



# The Image of Freedom

## Summary and Goal

What does freedom look like? We see true freedom as we observe the life of Jesus.

### **Main Passage**

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

### **Session Outline**

1. The Veiled Glory of Moses (2 Cor. 3:12-14)
2. Finally, Seeing Clearly (2 Cor. 3:15-16)
3. The Image of Freedom (2 Cor. 3:17-18)

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### **Theological Theme**

Sanctification means being transformed into Christ's image, including freedom from condemnation for sin.

### **Christ Connection**

Christ's atoning work provides freedom from condemnation for all who call Him Savior.

### **Missional Application**

The Spirit-empowered freedom believers enjoy allows them to follow Christ and continue His ministry in the world.

# Historical Context of 2 Corinthians

## Purpose

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians mainly to express his joy that the majority had been restored to him, to ask for an offering on behalf of the poor saints in Jerusalem, and to defend his ministry as an apostle to the minority of unrepentant Corinthian believers. His desire was to encourage the majority and to lead the minority to change its mind about the validity of his apostolic ministry.

## Author

All biblical scholars agree that Paul wrote this letter (2 Cor 1:1; 10:1). It contains more personal information about him than any other letter, and its Greek style is especially like that of Romans and 1 Corinthians. Proposed chronologies of Paul's life and ministry include a number of variations. Yet for 2 Corinthians, the consensus is that the letter was written about AD 56 (from Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey).

## Setting

Although Bible students have often disagreed about the sequence of events that led to the writing of 2 Corinthians, the following scenario seems likely.

1. First Corinthians was not well received by the church at Corinth. Timothy had returned to Paul in Ephesus (1Co 4:17; 16:10). He reported that the church was still greatly troubled. This was partly caused by the arrival in Corinth of "false apostles" (2Co 11:13-15). These were perhaps Judaizers, asking Corinthian believers of Gentile heritage to live according to Mosaic regulations (Gal 2:14).
2. Paul visited Corinth a second time, the first time being his church-planting visit. He described this visit as sorrowful or "painful" (2 Cor 2:1; 13:2). Apparently the false apostles agitated the Corinthians to disown Paul. This second visit, not mentioned in Acts 19, occurred sometime during the apostle's long ministry in Ephesus.
3. Paul then wrote a (now lost) severe letter of stinging rebuke to Corinth from Ephesus (2 Cor 2:3-4,9). He sent this letter by Titus.
4. Titus came to Paul with the news that most of the Corinthian church had repented. They now accepted Paul's authority (2 Cor 7:5-7).
5. Paul decided to write the Corinthians one more time, expressing his relief but still pleading with an unrepentant minority. He promised to come to Corinth a third time (2 Cor 12:14; 13:1). This was fulfilled when Paul stayed in Corinth while on his way to Jerusalem with the financial collection from many churches (Ac 20:2-3).

## Special Features

Of all Paul's letters, none is more personally revealing of his heart than 2 Corinthians. At the same time, it is also the most defensive of any New Testament letter. In it Paul mounts a strong argument ("apology" in the positive sense) for his authority and ministry. A number of important doctrines are taught in the epistle, yet its greatest value may be that it reveals the heart and spirit of one of the most effective ministers of all time. We are thus shown that genuine ministry—although it may have to be guarded from attack—is commissioned by Christ and empowered by the Spirit.

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## Session Plan

# The Image of Freedom

### ? For Further Discussion

What items or activities can help a person keep Jesus as a focus throughout the week? What is your experience with this? What differences can you tell in your attitude or perspective when you miss those prompts?

### ? For Further Discussion

What would you say is the overall impression the Bible gives readers about Moses? What passages come to mind when you answer? How does it make you feel to know, then, that the covenant for Christians today is infinitely greater than that of Moses?

## Introduction

- ? Describe a time in your life when prolonged, deep focus on one thing was required. How did you prepare for the prolonged focus? What sort of distractions do you remember threatening your concentration?

