



**BIC Volume 11**  
**Second Corinthians**  
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Ministry Part One B:  
Topics 10.2.3.1.5 & 10.2.3.1.6  
2 Cor. 3:1-4:15

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**10.2.3.1.5 Ministry compared to Moses, 3:1-18**

In this section, Gospel ministry in Paul's calling is compared to the leadership of Moses among the Hebrews. The point of comparison includes both similarities and differences due to the nature of the two separate covenants God made, one with Israel and the other with believers in Christ. Throughout Paul maintains the plural 'we' rather than singular "I" perspective in order to define not just his Gospel ministry but that of

his associates as well. Thus Christian ministry is being compared to that of Moses, and not just Paul's ministry.

The progression of thought in this section moves from the cultural illustration of religiously neutral letters of recommendation to the 'letters of the Torah' of Moses. Throughout is a contrast between the Israelite approach to religion through Torah and the Gospel of Christ that Paul and his associates were preaching. Whether or not this contrast implies an element of Jewish Christian opposition to Paul in the Christian community at Corinth is debatable. Clearly both Jews and non-Jews were members of the community in the city. But Paul may well be speaking more out of his own Jewish heritage as a Pharisee prior to becoming a Christian, than suggesting that his opposition in the church was Jewish in nature. The heart of the contrast consistently in the passage is changed lives of believers in contrast to externally imposed regulations in Judaism.

46 ἢ  
μὴ χρῆζομεν . . . συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν  
ὡς τινες  
πρὸς ὑμᾶς  
ἢ  
ἐξ ὑμῶν;

47 <sup>3.2</sup> ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε,  
ἐγγεγραμμένη |  
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις | ἡμῶν,  
γινωσκομένη |  
| καὶ |  
ἀναγινωσκομένη |  
| ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων,  
<sup>3.3</sup> | φανερούμενοι  
|  
|  
|  
|  
ἐγγεγραμμένη  
οὐ μέλανι  
ἀλλὰ  
πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος,  
οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις  
ἀλλ'  
ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίναις.

ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ  
διακονηθεῖσα  
ὑφ' ἡμῶν,

**10.2.3.1.5.1 Letters of Recommendation, 3:1-3**

3.1 Ἀρχόμεθα πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνειν; ἢ μὴ χρῆζομεν ὡς τινες συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἢ ἐξ ὑμῶν; 2 ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 3 φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ἐγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας.

3.1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; 3 and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared 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.

As is visually illustrated in the block diagram above, Paul begins with a pair of rhetorical questions (#s 45-46), which he then answers in statement #47. The two rhetorical questions make the same essential point of what does it take to gain acceptance among all the Corinthians. His answer is a complex structured sentence built off the core declaration ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, *you are our letter* (of recommendation).

The historical background of letters of recommendation in Paul's world is important to understand here. The adjective in the superlative form συστατικῶν is only used here in the NT, but the form συστατικός, -ή, -όν comes from the verb συνίστημι used in this same verse as the infinitive συνίστημι. The verb συνίστημι literally means *to stand together* or *to put together* in the sense here of creating a written evaluation that matches correctly the individual and his character. The infinitive use συνίστημι carries the sense here with ἑαυτοὺς of self commendation, something basically done by others and not for oneself. Playing off of this is συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν, *letters of recommendation*. The purpose of such letters was to introduce the named individual as a person of worth and possessing necessary credentials for his position. Oral recommendations given in behalf of another were commonplace in Paul's world and constituted a distinct form of speech with its own rules and guidelines for composition and delivery. Written letters for this purpose of introducing or commending an individual followed established rules of composition as well.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly when Apollos left Ephesus for

<sup>1</sup>What Paul references here should not be confused with later ecclesiastical formulations which, although building off the core idea of commendation, take on a distinct character, mostly of recommending priests by bishops.

The bishop of any congregation, in any part of the empire, might commend a traveller, layman or cleric, to the good offices of any other. The precautions against imposture might sometimes, as in the well-known instance of Peregrinus (Lucian, *de Morte Peregrin.*), perhaps also in that of the παρείσακτοι ψευδάδελφοί of Gal. 2:4, be insufficient, but as a rule it did its work, and served as a bond of union between

Corinth οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἔγραψαν τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἀποδέξασθαι αὐτόν, *the brothers wrote to the disciples to welcome him* (Acts 18:25b),

For the apostle Paul, the idea of commendation, either written or oral, was a significant issue in Second Corinthians.<sup>2</sup> Nine of the 14 Pauline uses of συνίστημι are in Second Corinthians: 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 7:11; 10:12, 18 (4x); 21:11. But given the overall emphasis of this letter, this is not particularly surprising.

A letter of recommendation of Paul to the Corinthians from someone else made no sense at all. Such letters of introduction were for the benefit of folks who did not know personally the individual being recommended. Paul as the 'founder' of the Christian community on the second missionary journey was well known by the community of believers. To be sure, when Apollos first arrived at Corinth after leaving Ephesus just as Paul arrived there was a legitimate situation. He was not known personally in Corinth and so the Ephesian Christian community, especially with the influence of Priscilla and Aquila, composed such a letter of introduction for Apollos to the Corinthian church (Acts 18:24-28). But this was not the case at all for Paul as he prepared to make at least his third visit to Corinth in his ministry. Thus Paul's two introductory rhetorical questions in 3:1

all Christian Churches. Wherever the Christian traveller went, if he were provided with these letters, he found the "communicatio pacis," the "contesseratio hospitalitatis" (Tertull. *de Praescript. Haeretic.* c. 20). Those outside the Church's pale, however arrogant might be their claims, could boast of no such proof of their oneness. They were cut off from what was in the most literal sense of the term the "communion of saints" (Ibid. c. 32). It was the crowning argument of Augustine (Epist. xlv. 3) and Optatus (*De Schism. Donat.* ii. 3) against the Donatists that their letters would not be received in any churches but their own; that they were therefore a sect with no claim to catholicity, no element of permanence. It was, in like manner, but a necessary sequel to the deposition of Paul of Samosata by the so-called Second Council of Antioch, when the bishops who passed sentence on him wrote to Dionysius of Rome and Maximus of Alexandria (Euseb. H. E. vii. 30), requesting them not to address their letters to him, but to Domnus, whom they had appointed in his place. The letters of Cyprian on the election of Cornelius (Epist. xlv.) and to Stephen (Epist. lxxvii.) are examples of the same kind. The most remarkable testimony, however, to the extent and the usefulness of the practice is found in the wish of Julian to reorganise heathen society on the same plan, and to provide, in this way, shelter and food for any non-Christian traveller who might be journeying to a strange city (Sozomen. H. E. v. 16).

