more and more people.
- **2 Cor. 4:16-18** In the face of his weakness and suffering, Paul does not lose heart because his inner man is being renewed and he knows that it is producing an eternal weight of glory far beyond the glory that shone from Moses' face.

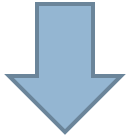
2 Cor. 3-4

- ***Comparing Old and New Covenants***
 - ▣ **The new covenant is greater in its ministry.**

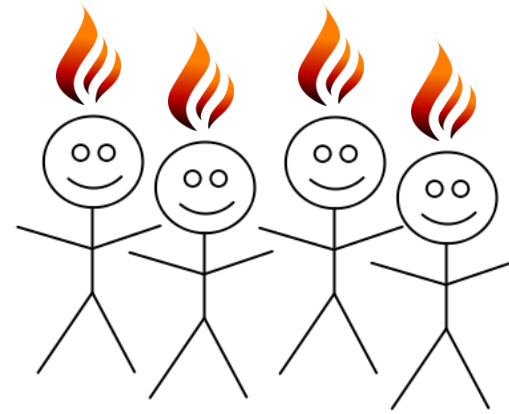
The Mosaic covenant is a ministry of death and condemnation whereas the new covenant in Christ is a ministry of the Spirit and a ministry of righteousness.

2 Cor. 3-4

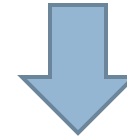
Acts 2:41 “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. ⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”



3,000 Died



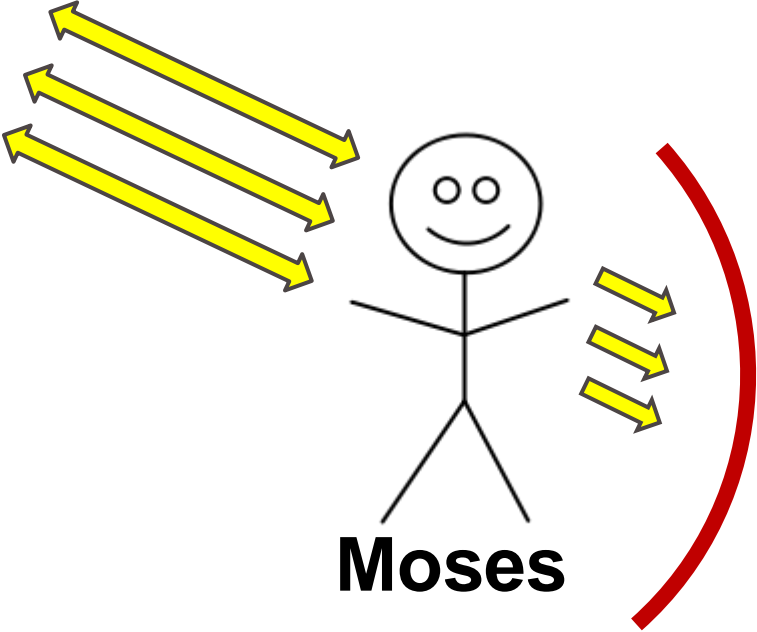
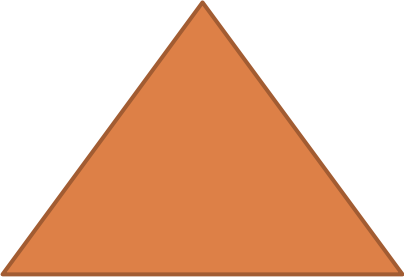
Gospel



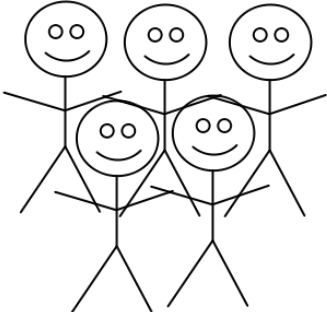
3,000 Converted

2 Cor. 3-4

- ***Comparing Old and New Covenants***
 - ▣ **The new covenant is greater in glory.**
 - Paul writes that the glory on Moses' face was fading or you could also translate the word, blocked (it is a difficult word to translate). It was a glory that didn't last, either because it faded or because Moses veiled it.