In this week's session, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth regarding the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant in Jesus' blood. To highlight the dramatic difference in the new covenant, Paul pointed to the difference between the veiled glory Moses experienced and the lasting glory of Christ that believers experience through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Within that abiding glory, Christians are transformed into the image of Christ.

## 1. The Veiled Glory of Moses (2 Cor. 3:12-14)

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is his most disjointed letter to any of the churches to which he wrote. Shifts in tone and focus are abrupt, reflecting the long history of Paul's sometimes combative relationship with the Corinthian believers. Between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, there was at least one other letter referred to as the "severe letter" (2 Cor. 2:3-4), in which Paul strongly confronted a number of matters over which the Corinthians were slow to repent, and also defended his own apostleship from critics. While 2 Corinthians was intended to express relief for the growth of the Corinthian congregation, Paul still strongly appealed to a small group of unrepentant individuals who had fallen victim to Judaizer false teachers. Those false teachers advocated the necessity of adhering to certain Jewish customs in addition to following Christ, in order to be proper Christians. So in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul contrasted the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, strongly stating how the ministry of Christ and those who follow Him is more glorious than that of Moses.

- ? Application: How should the Christian's relationship with Jesus serve as an abiding source of boldness and openness in gospel conversations? How would you explain the "hope for future glory" in Christ to someone? Why do you think it's important to have a clear idea of what that glory is?

## 2. Finally, Seeing Clearly (2 Cor. 3:15-16)

In verse 15, Paul repeated a significant amount of what he had written in verse 14 in order to set up a contrast between those who have turned to the Lord and those who have not. As Barnett explains, between the two verses, “in common are (1) until today, (2) when the old covenant/Moses is read, and (3) their minds/hearts are veiled. . . . Paul had good reason to speak in this dramatic manner. He himself had sat in the synagogue Sabbath after Sabbath listening to the reading of the old covenant/Moses, but blinded to its glory, which pointed toward Christ.”<sup>3</sup> Paul understood at a painfully first-hand level what it meant to be blinded to Christ through the hardening of his mind. After all, the manner in which the Bible reader is introduced to Paul is as he was holding the coats of those who stoned Stephen for his proclamation about Christ. The very next mention is Paul’s pursuit of anyone who claimed the name of Christ.

- Consider the life of Paul. For his critics, what impact do you think it would have for Paul to be able to speak of the veil over the heart from his own experience?

## 3. The Image of Freedom (2 Cor. 3:17-18)

Paul called the Lord “Spirit,” which was in contrast to the Old Covenant that was described earlier as “ministry that brought death, chiseled in letters on stones” (v. 7). While the Old Covenant that had been fulfilled and surpassed was now effectively dead, the New Covenant was a “ministry of the Spirit” (v. 8). The Spirit connected the New Covenant with the living God who gives life and freedom.

- How is “freedom” often defined in our community? What similarities or differences do you notice between that and Paul’s definition?
- Application: How does having the veil lifted, so to speak, help Christians in becoming like Christ? Who in your life models walking with Christ most consistently?

## Conclusion

- Why is it important for the Christian to remember that the Holy Spirit of God is always with him or her? How might this affect daily living?
- In what area of your life do you perceive the Holy Spirit prompting you toward growth in Christ most right now? Who prays for you and with you as you pursue transformation? Describe a time when the prayers and encouragement of another were helpful to you in the transformation process.
- Who are you currently praying for to have the veil of spiritual blindness removed? How can you engage them in gospel conversations this week? Who have you given up on with whom you might need to rekindle a conversation?

### ? For Further Discussion

Application: Describe a time in which you engaged someone in a gospel conversation and it seemed they had a veil over their heart. How does Paul’s explanation here help/encourage Christians to continue having gospel conversations, regardless of the responses of others?