[Edward Hayes Plumptre, "Commendatory Letters," ed. William Smith and Samuel Cheetham, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (London: John Murray, 1875-1880), 407.]

<sup>2</sup>"Συνίστημι occurs 16 times in the NT: 14 times in the Pauline corpus (9 of those in 2 Corinthians), and once each in Luke and 2 Peter." [Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-), 3:308.]

47 <sup>3.2</sup> ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε,  
 ἐγγεγραμμένη |  
 ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις | ἡμῶν,  
 γινωσκομένη |  
 | καὶ |  
 ἀναγινωσκομένη |  
 | ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων,  
 3.3 | φανερούμενοι  
 | ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ  
 | διακονηθεῖσα  
 | ὑφ' ἡμῶν,  
 ἐγγεγραμμένη  
 οὐ μέλανι  
 ἀλλὰ  
 πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος,  
 οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις  
 ἀλλ'  
 ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας.

recognized it or not. The witness centered on the transforming power of the apostolic Gospel, but this message came through the preaching of Paul and his associates. Thus their witness reflected the kind of life transformation that came through this Gospel, rather than some spurious version of it. As such it reflected what actually came directly from God. The pair of participles here γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη under-

carry a subtle tone of sarcasm.

In his reply to these two questions in statement # 47 (vv. 2-3) he makes the central point ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, *you are our letter*. This core point is then qualified by a wide variety of modification as illustrated in the block diagram:

To a group of folks who already knew the apostle well, he makes the declaration that they themselves are his 'letter of recommendation. That is, their very existence as a Christian community is conformation of Paul's apostolic credentials. What he means by this core declaration is amplified in four different ways via the modifiers, the participles, attached to either the subject or the verb of the core declaration. The first three develop the idea of ἐπιστολὴ, while the fourth participle centers on the verb ἐστε. This final modifier affirms the nature of the Corinthians being a letter of recommendation.

a) *ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, written in our hearts*. Here ironical play is made between the perfect passive participle ἐγγεγραμμένη and ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν. The first person plural pronoun ἡμῶν, *our*, seemed illogical to a few copyists, who changed it to the second person pronoun, ὑμῶν, *your*.<sup>3</sup> But the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of ἡμῶν. Thus what Paul affirms here is that the existence of the Christian community is deeply embedded down inside the apostle. Here ταῖς καρδίαις specifies the interior part of not just Paul but with the plural of his associates as well. These people were very precious and important to these Christian missionaries. Much time and effort had been invested into growing this group of people in Christ in the midst of all their problems and issues.

b) *γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, being known and read by all men*. As a reminder to the Corinthians, they had a witness that they gave out to everyone around them whether they

underscores the central point of a witness being given out to others by the Corinthians.

c) *ἐγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνας, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not of tablets of stone but on tables of human hearts*. Here the repetition of ἐγγεγραμμένη at the end of the sentence ties this participle back to the same antecedent of ἐπιστολὴ in the core expression. The image of a written letter controls the image being presented here in figurative terms. In the first participle modifier the location of that 'writing' is embedded deeply inside the lives of Paul and his associates. Now the second use of ἐγγεγραμμένη stresses how this 'writing' was done.

Note the two parallel sets of 'not this...but that' which throw important light on how the Corinthians themselves became Paul's letter of recommendation. First, ἐγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, *written not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God*.

The contrast is between the Jewish Torah and the Christian Gospel. In the background of this stands Jeremiah 31:31-34 with the projection of a new covenant that God would eventually establish with His people.<sup>4</sup> The central point of the contrast is the more direct action of God in the new covenant via the working of the

<sup>4</sup>Jer. 31:31-34 NRSV. 31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

<sup>3</sup>υμων x 33. 1175. 1881.

Holy Spirit. Second, οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις, [not on tablets of stone but on the tablets of human hearts](#). This parallel to the first re-enforces the point of the first by specifying where as opposed to how in the first strophe.

ἐγγεγραμμένη (going back to ἐπιστολή in main clause)

A οὐ μέλανι

B ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος,

A' οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις

B' ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις.

Here to so-called Hebrew 'step parallelism' is used where the second set (A'B') advances the idea of the first set (AB) a step further in thought.

Paul's letter reflecting the Gospel of Christ stands in contrast with the Jewish Torah as superior and more relevant to the Corinthians. But it really isn't so much Paul's letter as it is the Corinthians themselves as committed believers in Christ who are Paul's 'letter of recommendation.' That God has worked in life transforming manner in their lives becomes the ultimate validation of Paul's Gospel message. Just some reflection on their past is all they need for understanding the validity of Paul's message to them.

Now, does Paul's analogy against the backdrop of the Jewish Torah signal that his opponents in Corinth were Christian Jews in the church? This is connected also to the ὡς τινες, [as some do](#), in verse one. There Paul implies that some preachers coming to Corinth had to produce a letter of recommendation, evidently from Christians in Judea. It would be very misleading to take this as referring to the letter of recommendation that Apollos brought with him from Ephesus to Corinth as Luke describes in Acts 18:27. That was a very different situation from what the apostle is talking about here. But Paul's contrast image here is natural for him to use as a Jewish Christian himself and former Pharisee. Plus it strengthens the claim of the apostle Gospel as from God.