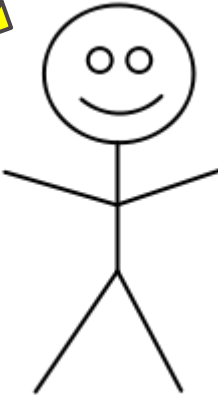
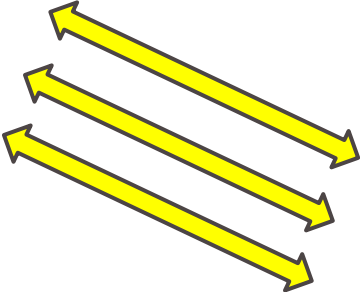
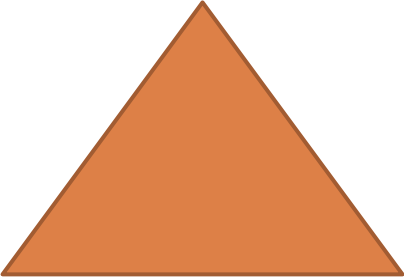
Moses



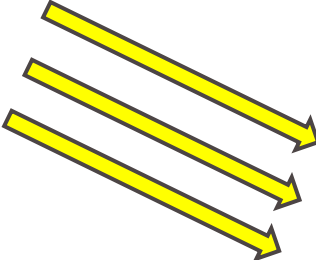
Israel

2 Cor. 3-4

- ***Comparing Old and New Covenants***
 - ▣ **The new covenant is greater in glory.**
 - The glory of the new covenant is not veiled; it remains for all to see. It is reflected by all those who have turned to the Lord and behold him.

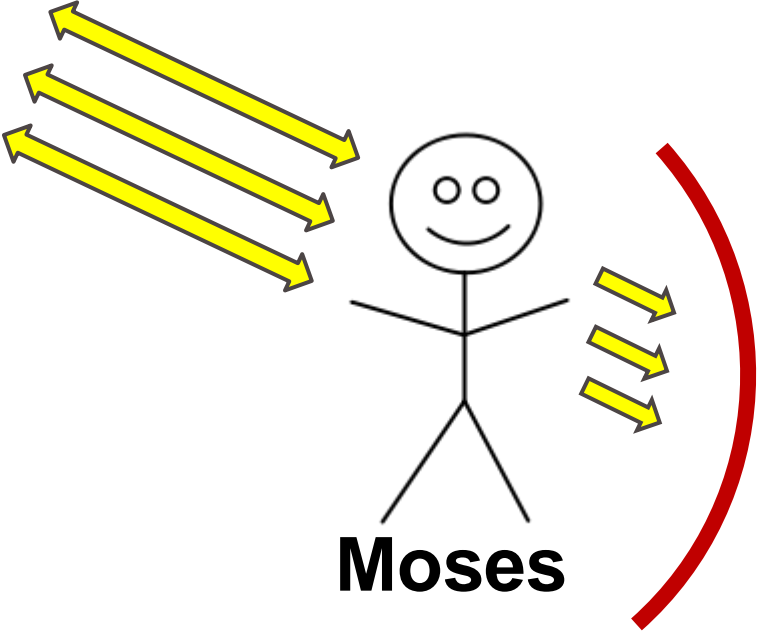
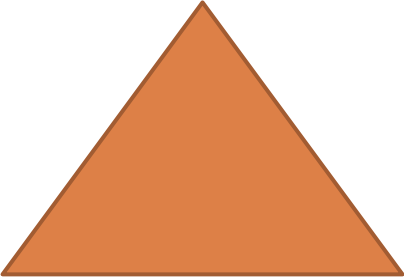


Paul

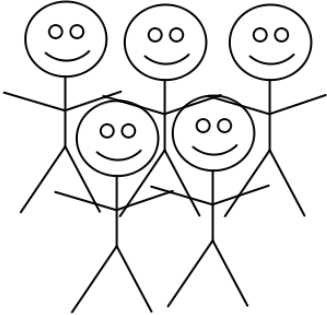


2 Cor. 3-4

- ***Comparing Old and New Covenants***
 - ▣ **The new covenant is greater in its opportunity to fellowship with God.**
 - The glory on Moses' face was evidence of his intimate and personal relationship with God. But it is clear that the people of Israel did not enjoy that kind of fellowship with God and were even barred, for the most part, in observing the reflected glory that resulted from that personal relationship.