## Expanded Session Content

# The Image of Freedom



### Introduction

An article posted by *Psychology Today* in August 2014, entitled “Monsters in the Mirror: No Really, Literal Monsters,” investigated a phenomenon known as the Troxler effect. The Troxler effect has to do with how the brain reacts when one’s attention is strictly focused on a particular point for an extended period. The article’s author, Maclen Stanley, explained:

*These surprising results beg the question—how can staring into a mirror possibly cause our faces to shape shift into unknown and potentially terrifying deformations? The answer lies in our brain’s penchant for selective processing. In simple terms, our brains can only handle so much information at a time. Right now, as you’re reading this article, you probably aren’t noticing the feeling of your clothes against your skin, the pattern of your breath, or any of the delicate sounds around you. Your brain simply turns a blind eye to these various stimuli in order to better focus on what it deems most important (right now, these words). Our sense of sight works no differently. When faced with an abundance of visual stimulation, only some of which is considered relevant, our brains will tune out the non-relevant parts.*

*This phenomenon is termed the Troxler Effect, discovered long ago in 1804 by a physician and philosopher named Ignaz Troxler. It is this effect that underlies many of the optical illusions you can find on the Internet. Stare at a red dot in the middle of a circle for long enough and suddenly the outside circle fades away and disappears. This is because your brain has deemed the outer edges irrelevant and it has lessened its processing burden by simply fading it out of our perceptual domain.<sup>1</sup>*

What a person focuses on intently has incredible power to obscure everything else around it. For the Christian, focusing on the right Object is fruitful and glorious. The opposite is equally tragic and destructive. Being transformed into the image of Christ necessitates that the person of Christ be the consistently central focus of the Christian’s life.

-  Describe a time in your life when prolonged, deep focus on one thing was required. How did you prepare for the prolonged focus? What sort of distractions do you remember threatening your concentration?
  
-  What items or activities can help a person keep Jesus as a focus throughout the week? What is your experience with this? What differences can you tell in your attitude or perspective when you miss those prompts?

## Session Summary

In this week’s session, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth regarding the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant in Jesus’ blood. To highlight the dramatic difference in the new covenant, Paul pointed to the difference between the veiled glory Moses experienced and the lasting glory of Christ that believers experience through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Within that abiding glory, Christians are transformed into the image of Christ.

### 1. The Veiled Glory of Moses (2 Cor. 3:12-14)

Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians is his most disjointed letter to any of the churches to which he wrote. Shifts in tone and focus are abrupt, reflecting the long history of Paul’s sometimes combative relationship with the Corinthian believers. Between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, there was at least one other letter referred to as the “severe letter” (2 Cor. 2:3-4), in which Paul strongly confronted a number of matters over which the Corinthians were slow to repent, and also defended his own apostleship from critics. While 2 Corinthians was intended to express relief for the growth of the Corinthian congregation, Paul still strongly appealed to a small group of unrepentant individuals who had fallen victim to Judaizer false teachers. Those false teachers advocated the necessity of adhering to certain Jewish customs in addition to following Christ, in order to be proper Christians. So in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul contrasted the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, strongly stating how the ministry of Christ and those who follow Him is more glorious than that of Moses.

In the verses immediately prior (vv. 7-11), Paul began his argument of comparative glory. Paul utilized Exodus 34:29-35, which tells of Moses’ face glowing from the glory of the Lord after meeting with Him. Paul’s argument was for the surpassing glory of the “ministry of the Spirit” over the “ministry that brought death” based on the fact that the old was set aside for the sake of the new. This is the context of the phrase, “Since, then . . .” in verse 12. Because believers in the New Covenant have such a hope

#### Very Bold

The term for “very bold” in verse 12 could also accurately be translated as “very open.” The boldness/openness of believers is made possible by the power and presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit in their lives and ministry.

of future glory, or glory that is yet to be fully realized, they can act with great boldness. This hope that is unique to believers of the New Covenant is based on the permanence of the glory of the new covenant.

- ❓ What would you say is the overall impression the Bible gives readers about Moses? What passages come to mind when you answer? How does it make you feel to know, then, that the covenant for Christians today is infinitely greater than that of Moses?
- ❓ Application: How should the Christian's relationship with Jesus serve as an abiding source of boldness and openness in gospel conversations? How would you explain the "hope for future glory" in Christ to someone? Why do you think it's important to have a clear idea of what that glory is?

