

## THE READING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

### 2 CORINTHIANS 3:11 – 18



~ Our Spiritual Safari is on an expedition to locate the Lord Jesus Christ on every page of Scripture – including the Old Testament. Do you find Jesus in the Pentateuch? Do you see Christ in the historical books of the Old Testament? How about the Book of Job or Ecclesiastes; can you find Jesus there? Well, if you cannot see Him in the Old Testament then, may I say? – The Holy Spirit simply is not your teacher, my friends – impossible. Let's examine ourselves and see if we are in the faith.

Your safari guide has pointed out the Lord Jesus in each report from each book of the Old Testament that we have considered thus far – which is many reports; although I cannot claim to find Him on every page of every book. That doesn't mean He isn't there, it means I am unable to point Him out fully. I don't wonder why some people can see Him in the Old Testament, yet others cannot – it's not a mystery to me whatsoever; and it was no mystery to the apostle Paul, either!

In this report, we're going to get the Biblical answer to this problem – very clearly from Paul – yet I seriously doubt many will accept or fully understand the answer properly, correctly and completely. I'm not trying to be arrogant or harsh – I'm just trying to keep it real. Won't you pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment right now; and then read this Bible study that has been prepared exclusively for *YOU*, my beloved friend?

This second epistle that Paul took the time to write to the church in Corinth places us on higher mountaintops of the government of God than even the Gospel of John did. If you read my commentary on John, you'll know we were so high up it was difficult to breathe most of the time. If you have not found our first four reports from this book of the Bible extremely wonderful, it is because I am a miserable failure at Bible teaching. I recognize my total and complete inability to bring you to the heights of this epistle; mostly because I am, personally, dragged down with extremely dire

circumstances in my own life that have made me inconsistent, unmotivated to write and thoroughly drained emotionally. All I can even pray for is that the Spirit of God will make this all real to you beloved and faithful safari adventurers. I certainly owe you all an apology – so, there you have it....

***11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.***

***12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:***

***13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:***

***14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.***

***15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.***

***16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.***

***17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.***

***18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

~ This section of the Word of God paints a contrast between the giving of the law and our age of grace today. The giving of the law may have been glorious; but it was awful and terrible at the same time. The law was so unforgiving, condemning and unsatisfactory that God Himself had to abolish the Mosaic System of Levitical Law. Now, to understand all of this, we must recognize that the law was given to Moses *TWO* times. Moses went to the top of the mount the first time, and God gave him the tables of stone that He Himself had written. The first law-giving was supposed to be for the children of Israel to live by and, actually, to be saved and judged by.

But before Moses could even get back to the camp with the first law, the children of Israel had already broken the first two commandments. The golden calf had been forged by Aaron before Moses was even out of the camp for fifteen minutes; so, they had other god's before God, and they had made an image and likeness of what they perceived to be their god. Remember, Moses said, "... *I exceedingly fear and quake!*" The law was strict and rigid – an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth – burning for burning and cutting for cutting; that law was absolute and intrinsic righteousness and holiness. That which a man deserved according to that law was what was to be received by that man. God knew the people were breaking the law, so, He told Moses to get back down off the mount – Mount Sinai.

When Moses went down, and he saw in the distance what the Israelite's had done, he didn't dare bring the commandments into the camp. Remember, Moses broke the tablets afar off by smashing them. He broke them because if he had brought them into the camp, the entire nation would have been blotted out; and that would have been the end of Israel right then and there. There would have been judgment at that moment; instant death would have *HAD* to have been pronounced by God. There was simply no sense taking the tablets of stone with the law written on them to the people at that time.

When Moses went back to the top of Mount Sinai, we see something has happened: God now tempers the law with mercy and grace by providing a tabernacle and a sacrificial system. Those were not part of the original giving of the law. The tabernacle was the place where God would meet with His people; and the sacrifices *ALL* spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is also when God tells them that, without the shedding of blood, there would be no remission of sins. At the same time, without holiness, no man was ever going to have an opportunity to even approach God on *ANY* level. So, how in the world could this all be worked out? The only possible way is the way God made for us – which is what Paul is referring to here.