To be learned from this section of modifiers is the fundamental importance of Christian validation. Logical arguments of proof will never move off dead center in persuading people of the Gospel. But the message presented by a community of believers living that Gospel can and will have powerful impact on the non-believing world.

d) φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, [being made clear that you are Christ's letter having been prepared by us](#). This participle phrase in v. 3a via the nominative masculine plural spelling goes back to ὑμεῖς ἐστε, [you are](#). The absence of an article with the participle signals an adverbial function tying it especially to the verb ἐστε. The specific adverbial function can range from temporal to possible causal: [You are while being revealed; you are because of be-](#)

[ing revealed](#). The use of φανερούμενοι is appropriate to ἐπιστολή as disclosing important understanding about something. The ὅτι clause ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολή Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν defines what is being disclosed: [you are Christ's epistle prepared by us](#). That is, the transformed lives of the Corinthians believers comes from Christ, not from Paul. Paul and his associates' role was simply διακονηθεῖσαι. This aorist passive participle from διακονέω beautifully pictures Paul and his associates as the slaves in God's household who served up the nourishing food of the Gospel to the Corinthians. The food comes from Christ and is Christ while Paul and his associates simply serve it to those hungry from life changing salvation.

### 10.2.3.1.5 2 God's Recommendation, 3:4-11

4 Πεποιθήσιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 5 οὐχ ὅτι ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν λογισασθῆναι τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, 6 ὃς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος· τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ. 7 Εἰ δὲ ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως διὰ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὴν καταργουμένην, 8 πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος ἔσται ἐν δόξῃ; 9 εἰ γὰρ τῇ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως δόξα, πολλῶ μᾶλλον περισσεύει ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξη. 10 καὶ γὰρ οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει εἶνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης. 11 εἰ γὰρ τὸ καταργούμενον διὰ δόξης, πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὸ μένον ἐν δόξῃ.

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, 6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, 8 how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory! 10 Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; 11 for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

This section via the antecedent nature of τοιαύτην, [such](#), continues the previous emphasis but with much more stress upon the saving work of God through Christ in the Gospel. The contrast between Torah and Gospel will continue but with more detail.

The internal arrangement of this pericope in vv. 4-11 is built around two key points made in statement #

3.4 δὲ

**48** Πεποίθησιν τοιαύτην ἔχομεν  
 | διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
 | πρὸς τὸν θεόν.  
 | ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν

3.5 οὐχ ὅτι...ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν  
 | λογίσασθαί τι  
 | ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν,  
 | ἀλλ'  
 ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν (ἐστίν)  
 ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ,

3.6 ὃς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς  
 | διακόνους  
 | καινῆς διαθήκης,  
 οὐ γράμματος  
 | ἀλλὰ  
 πνεύματος·

γὰρ

**49** τὸ γράμμα ἀποκτέννει,  
 δὲ

**50** τὸ πνεῦμα ζῶοποιεῖ.

3.7 δὲ

Εἰ ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου. . . ἐγενήθη  
 /---|-----|  
 ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη |  
 | | λίθοις |  
 | | ἐν δόξῃ  
 ὥστε|μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ  
 | /-----|  
 | εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως  
 | διὰ τὴν δόξαν  
 | τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ  
 | τὴν καταργουμένην,

**51** 3.8 πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος ἔσται  
 ἐν δόξῃ;

3.9 γὰρ

εἰ τῆ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως δόξα,  
**52** πολλῷ μᾶλλον περισσεύει ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξῃ.

3.10 γὰρ  
 καὶ

**53** οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον  
 ἐν τούτῳ  
 | τῷ μέρει  
 εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης.

3.11 γὰρ

εἰ τὸ καταργούμενον  
 διὰ δόξης,  
**54** πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὸ μένον (ἐστίν)  
 ἐν δόξῃ.

48 and a followup rhetorical question in statement # 51. Both points generate a series of justifying statements introduced by γὰρ: # 48 ==> #s 49-50; # 51 ==> #s 53-54. Note the structure of this passage in the above block diagram.

First is Paul's confidence, vv. 4-6 (#s 48-50). The

very first word πεποίθησις, a noun built from the perfect participle πέποιθα from πείθω, is more the sense of **my having been persuaded**. It alludes to a conviction deeply held through being persuaded via external circumstances. The addition of the correlative adjective modifier τοιαύτην ties this persuasion back to the dis-

cussion in vv. 1-3 on the Corinthians themselves being Paul's 'letter of recommendation.' Their transformed life stands as the external persuader of Paul.

But the focus ultimately of this persuasion is to observe what God has done through Christ in transforming these lives in Corinth: *διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν*. Thus his confidence is in the ability of God to change lives through Christ, which he has witnessed taking place in Corinth. His preaching of the apostolic Gospel occasioned the transformation but as he declares in v. 5, *οὐχ ὅτι ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν λογίσασθαι τι ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ*, *not that from within ourselves are we able to claim anything as coming from us, but our competency is from God*.

Paul and his associates' role in this divine transformation of the Corinthians is depicted simply as *ὃς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης*, *who [God] also outfitted us as servants of a new covenant*. These men were the *διακόνους*, *servants*, who delivered the nourishing Gospel to the Corinthians. They did not make the Gospel meal, but rather served to the people what God had prepared. The modern image is somewhat that of a waiter / waitress in a restaurant, or the more contemporary label, food server. But Paul makes it clear that God has 'employed' them to do this work.