Reading through the pages of the Old Testament, Moses was referred to as a friend of God, with whom God spoke face-to-face! For the New Covenant Christian to have a greater hope for glory than Moses during the Exodus 34 account would have been difficult for an Israelite to hear; it was equally difficult for Paul to say at one point in his life. According to Paul Barnett, Paul "suggested (by implication) that they [Israelites] had no hope, since whatever 'glory' there had been in that covenant, it was veiled from them. Now he will emphasize the dire circumstances of the people. Their hardened minds were responsible for their blindness to the eschatological glory."<sup>2</sup> Paul used Moses' veil as a metaphor for the Israelites' spiritual blindness. Due to the hardening of their minds, they were unable to perceive that the ministry of Moses (including his glowing countenance from being in God's presence) was pointing forward to the surpassing ministry of Christ.

## 2. Finally, Seeing Clearly (2 Cor. 3:15-16)

In verse 15, Paul repeated a significant amount of what he had written in verse 14 in order to set up a contrast between those who have turned to the Lord and those who have not. As Barnett explains, between the two verses, "in common are (1) until today, (2) when the old covenant/Moses is read, and (3) their minds/hearts are veiled. . . . Paul had good reason to speak in this dramatic manner. He himself had sat in the synagogue Sabbath after Sabbath listening to the reading of the old covenant/Moses, but blinded to its glory, which pointed toward Christ."<sup>3</sup> Paul understood at a painfully first-hand level what it meant to be blinded to Christ through the hardening of his mind. After all, the manner in which the Bible reader is introduced to Paul is as he was mentioned holding the coats of those who stoned Stephen for his proclamation about Christ. The very next mention is Paul's pursuit of anyone who claimed the name of Christ.

The element that ties verses 15 and 16 together is the use of “today.” Paul underscored the present condition. What he highlighted with Moses from centuries earlier was still in effect thousands of years later and on the other side of the Messiah’s coming. The veil was still in place for all those who had not turned to the Lord. They could not understand the richness of the promises of the Old Covenant pointing to Jesus until their eyes had been opened by Jesus.

- ❓ Consider the life of Paul. For his critics, what impact do you think it would have for Paul to be able to speak of the veil over the heart from his own experience?
- ❓ Application: Describe a time in which you engaged someone in a gospel conversation and it seemed they had a veil over their heart. How does Paul’s explanation here help/encourage Christians to continue having gospel conversations, regardless of the responses of others?

The only solution for the veiled heart that is hardened to the things of God is turning to the Lord. Interestingly, in his own experience, Paul had the blindness in his own life removed by an encounter with Jesus that left him physically blind. But when Ananias touched his eyes and the scales fell off, he saw with more than physical eyes. Paul desired the same experience for those still veiled. Barnett says, “Paul is saying, in effect, that only as Israelites turn to Christ, on the basis of the preaching of the gospel, will they discern the inner meaning and glory of the old covenant. Apart from Christ those who remain under that old covenant remain veiled to the eschatological glory to which it pointed.”<sup>24</sup>

### 3. The Image of Freedom (2 Cor. 3:17-18)

Paul called the Lord “Spirit,” which was in contrast to the Old Covenant that was described earlier as “ministry that brought death, chiseled in letters on stones” (v. 7). While the Old Covenant that had been fulfilled and surpassed was now, effectively, dead, the New Covenant was a “ministry of the Spirit” (v. 8). The Spirit connected the New Covenant with the living God who gives life and freedom.