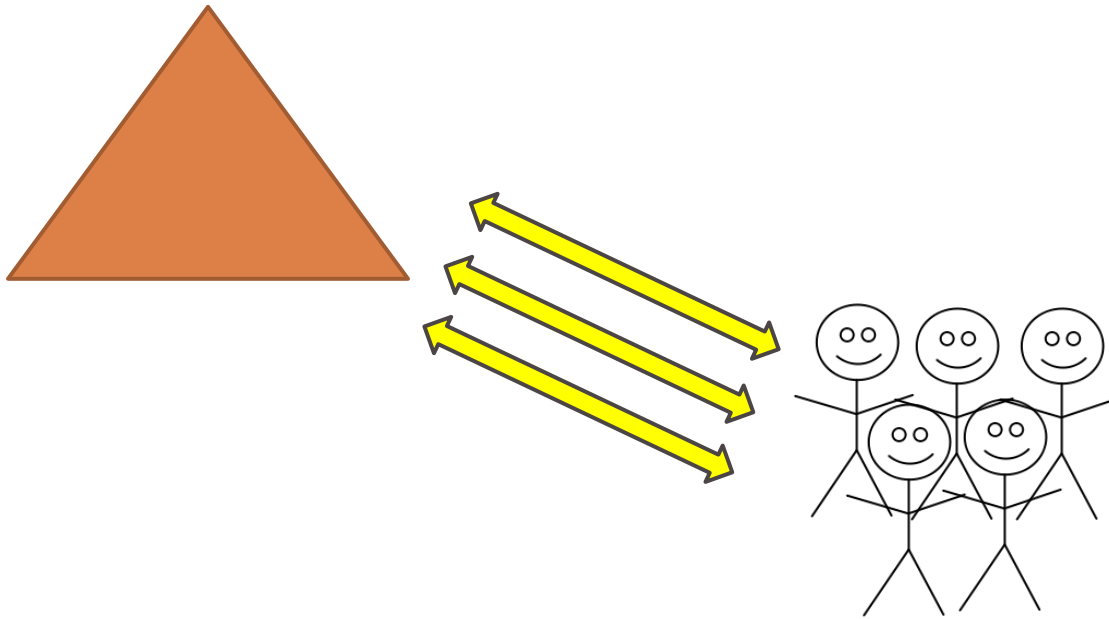
Moses



Israel

2 Cor. 3-4

- ***Comparing Old and New Covenants***
 - ▣ **The new covenant is greater in its opportunity to fellowship with God.**
 - Paul writes that there is a new found freedom in the new covenant. The freedom to draw near to God. All God's people can enter in to an intimate relationship with God and behold and reflect his glory like Moses.



All Believers

2 Cor. 3-4

- **William Baker:** “What was denied Israel by Moses' veil in Christ has been opened wide to all people. A personal relationship with God himself is now available to all. This is Paul's gospel.”

2 Cor. 3-4

□ *The Glory of the Lord*

- **2 Cor. 3:18** Paul writes that we all, with unveiled face, behold the glory of the Lord. What is he talking about? Paul has in mind the glory of the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4).
- What is the gospel? The gospel is the display of God's saving power through the weakness, suffering, and death of Jesus. It is about life through death. This is the unveiled glory of the new covenant.

2 Cor. 3-4

□ ***The Glory of the Lord***

- Moses sees God's glory on a mountain in the context of God forgiving his people for having broken his covenant, for having sinned.
- Where do we see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ shining the brightest? We also see it on a mountain or a hill, a place name Golgotha in the context of God forgiving his people for having sinned against him.

2 Cor. 3-4

□ *Paul's Conclusion*

- So what is Paul saying? Yes my gospel ministry may seem unimpressive and attended by many trials but this ministry of weakness is a reflection of the glory of the Lord and it is producing life in others.
- Rather than my suffering and weakness casting doubt on my ministry, it legitimizes my ministry, it elevates my ministry, because it reflects Christ's image.

Significance and Application

- ***God's people are called to the glorious ministry of the new covenant which brings the Spirit, life, and righteousness.***

Significance and Application

- ▣ The new covenant far surpasses the old covenant. As one ancient commentary remarks, “As the light of a lantern shines at night, but at noonday is overpowered by the sun, so was the glory of Moses overshadowed by Christ.”



Significance and Application

- ***God has chosen to accomplish this new covenant ministry through the weakness, suffering, and even death of his people.***
 - ▣ Christianity, the gospel, is not about man's powers and abilities. It is not about being strong, impressive, eloquent, educated, wealthy, having a strong resume.
 - ▣ The gospel is about the power of God. Difficulties, trials, distresses, and sicknesses all remind us that we are but jars of clay and they teach us to rely on God and his strength.

Significance and Application

- ***The new covenant ministry of weakness that brings life is an unveiled reflection of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.***