What is being served is the apostolic Gospel which here Paul labels as *καινῆς διαθήκης*, *new covenant*. Although a variety of rather wierd theories emerge with the idea of new covenant here in Paul's language. Clearly the contrast being presented is between the apostolic Gospel as new covenant and the Jewish Torah of Moses as the old covenant. That the Essenes in Judea spoke of a new covenant as their possession is *not in mind here with Paul*.<sup>5</sup> In the history of salvation

<sup>54</sup>Did Paul, perhaps, need to counter the influence of opponents who themselves claim to be agents of a new covenant but who saw it as including, still, the observance of the law of Moses? There would be something of a non-Christian parallel to such an attitude in the outlook of the Qumran community. The actual expression 'new covenant' occurs in the Damascus Document (CD 6:19; 8:21 = 19:33; 20:12), expressing a relationship into which the members of the sect have entered, and in no way does this involve abandonment of the law.<sup>317</sup> Elsewhere, the sectaries speak of the renewing of the covenant (see, e.g. IQSb 3:26; 5:21).<sup>318</sup> At the same time, there is also the belief that God has placed his Spirit within them (1QH 12:11–12), and this may be related to the concept of a new covenant (1QH 17:26–27).<sup>319</sup> Perhaps there were people in Corinth who had been influenced by this kind of thinking.<sup>320</sup> Paul would share with them the idea of the new covenant, but would strongly disagree on the question of the function of the law within this new order.<sup>321</sup> The phrase *οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος* may be seen as distinguishing between two forms of the new covenant (rather than between the old and the new).<sup>322</sup> Against all theories of this kind, however, it has to be said that in what follows there is no indication that Paul is contesting a contemporary christianised concept of a new covenant." [Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T

only the two covenants have connection to the God that Paul worshiped. So compare and contrast of these two would be entirely natural. With some of the Corinthians being Jewish and some of the Gentiles having attended the synagogue as 'God fearers' before becoming Christians, such a comparison would make clear sense to these members at Corinth.

The subsequent contrasts (v. 6b) draw the distinctions between the two covenants in dramatic terms:

*οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος*

*τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ.*

*not of letter but of spirit,*

*for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.*

An ironical play off of *γράμμα* as 'writing' and 'letter of the alphabet' enables the apostle to contrast the written Torah to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Corinthians as his 'letter of recommendation'. The written Torah given to Moses as ten words chiseled in stone centered on penalties for wrong doing. In stark contrast the new covenant reflects the working of God directly through His Spirit in giving eternal life to those choosing obedience to Christ.

Second, this sets up the second major point of the contrast in statement # 51 as a lengthy first class conditional sentence. The protasis *Εἰ δὲ ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου ἐν γράμμασιν ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσέως διὰ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τὴν καταργουμένην*, *Now since the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside*, (v. 7). Paul alludes here to Exodus 34:29-35.<sup>6</sup> The OT text speaks of the

[Clark International, 2004), 236.]

<sup>6</sup>**Exodus 34:29-35 LXX.** 29 ὡς δὲ κατέβαινε Μωϋσῆς ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους, καὶ αἱ δύο πλάκες ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν Μωϋσῆ· καταβαίνοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους Μωϋσῆς οὐκ ᾔδει ὅτι δεδόξασται ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ λαλεῖν αὐτὸν αὐτῷ. † 30 καὶ εἶδεν Ααρων καὶ πάντες οἱ πρεσβύτεροι Ἰσραὴλ τὸν Μωϋσῆν καὶ ἦν δεδοξασμένη ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν ἐγγίσει αὐτοῦ. † 31 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτοὺς Μωϋσῆς, καὶ ἐπεστράφησαν πρὸς αὐτὸν Ααρων καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄρχοντες τῆς συναγωγῆς, καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς Μωϋσῆς. † 32 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα προσῆλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ ἐνετείλατο αὐτοῖς πάντα, ὅσα ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σινα. † 33 καὶ ἐπειδὴ κατέπαυσεν λαλῶν πρὸς αὐτούς, ἐπέθηκεν ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ κάλυμμα. † 34 ἡνίκα δ' ἂν εἰσεπορεύετο Μωϋσῆς ἔναντι κυρίου λαλεῖν αὐτῷ, περιηρεῖτο τὸ κάλυμμα ἕως τοῦ ἐκπορεύεσθαι. καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἐλάλει πᾶσιν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ ὅσα ἐνετείλατο αὐτῷ κύριος. † 35 καὶ εἶδον οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ τὸ πρόσωπον Μωϋσῆ ὅτι δεδόξασται, καὶ περιέθηκεν Μωϋσῆς κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον ἑαυτοῦ, ἕως ἂν εἰσέλθῃ συλλαλεῖν αὐτῷ.

**NRSV.** 29 Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid

skin on Moses' face shining after coming down from the mountain. He took to covering his face to prevent the people from seeing it. Paul's point in this allusion is to compare the superior glory of the new covenant to the lesser splendor of the old covenant. The use of δόξα for glory or splendor alludes to the divine Presence of God in connection to both covenants. It was present in the first covenant in that it impacted Moses' appearance.

But as the main clause apodosis asserts (v. 8), πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἢ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος ἔσται ἐν δόξῃ; **how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory?** The divine Presence is greater in the new covenant due to the Spirit of God Himself administering it. Again the play off of ἡ διακονία, service, is made against the backdrop of first century house slaves labeled διακόνους (v. 6) who served the food to the members of the family. Here Paul sees the role of διάκονος for the Holy Spirit serving the nourishment of the new covenant. Such is far greater than Moses' role of giving the Torah to the Israelites.

	3.9	γὰρ	εἰ τῆ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως δόξα,
52		πολλῷ μᾶλλον περισσεύει ἢ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξῃ.	
	3.10	γὰρ καὶ	
53		οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον	
		ἐν τούτῳ	
		τῷ μέρει	
		εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης.	
	3.11	γὰρ	εἰ τὸ καταργούμενον
			διὰ δόξης,
54		πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὸ μένον (ἐστίν)	ἐν δόξῃ.

This assertion in the main clause of statement # 51 is now amplified through a series of justifying (γὰρ) statements (#s 52-54, vv. 9-11).