The freedom that Paul mentioned does not refer to some sort of personal license to cast off restraint now that the consequences of death have been destroyed by Christ. In fact, this sort of moral carelessness and licentiousness was one of the issues with the Corinthian church that Paul had rebuked throughout his history of correspondence with them. Barnett explains that this freedom was “from the ‘condemnation’ arising from inability through ‘the flesh’ to keep the Law of God. Furthermore, it is a Spirit-empowered freedom . . . The new covenant as promised by the



## The Spirit of Glory

According to Barnett, “References to the Spirit are eschatological, pointing both to the now-realized fulfillment of prophecy and onward to the end time . . . it is clear that Paul regards the Spirit as anticipatory of the future glory of God.”<sup>6</sup> Paul was not simply concerned with the present spiritual condition of the Corinthian believers. He pointed them to the ultimate hope at the Second Coming that only Christ could offer.

prophets was not a covenant of lawlessness, but a covenant under which the people would be moved by the Spirit to ‘follow [God’s] decrees and be careful to keep [His] laws.’<sup>5</sup>

- ❓ How is “freedom” often defined in our community? What similarities or differences do you notice between that and Paul’s definition?
- ❓ Application: How does having the veil lifted, so to speak, help Christians in becoming like Christ? Who in your life models walking with Christ most consistently?

Verse 18 serves as a summary of the section in 2 Corinthians that starts in 2:14 dealing with New Covenant ministry. Paul used a verb translated as “looking,” which occurs only in this verse in the entire New Testament. Paul intentionally phrased this verse to communicate what it meant to be transformed into the same image. Barnett explains that Paul’s verb meant that New Covenant believers saw the glory of the Lord indirectly “as it were, in ‘the face of Jesus Christ.’”<sup>7</sup> Such a transformation was to be a morphing into the moral and spiritual likeness of the glorified Christ. Barnett continues, “It is transformation into that Christ-likeness which will be ours in the end time, when He will be the ‘firstborn among many brothers’ (Rom. 8:29).”<sup>8</sup>

The transformation as described by Paul was to be from “glory to glory.” With all of the mention of glory in the passage, the procedural use of the term here could be confusing. What Paul had in mind were the boundaries within which the transformation was to occur—a beginning and an ending. The first glory, then, was the day of salvation for the Christian in which, as Paul mentioned earlier, “turned to the Lord.” This is the moment in which the Christian’s face is unveiled. The latter glory, then, at the conclusion of the transformation is that future moment of Christ’s Second Coming in which the Christian will be glorified in Christ.

## Conclusion




Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians addressed incredibly grand theological topics. These verses offer great insight for Christians today. First, the hope of Christians lies solely in the permanence and presence of Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit. While those words may seem overly theological, they are crucial. The only source of hope for the Christian is the truth that Christ will never leave or forsake him or her.

Second, persistence in gospel conversations is crucial. Until someone “turns to the Lord,” he or she cannot appreciate the depths of truth that believers are so invigorated by. Since Scripture is clear that no one can come to God unless the Holy Spirit draws him or her, sometimes even the

most clear explanation of the gospel does not lead to immediate salvation. From the human perspective, this can be very frustrating and even heartbreaking. Yet to a certain degree, this is to be expected. Be faithful!

Third, the transformation of the Christians begins at salvation and is finished in eternity. For the Christian, as long as he or she draws oxygen, the Holy Spirit is still moving toward Christlikeness. Further, there are no life stages or life circumstances that pre-empt the call to transformation. Christians are called to transformation during all the demands of life, until we see Him face-to-face.

Fourth, holiness matters. Christians pursue holiness out of gratitude to the One who provided that holiness which no person could earn or deserve on their own. The freedom that accompanies such grace must lead to transformation under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

-  Why is it important for the Christian to remember that the Holy Spirit of God is always with him or her? How might this affect daily living?
-  In what area of your life do you perceive the Holy Spirit prompting you toward growth in Christ most right now? Who prays for you and with you as you pursue transformation? Describe a time when the prayers and encouragement of another were helpful to you in the transformation process.
-  Who are you currently praying for to have the veil of spiritual blindness removed? How can you engage them in gospel conversations this week? Who have you given up on with whom you might need to rekindle a conversation?