So, here comes Moses with the second set of commandments which were, likewise, a ministration of condemnation; *AND* they were a ministration of

righteousness, also — which demanded perfected righteousness from man — but man was and is unable to produce said righteousness in and of himself. That was a problem, too; and that is when we first discover grace in the Old Testament.

Paul, before his conversion, was a man under Mosaic Law — a Pharisee — who persecuted Jesus; and he says, “...that I might be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith.” That is a ministration of glory, indeed; that is the glorious Gospel. I do pray I have articulated this succinctly, because I am attempting to use great plainness of speech. The law was glorious; because it had made a way of salvation for the children of Israel; and Paul calls the law a glorious Gospel.

**Micha 7:**<sup>18</sup> *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy ~*

Judgment is God’s “strange work.” God delights in *mercy*, friends. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but desires the wicked would turn from their evil ways to Christ and live. God wants to save anyone and everyone, you may be sure. So, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai for the second time, there was joy in his heart; joy that had been placed there by a merciful God. Now, Moses’ face was shining, because there was a way for the children of Israel to be saved. That’s when the veil was put on Moses’ face — but it wasn’t because his face was shining so bright that they couldn’t look at him; no, the veil was placed over Moses’ face because that glory was beginning to *fade away*. Perhaps you want to pray about this, and then read this passage again — just to be sure what I am saying is absolutely correct.

The minds of the children of Israel had been blinded — and until this day — as I type this report and you read it, the veil remains not taken away upon the reading of the Old Testament. It can *ONLY* be done away in Christ Jesus. God’s ancient and chosen people did not recognize Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Christ is the fulfillment of the law. Jesus said, “... *think not that I have come to do away with the law but to FULFILL the law.*”

Well, we have *MANY* so-called Christians who remain as blind as they ever were in this hour in which we live. Later, we're going to see that the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe – and we're going to see why – but, for now, we must move on.

The Gospel provided the apostle Paul with hope and confidence. He could **BOLDLY** say the Lord was his helper and his salvation; and, because Paul could say that – *WE* can say that today. Someday, we'll be called up to meet the Lord in the air. We are all mighty sinners, my friends; let's just keep this real. Only when we go to be with Him will we be changed to be like Him. The confidence doesn't come from what we have done for God; but because of what God has done for us. That is the hope God has given to mankind. Praise His Name, a-men.

In the next chapter, Paul says, "*.... we have treasures in our earthly vessels.*" That is said in light of all that has preceded the statement in this epistle. Paul wasn't running around trying to perfect some excellently styled speech – no, he was speaking very plainly and simply – as I am trying to do in *ALL* of these safari reports. In fact, Paul wasn't interested in knowing anything amongst the Corinthians except the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

What we need in our Bible colleges and theological seminaries today is to get back to the Spirit of God; and abandon the gimmicks, methods, self-abilities and cleverness – and just depend on the Word of God to perform the works of Christ. The tactics that are employed to "bring people to the Lord" only accomplish an emotional throwing of the hands in the air and a dollar in a basket before coming forward so a convert count can include them; which is the very act driving people away from God. If we could only use plain talk and give the Bible out as it is, *THEN* we might see revival in this country and around the world. I think it's very, very important that we do so.

When people read the law today, they usually suspect they might actually be able to keep it. Of course, it is natural to attempt to merit our salvation by our own shallow goodness – and that is where Christian Tragedies are born – not born again – just hatched; like a baby bird or something. Well, even in the Old Testament, the children of Israel didn't have that type of

foolish confidence. Remember, even King David was perplexed, and he had many, many questions. Job – poor Job – was in utter bewilderment. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and wept sorely and sobbed — and didn't understand God — when he was diagnosed with the boil and given a death sentence. Hezekiah was, perhaps, the best king of all the kings in Judah, too, you will recall.