Note that in the first (# 52) and third (# 54) statements as first class conditional sentences the comparative πολλῷ μᾶλλον, much more, is used to introduce the apodosis main clause. This adds heightened contrast to the new covenant mentioned in the main clause in contrast to the old covenant referenced in the protasis if-clause. Note that the first class grammar

to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. 32 Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; 34 but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35 the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

construction here stresses assumption of reality in the protasis. That is, 'since this is correct, that is also correct.' The central topic throughout all three statements is that of the contrast in the δόξα, the divine Presence, between the two covenants. In the new covenant it is substantially greater than it was in the old covenant.

Particularly insightful is the labeling of the two covenants:

Old Covenant	New Covenant
#52 τῆ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως ministry of condemnation	ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης ministry of righteousness
#53 τὸ δεδοξασμένον what had glory	τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης the surpassing glory
#54 τὸ καταργούμενον what was set aside	τὸ μένον the permanent

In # 52 (v. 9), the Torah is viewed from the angel of imposing punishment from disobedience. The Law of Moses worked off the premise of the inclination toward sinning and thus imposed punishments upon disobedience. Paul does assert that δόξα, the divine Presence, did indeed exist in the giving of the Torah. But the new covenant serves righteousness. That is, its design is to bring sinful humanity to God in a way that makes them presentable to a holy God. In this covenant, the divine Presence abounds far greater πολλῷ μᾶλλον περισσεύει, since God worked through Christ to produce this covenant.

In # 53 (v. 10), Paul shifts over to the verb δοξάζω in a couple of Greek perfect tense passive voice forms: οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον, what contained glory does not contain glory. But here the adverbial qualifier ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει, in this part, sets up a contemporary time frame. That is, the Torah did contain the divine Presence at its giving, but not now. Why? εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης, because of the much greater divine Presence, now in the new covenant. Remember that Paul is primarily contrasting the giving of the Torah through Moses from Exodus 34:29-35 with the presentation of the apostolic Gospel. These are the two covenants under consideration. Both the Jewish converts and the Gentile God-fearer converts in the Corinthian community would immediately recognize this difference as they reflected upon their conversion experience through the apostolic Gospel. And just who was it that first brought this Gospel to them? The apostle Paul and his associates, of course!

In # 54 (v. 11), Paul contrasts the temporality of the old covenant with the permanence of the new cove-

nant. But his main point is that if the old covenant at its giving reflected the divine Presence, then the coming of the new covenant in Christ brings a much greater presence of God that is permanent rather than temporary.

All this represents the basis of Paul Πειθοῖθσιν, persuasion, that comes through Christ (v. 4). Thus the direct working of the Spirit of God through the new covenant brings a much greater divine Presence into the lives of all believers whether Jews or Gentiles.<sup>7</sup> In this reality the Corinthians themselves become Paul's 'letter of recommendation.'

One of the many 'lessons' to be learned from this passage vv. 4-11 is that the validation of one's ministry both as a minister and simply as a Christian lays not in what you possess. Rather, it is found in what you pass on to others that brings life changing transformation to them. God alone is the one who stamps 'approved' on your ministry. And He does that through changing the lives of people you provide ministry to. Out of this then ought to come the highest priority of being utterly obedient to God in ministry. Education and personal experience are important, but they must never ever substitute for complete surrender to the leadership of God's Holy Spirit in ministry.

### 10.2.3.1.5.3 Paul's bold Ministry in New Covenant, 3:12-18

12 Ἐχοντες οὖν τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ χρώμεθα 13 καὶ οὐ καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου. 14 ἀλλ' ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν. ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας τὸ αὐτὸ

<sup>7</sup>The many blind, dead end 'rabbit trails' followed by many commentators in vv. 7-11 usually comes out of failure to understand Paul's use both of Ex. 34:29-35 and the term δόξα. The apostle uses the OT text as a biblical event, not as principalized teaching.

A comparison of 2 Cor. 3:7-18 with Exod. 34:29-35 indicates several ways in which the OT passage differs from Paul's commentary. The Exodus narrative makes no mention of Moses' purpose in veiling his face, the fading splendor of his face, or the inability of the Israelites to gaze at his face because of its brightness. Aware of these differences, some scholars speak of 2 Cor. 3:7-18 as a "midrash" on Exodus 34,<sup>8</sup> some prefer the designation "peshet"<sup>9</sup> or "midrash peshet,"<sup>10</sup> while others appeal to the category of allegory.<sup>11</sup> Given the fact that specific reference to the Exodus story is found only in vv. 7, 13, and 16 of 2 Corinthians 3, it may be wiser to follow Hays's lead and describe 3:7-18 as "an allusive homily based on biblical incidents."<sup>12</sup>

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 277.]

That Paul uses δόξα in reference to the divine Presence, and not in regard to either Moses' glory or his glory should be so apparent as to not need commentary. But numerous commentators miss this completely, which probably tells you more about them personally than the biblical text.

κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει, μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται· 15 ἀλλ' ἔως σήμερον ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς, κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται· 16 ἡνίκα δὲ ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περαιορεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα. 17 ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν· οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. 18 ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακαλυμμένω προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.

12 Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, 13 not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. 14 But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. 15 Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; 16 but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

This pericope of vv. 12-18 is linked to vv. 4-11 by the inferential conjunction οὖν, therefore, in v. 12. Thus Paul's focus in vv. 12-18 on ministry in the new covenant makes explicit what he considered implicit in vv. 4-11. A major topic in this passage is the often repeated word κάλυμμα, veil. The covering that Moses' used to hide his face from the Israelite people becomes a symbolic reference to the spiritual blindness of those failing to see the divine Presence in the apostolic Gospel as the new covenant of God.