## Prayer of Response

*Close in prayer, thanking God for the New Covenant that has brought freedom in Jesus. Pray for those you know who do not yet believe in Jesus, asking that God would remove the veil from their eyes, that they might see the truth and experience freedom in Christ.*

## Additional Resources

- *Be Encouraged* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Second Corinthians: Thru the Bible* by J. Vernon McGee
- *2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness* by R. Kent Hughes

## For Next Week

### Session Title

- The Image of Righteousness

### Main Passages

- Ephesians 4:17-24

### Session Outline

1. Farewell to the Old Life (Ephesians 4:17-18)
2. Contrasting the Old Life and the New Life (Ephesians 4:19-21)
3. Living the New Life (Ephesians 4:22-24)

### Memorize

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

-2 Corinthians 3:17

### Daily Readings

- Monday - 2 Corinthians 3:12-18
- Tuesday - Galatians 5:1
- Wednesday - John 8:31-36
- Thursday - Galatians 5:13
- Friday - Romans 8:1-4
- Saturday - 1 Peter 2:16

## Extended Commentary

### 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

3:14-15. Paul stated metaphorically that the same veil remain[ed] when the old covenant was read. When Jews in Paul's day read from the Torah, they saw glimpses of God's glory, but no more than glimpses. Only in Christ is the veil that obscured the glory of God on Moses' face taken away. Christ is the revelation of the glory of God in a much greater way than Moses ever was. Yet, because unbelieving Jews in Paul's day rejected Christ, when Moses was read, a veil cover[ed] their hearts. They saw only a small bit of God's glory because the veil over their hearts also made their minds . . . dull, hiding the full truth from them.

3:16. By contrast, whenever anyone turns to the Lord in repentance and faith, his or her condition changes. Paul alluded to Exodus 34:34 which spoke of Moses removing his veil, but he shifted the language toward Christ. Those in Christ see the glory clearly because the veil that dulls their minds is taken away. Christians possess renewed hearts and minds, enabling them to see the revelation of God more fully than those under the old covenant had seen it. Many things still remain hidden (Rom. 11:33-34), but compared to its visibility under the old covenant, the glory of God is now highly visible in Christ.

3:17. Continuing to draw attention to the change that had taken place in Christ, Paul stated, Now the Lord is the Spirit. This sentence is difficult to interpret because it appears to assert an identity between Christ and the Holy Spirit. Such an identification would contradict the doctrine of the Trinity which states that God is one substance, but three persons. The persons of the Trinity are not identical to one another.

The context indicates that Paul used the term Lord here and in 3:16 to refer to Christ and that he spoke figuratively about the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit. He did not intend to describe an identity between Christ and the Holy Spirit. As the immediate context makes clear, Paul did not always speak literally. In the preceding three verses, he had described the related realities of Moses' veil and contemporary Jewish dullness by identifying one with the other. Thus, it is likely that when he identified Christ with the Spirit, he used a figure of speech (cf. Phil. 1:21).

He really meant something like "the Lord is the one who sent the Spirit" or "the Spirit is of the Lord." This is evident from 3:17b, which refers to the Spirit of the Lord. This second half of the verse assumes that the first

half does not equate the Lord with the Spirit, but asserts a close connection between them. Paul had already drawn this connection between Christ and the Spirit a number of times in this context.

Paul explained how those who turned to Christ had the veil removed by declaring that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Paul had not yet touched on the theme of freedom in this context, but elsewhere in his epistles this idea is clear enough. Those who seek salvation through obedience to the Law of Moses (as many Jews did in Paul's day) are in bondage to the law and death (Rom. 6:6-22; Gal. 2:4; cf. Heb. 2:15). Those in Christ, however, are free from the dominion of sin and death (Rom. 7:6). In Christ believers are set free from sin's guilt and influence. Believers are no longer slaves to sin, incapable of resisting its influence over their behavior. Instead, they become free to withstand sin and to do good instead of evil. Freedom stood as one of those words that Paul used to summarize the experience of salvation in Christ.

Paul did not mean that believers were free from all obligation to obey God. Rather, for Paul freedom in Christ was only freedom from sin— it was not also freedom from righteousness. In fact, freedom from sin was slavery to righteousness. Only this slavery to righteousness enabled a person to serve “in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” (Rom. 7:6). It is easier to understand Paul's perspective and vocabulary when one considers that he probably drew the image of freedom not from slaves and freemen in the Roman empire, but from Israel's freedom from their slavery in Egypt. Thus, he did not contrast slavery to another's control with freedom to be autonomous. Instead, he contrasted slavery to a sinful power that prevented proper worship with the freedom to be ruled by God— to obey him and to worship him.