Today, even the weakest and most feeble saint has absolute assurance of salvation and perfect acceptance by God through the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the heart turns to God, then the Holy Spirit can lift the veil — and *ONLY* the Holy Spirit can remove the veil. The *ONLY* way we are ever going to see Christ as the Savior is if the Spirit of God reveals Himself to us. Just as Paul stressed this point dogmatically, I am stressing it to you dear readers today; and I cannot make it strong enough or clear enough for my own satisfaction. Simon Peter said, “.... *all the prophets give witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.*” Only through the Blood of Christ Jesus can we receive remission of sins. As I said in the beginning of this report — if you don't find Christ on every page of the Old Testament, then the Spirit of God isn't teaching you. Only the Holy Spirit can take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

When we turn to Christ, He brings us to a place of liberty — not law. We are delivered from the ministration of death and brought to the place of grace. This wonderful passage of Scripture is completely abused when it is taught today; so, I am actually thankful it is rarely, if ever, the topic of a study. The unfortunate result is that we find many taking the position they can turn to Christ and behold Him on their own volition. They erroneously perceive their self-ability empowers them to witness. Well, that's false. The Gospel is veiled; and when that veil is removed, Christ appears! If we have continuing sin in our lives, then we can be assured we will *NEVER* have fellowship with the Father. Only when we look to Christ and confess our sins can we find liberty in the Spirit of the Lord.

See, we're not looking to the Lord to be transformed; but, rather, we are to behold the Face of Christ *UNTIL* we are transformed. There just happens to be all the difference in the world between those two. *THEN* we can reflect and *THEN* we develop a witness and a testimony — and not until then. God

Himself makes that determination of spiritual maturity in our lives, my friends – not us. Our degrees of asserting His glory come from the Lord on *HIS* timetable; there is *NOTHING* we can do to hasten or quicken the process, either — except for a sincere, educated, competent, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led Bible study. That effort *will* greatly speed-up the process. Few avail themselves of that extra credit.

Some people believe they are transfigured when they are saved – but I have never met a saint that has been transfigured. In fact, only the Lord Jesus was ever transfigured – and you aren't Him – so, that's a problem. That's why we need to stay in the Word of God and simply behold the Lord Jesus Christ at all times. When we do, we can be regenerated and transformed; but without the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever – you can simply forget ever having any spiritual growth. I know it's not popular, because the Word of God just doesn't happen to be popular when taught properly, correctly and completely.

We have spent a *LOT* of time with this passage in our safari, because it is where most saints go horribly wrong. It is extremely important to me – I hope you find it equally as important, too. I wish I had stayed in the Word of God and spent more time looking in the mirror beholding Christ a long time ago. You're never going to see the Lord Jesus outside of this thing called the Bible. You – just – *WON'T!* Jesus isn't a superstar, and He isn't a simple man; what we are seeing here – if you have eyes to see – is the unveiled God and Creator of this universe. How wonderful He really is.

You and I aren't going to be hanging around this world very long, my friends. I am doing my best to give you a passing glimpse of this Shadow of Truth. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you will receive a full-orbed picture of God Almighty – but I don't hold out that hope; not because you are not capable – but because I am not sufficient. I'm sure all of you find me very unsatisfactory, to be sure. Well, may I say to you: I certainly tried. I sincerely desire you to behold the Man in the Glory – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is coming back one day to take His church to the New Jerusalem – will you know His Face when He appears? Will you be ashamed at His appearing? Do you want to be changed to be Christ-like? If you do, then

take a look at Jesus. Take some time to behold Him today – turn your eyes upon Jesus – look fully in His Wonderful Face – and the things of this earth will grow strangely dim to you – in the light of His glory and grace – which can only be found in the Word of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see him as He is. I need this very much — I need to see Jesus — I hope you sense that you need it, too; so that you and I might become like Him ~

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