The organization structure of this pericope, as reflected in the block diagram below, is built largely off of statement # 55 with justifying and expansion statements (#s 56-63) following. The core assertion of # 55 is χρώμεθα, we take action. This dominantly Pauline verb in the NT (9 of 11 uses) from χράομαι, fundamentally





3.12	οὖν	Ἐχοντες τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα πολλῆ παρρησίᾳ
55	<b>χρώμεθα</b>	
3.13	καὶ	
56	<b>οὐ (χρώμεθα)</b>	καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου.
3.14	ἀλλ’	
57	<b>ἐπαρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν.</b>	
	γὰρ	
58	<b>τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα . . . μένει,</b>	ἄχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ἐν Χριστῷ ὅτι...καταργεῖται·
3.15	ἀλλ’	ἕως σήμερον ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς, ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν
59	<b>κάλυμμα...κεῖται·</b>	
3.16	δὲ	ἡνίκα ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον,
60	<b>περιαίρεται τὸ κάλυμμα.</b>	
3.17	δὲ	
61	<b>ὁ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν·</b>	
	δὲ	
62	<b>(ἐστιν) ἐλευθερία.</b>	οὗ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου (ἐστιν),
3.18	δὲ	
63	<b>ἡμεῖς πάντες...τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα</b>	ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου ἀποπριζόμενοι ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.

ally a slightly different emphasis is present. In v. 4, Paul's **confidence**, Πεποιθήσιν, was centered in the evidence of genuine conversion of the Corinthians that came through Christ. Here in v. 12, his ἐλπίδα, **hope**, centered in the new covenant reflected in the apostolic Gospel that the Corinthians had accepted. The use of the correlative adjective τοιαύτην in both instances links the modified noun back to the immediately preceding theme: in v. 4 back to vv. 1-3, and in v. 12 back to vv. 7-11. Thus the very basis for how Paul and his associates function is the greater divine Presence in the new covenant of the apostolic Gospel. Paul is totally confident that this is of God.

means to **act, do, function**. With such a basic meaning, it will be translated by a wide variety of English terms as the chart from the NRSV below illustrates. What Paul specifies by this present tense verb χρώμεθα is everything connected to actions in his life and ministry. Again the first person plural form includes his associates as well.

With the verb here, it is the attached qualifications that adds richness and specificity to their actions.

**First** is the adverbial causal participle phrase Ἐχοντες τοιαύτην ἐλπίδα, **since having such confidence**. Not much difference between this participle phrase and the earlier main clause expression, Πεποιθήσιν τοιαύτην ἔχομεν, **we have such confidence** (v. 4) exists. Contextu-

**Second**, πολλῆ παρρησίᾳ, **with much boldness**, Paul functions. Now what is παρρησία? The English word 'boldness' is potentially misleading. The manner of Paul doing ministry was not as an arrogant smart aleck! I've encountered countless preachers over the past 50+ years of ministry who took παρρησία to mean acting like an arrogant fool. In reality what they do is biblically reflecting ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου which has no connection to God whatsoever according to 1 John 2:16.

What Paul means here by παρρησία is to do ministry out of deep conviction that this ministry comes from and is being led by God through the Holy Spirit. It reflects confidence, but not one based on Paul himself.

Rather a confidence to speak courageously based on God's presence in his life.

**Third**, a pair of elipitil amplification follows (#s 56-57). introduced by καὶ. The οὐ...ἀλλ', not this...but that sets up a contrast that is important to note correctly. On the initial negating side come καὶ οὐ καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου, **not like Moses put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not gaze at the end of his fading glory**. One issue that emerges here is the assertion of a reason for Moses putting the veil over his face when he spoke to the people after being on the mountain with God.<sup>8</sup> The Exodus text simply defines a sequence as follows:

- 1) on the mountain with God, no veil
- 2) off the mountain speaking with the people, no veil.
- 3) when finished speaking with the people, a veil put on his face until the next time speaking with God.

What seems to be happening with Paul's statement is taking what, at least in the LXX translation of Exd. 34:35, appears to be a hint that Moses put the veil on so that the people would not focus on him and the odd glow on his face, but rather on the words of the Torah delivered to the people. While reporting these words he did not wear the veil, but at the end of his speeches, he put it on. While delivering the words of God to the people the visible glow on Moses' face confirmed the divine nature of the worlds being spoken. But at the end of the speech it was critical for the Israelites to seriously ponder the meaning of those words, and not to be fascinated with the divine glow on Moses' face, which evidently faded with time. Paul's statement πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου, **so that the sons of Israel would not gaze into the end of what loses its usefulness**, reflects something of the hint in the LXX translation, but with the interpretive comment εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου it seems to go beyond the OT text.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>“The Exodus narrative gives no explicit reason for Moses' recurrent veiling of his face, but many commentators assume that it was to avoid frightening the people or to protect them from prolonged exposure to the divine radiance and to mark clearly the difference between his official role as Yahweh's intermediary, regularly declaring Yahweh's words to Israel (the unveiled face), and his status as a private citizen, speaking his own words (the veiled face). But Exod. 34:35 contains a hint of Moses' purpose, if the καὶ that joins the two parts of the verse is rendered ‘and so’:<sup>14</sup> ‘The people of Israel saw (εἶδον) that the face of Moses was radiant, and so (καί) Moses placed a veil over his face.’ That is, he wanted to prevent the people from being preoccupied with what they saw, from gazing in amazement, as opposed to giving attention to what they had heard. It is this idea, we suggest, that prompted Paul's statement in 3:13b.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 297.]

<sup>9</sup>“πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ

The contrastive statement # 57 introduced by ἀλλ' ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν, **but their minds were hardened**, shifts from Moses to the Israelite people of Moses' time. All five uses of πωρώω inside the NT -- Mk. 6:52; 8:17; Jhn. 12:40; Rom. 11:7; 2 Cor. 3:14 -- allude to the process of the intensifying of rebellion by the Israelites to the leadership of God through Moses. The literal meaning of to harden has the figurative meaning of ‘hardening’ of the heart in heart in the sense of rebelling against leadership. Hear Paul indicates that τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν, **their minds**, became hardened so that they would not listen to God through Moses. Of course, the narrative in the Exodus of the Israelites after crossing the Red Sea is the story of just that.