3:18. Paul closed this section with a description of the new life of freedom that all believers enjoy in Christ. He declared that we... with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory. By “we” Paul identified himself and those who ministered the new covenant with him, just as Moses ministered the old covenant. Of course, the same is also true for every minister of the new covenant. Ministers of the gospel of Christ all reflect the Lord's glory. By this Paul did not detract from his statement that all believers (not just ministers) have the veils removed from their hearts. He simply returned to his main issue: defending his own ministry and actions.

With the phrase “reflect the Lord's glory,” the NIV translation becomes problematic. This phrase may also be translated as “beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord” (NASB). Both translations fit because they conform to the analogy set up between Moses and the ministers of the new covenant.

Moses both beheld and reflected the glory of God. Like Moses, the ministers of Christ are being transformed into his likeness as they are sanctified by the Spirit of God. But the transformation that takes place in followers of Christ has ever-increasing glory, unlike Moses' fading glory. This expanding glory comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Once again, the language that describes the connection between the Lord and the Spirit is difficult to interpret. Literally, the Greek text reads, "the Lord Spirit." Various translations have taken different approaches to this statement, such as "the Lord, the Spirit" (NRSV) and "the Spirit of the Lord" (NKJV). Grammatically, all of these options are viable. However, their meanings are ultimately the same. We receive glory from Christ, who has sent us his Spirit.<sup>9</sup>

## References

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## Author Bio

### **Maclen Stanley (“Monsters in the Mirror: No Really, Literal Monsters.”)**

Maclen Stanley is a graduate student in Human Development and Psychology at Harvard University.

### **Paul Barnett (The Second Epistle to the Corinthians)**

Paul Barnett is visiting fellow in ancient history at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, and teaching fellow in biblical studies at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia.

### **Richard Pratt (I & II Corinthians)**

Richard L. Pratt Jr. (M.Div., Union Theological Seminary; Th.D., Harvard University) is president of Third Millennium Ministries. He was a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary for over twenty years and is the author of *Pray with Your Eyes Open*, *He Gave Us Stories*, and *Every Thought Captive*.

### **Max Anders (I & II Corinthians)**

Dr. Max Anders is the author of over 25 books, including the bestselling *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*, and is the creator and general editor of the 32-volume *Holman Bible Commentary* series. He has taught on the college and seminary level and is a veteran pastor. Max provides resources and discipleship strategies at [www.maxanders.com](http://www.maxanders.com) to help people grow spiritually.

### **Warren Wiersbe (Be Encouraged)**

Warren W. Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church and general director of *Back to the Bible*, has traveled widely as a Bible teacher and conference speaker. Because of his encouragement to those in ministry, Dr. Wiersbe is often referred to as “the pastor’s pastor.” He has ministered in churches and conferences throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Central and South America, and Europe. Dr. Wiersbe has written over 150 books, including the popular BE series of commentaries on every book of the Bible, which has sold more than four million copies. At the 2002 Christian Booksellers Convention, he was awarded the Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, live in Lincoln, Nebraska.

### **J. Vernon McGee (Second Corinthians: Thru the Bible)**

Dr. J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988) spent more than 50 years teaching the Bible on his “Thru the Bible” radio broadcast. He pastored for more than 40 years and has authored many best-selling books, including *Doctrine for Difficult Days*.

### **R. Kent Hughes (2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness)**

R. Kent Hughes (D.Min., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) is senior pastor emeritus of College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, and former professor of practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Hughes is also a founder of the Charles Simeon Trust, which conducts expository preaching conferences throughout North America and worldwide. He serves as the series editor for the *Preaching the Word* commentary series and is the author or coauthor of many books. He and his wife, Barbara, live in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, and have four children and an ever-increasing number of grandchildren.