**Fourth**, statements #s 58-60 (vv. 14b-16) re-enforce the point, especially in # 57, of the symbolic veil still being present among the Jews both in their synagogue meetings and temple worship in Jerusalem. Paul's application of the OT principle of the hardness of the Israelites to his present generation is made emphatically twice:

ἄχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας (v. 14b)

**until this very day**

ἕως σήμερον ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς (v. 15)

**until today whenever Moses is read.**

In both main clauses their rebellion reflected as spiritual blindness, or more literally, spiritual dumbness:

τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει, (v. 14b)

**this same veil continues at the reading of the old covenant**

κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται· (v. 15b)

**a veil rests upon their heart**

καταργουμένου. ‘To prevent the people of Israel from gazing steadily until the end of what was fading away.’ πρὸς with the articular infinitive expresses purpose.<sup>15</sup> A variety of proposals have been made regarding Paul's understanding of the reason for Moses' veiling of his face:<sup>16</sup>

“to prevent the Israelites from seeing that the splendor of his face was fading<sup>17</sup> and thus to preclude their disappointment<sup>18</sup> or their disparagement of his importance,<sup>19</sup>

“to conceal from the Israelites the temporary nature of the whole Mosaic system<sup>20</sup> or the goal of the fading old covenant,<sup>21</sup>

“to show the people, through an acted parable, that their sins had made them unable and unworthy to view even temporary glory without interruption,<sup>22</sup>

“to prevent the glory of God from achieving its intended result, namely the judgment of the ‘stiff-necked’ Israelites,<sup>23</sup>

“to prevent the Israelites from continuing to gaze in amazement until his face had totally lost the brilliance of the reflected glory and to demonstrate that the glory of the Sinai covenant would be eclipsed.”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 297–298.

The veil on Moses' face now becomes a veil on the reading of the Torah of Moses that keeps the people from seeing the divine Presence and then submitting to God in obedience.

But there is a way to get rid of the veil and see clearly the divine Presence: turn to Jesus who lifts this veil of ignorance. Notice this option first in statement # 58, *μη ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται, not being uncovered because it is nullified in Christ* (v. 15c).<sup>10</sup> This ὅτι clause principle then becomes the fully expressed main clause statement # 60 in v. 16: *ἡνίκα δὲ ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα, but whenever one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.* In commitment to Christ one can see the divine Presence clearly even in the Torah of Moses. The veil has been removed by Christ. The difference in meaning between *καταργεῖται* (v. 15c) and *περαιρεῖται* (v. 16b) is slight and essentially refers to the removing of the barrier to spiritual perception of the divine Presence during the reading of the Torah of Moses.

**Fifth**, statements #s 61-63 amplify the meaning and implications of the option of turning to the Lord for the removal of the veil. Notice the repeatitive δὲ introducing each of these

three statements. 17 ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν· οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. 18 ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν

<p>3.18 δὲ</p> <p>63 ἡμεῖς πάντες... τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα</p>	<p>ἀνακαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.</p>
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κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

The beginning declaration is important to get correctly so that the other statements come together sensibly. What does Paul mean by ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν, *the Lord is the Spirit*? First, who is ὁ κύριος? Christ or God? The use of the rare ἡνίκα only in vv. 15-16 in the entire NT suggests that Paul is following relatively closely Exod. 34:34 from the LXX in vv. 15-18. The use of κύριος twice in verse 34 is a clear reference to God. When Moses went up the mountain to speak to God the veil was removed. Normally in Paul's use of

κύριος in his writings it refers to Christ. The new covenant is closely linked in vv. 4-11 to the Spirit. Paul's statement # 61 links ὁ κύριος to τὸ πνεῦμά, but is immediately followed by τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, *the Spirit of the Lord*, in # 62. These would seem to equate κύριος with God. But *turning to the Lord*, ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, in v. 16, while playing off Exod. 34:34 also amplifies ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται, *because in Christ it is nullified* (v. 14b). Paul can move seamlessly between κύριος as God and also as Christ, which here he seems to blend together. Add to this is that Christ in the new covenant is the δόξα, the divine Presence of God (vv. 7-11). It may well be that the beginning questions, who is ὁ κύριος? Christ or God?, pose an artificial distinction resulting from post Enlightenment kind of thinking. When we encounter the Spirit in the new covenant we encounter God through Christ as the divine Presence of God.

In statement # 62 comes the huge implication of such an encounter: οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία, *and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. Crucial here is the definition of ἐλευθερία in this particular context. Clearly in light of statement # 63 especially, ἐλευθερία means the freedom to be consistently trans-

formed so that the divine Presence increasingly is impacting our life. This greater glory of the new covenant begins to impact us at conversion, but over a life time of obedience it continually transforms and changes us to be able to sense the presence of God in our lives.

Note the core affirmation: ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες... τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα, *And we all are being transformed into the same image*. That is, our lives are all being reshaped into the same image of Christ as the δόξα, the divine presence of God. This is much deeper than just becoming more 'Christ like.' In Paul's complex construction here in # 64, the central point is that this δόξα of God is permeating our lives step by step in bringing about change spiritually and morally. All of it is shaped by the single image of Christ and the life He lived while on earth.

The modifiers of the main clause verb, as illustrated in the above diagram, underscore this central point. First, this transformation comes about only with ἀνακαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ, *unveiled faces*. This alludes back to the previous reverences in vv. 14b and 16 where turning to Christ is the only way to get rid of the veil of

<sup>10</sup>Side note: this contrastive option in participle phrase is the basis for Paul's use of the contrastive conjunction ἀλλ' to introduce #59, while the core expressions of #58 and #59 are synonymous parallels. Setting up such unbalanced contrasts grammatically is not possible in most modern western languages. This forces rather artificial translation efforts that one finds in most contemporary translations.

ignorance of God's presence. The perfect passive participle ἀνακεκαλυμμένω references one's conversion commitment as the moment of unveiling. The phrase ἀνακεκαλυμμένω προσώπω spelled in the instrumental of means function (sometimes labeled the instrumental dative) stresses this unveiling as essential to the process of being transformed, μεταμορφούμεθα.

Then the process of transformation is linked to τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι as a simultaneous action. Here the idea is **continual gazing into the glory of the Lord**. Interestingly, κάτοπτρον, based upon the root verb κατοπτρίζω, is the most common word for 'mirror' in ancient Greek. For transformation to happen it must grow out of focused attention to Christ, the divine Presence of God. One should be very cautious here about this figurative picture of 'gazing' as advocating meditation. In later interpretive history this passage has been used for this. But Paul was no 'meditator' in the later Christian definition of such. Focus on the Presence of God in Christ means first and foremost obedient actions in ministry service. The symbolic veil referenced here centers on sinful actions out of ignorance of the Presence of God. And this came among the Jews of Paul's day in spite of the reading of the Torah on Friday evenings in the sabbath gatherings where much discussion took place around what was read. The reading and discussion of the Law occurred in ignorance of the divine Presence of God even in connection to the Torah, much less in rejection of Christ as that divine Presence in the new covenant. Thus Paul's point with the participle phrase modifier τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι asserts dramatically that divine transformation happens only in a concentrated focus on Jesus as the divine Presence of God.

The above two sets of modifiers are in the prefield position, and are matched by three modifying sets following the main clause verb.<sup>11</sup> Here we discover what this transformation means more precisely. The first two prepositional phrases, ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, **from glory into glory**, underscore the verb action of transformation in μεταμορφούμεθα. That is, transformation moves from one level of the divine Presence to another, deeper level. This contextually is against the backdrop of the greater divine Presence, δόξα, in the new covenant as opposed to the old covenant in vv. 7-11. But **beyond a conversion transformation**, the present tense

<sup>11</sup>One pattern to always look for is the positioning of groups of modifiers. In the vast majority of instances, multiple sets of modifiers will be grouped together both before and after when they modify. Usually some kind of rationale for listing sets together on either side of the word being modified will be detectable.

In the instance of # 63, the pair in the prefield center on our responsibility or requirements for the transforming action to take place. The three modifiers after the verb μεταμορφούμεθα define the nature of the transformation that takes place through God's action .

of μεταμορφούμεθα underscores an ongoing process of transformation to ever heightened awareness of the divine Presence inside the new covenant.

The source of this continual transformation is signaled by καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. The dependent conjunction καθάπερ, only used in Paul's writings, stresses a comparison of this transforming divine Presence has its starting point in κυρίου πνεύματος. Most likely πνεύματος is in the genitive of apposition function and thus the translation of κυρίου πνεύματος is **from the Lord, that is, the Spirit**. This ongoing transformation is traced back to God working through His Spirit which is linked in vv. 7-11 to the new covenant.

Thus the heart of the Christian experience in the new covenant is μεταμορφούμεθα, **being transformed**. But the transformation that changes us inside and out is dependent upon moving from one level of awareness of the divine Presence of God to a deeper awareness. The Corinthians themselves in their conversion and spiritual growth are Paul's 'letter of recommendation' that the true Gospel of the transforming new covenant was brought to them by the apostles and his associates. Proclamation this message stands as the center of Paul's ministry, and, as he will proceed to declare in the next pericope, energizes him in ministry.

#### 10.2.3.1.6 Ministry in clay pots, 4:1-15

In this next larger pericope the apostle uses the preceding comments as foundational for some personal applications to the ministry of both him and his associates. The prepositional phrase Διὰ τοῦτο, **because of this**, links up what follows in vv. 1-15 especially to the preceding 3:1-18. The following segment of vv. 1-15 has a two fold emphasis with the first one built around the contrastive οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν ἀλλ' ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, **we do not loose heart, but we have renounced the secret things of shame**. The same pattern is used to structure the subsequent segment of 4:16-5:10. The same denial οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, **we do not loose heart**, is followed by the contrastive declaration in dual forms: διαφθείρεται, **wasting away**, and ἀνακαινοῦται, **being renewed**.

Thus both 4:1-15 and 4:16-5:10 both grow out of the foundational principles of ministry set forth in 3:1-18. The parallel rhetorical structure of both 4:1-15 and 4:16-5:10 further link the two units closely together.

#### 10.2.3.1.6.1 Not losing heart, pt. 1, 4:1-6

4.1 Διὰ τοῦτο, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν, οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν 2 ἀλλ' ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συυστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν

συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 3 εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν, ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον, 4 ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ. 5 οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλ' Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν. 6 ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν, Ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

4.1 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open

4.1 Διὰ τοῦτο,  
ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην  
καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν,

64 οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν

4.2 ἀλλ'

65 ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης,

μὴ περιπατοῦντες

ἐν πανουργίᾳ

μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ

ἀλλὰ

τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς

πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων

ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

4.3 δὲ

εἰ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν,

ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις

66 ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον,

4.4 ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα

| τῶν ἀπίστων

εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν

/-----|

τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ.

4.5 γὰρ

67 Οὐ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν

ἀλλ'

68 (κηρύσσομεν) Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν

| κύριον,

| δὲ

| ἑαυτοὺς

| δούλους ὑμῶν

διὰ Ἰησοῦν.

4.6 ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν·

ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει,

ὃς ἔλαμψεν

ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν

πρὸς φωτισμὸν

τῆς γνώσεως

τῆς δόξης

τοῦ θεοῦ

ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Here the apostle deals with one of the continual challenges before every person engaged in Christian ministry. The heavy load that must be carried in ministry

can wear a person down and lead to discouragement. But here the apostle counters that temptation with a positive note about ministry in the midst of great difficulty. Central to his point here is statement # 65 stressing integrity in ministry. In light of the marvelous transformation of life that comes in the apostolic Gospel, service to others with this message can only be done with the highest of integrity.

The internal arrangement of ideas is clearly reflected in the above block diagram. The contrastive first two statements of #s 64 and 65, οὐκ... ἀλλ', *not...but*, set up the core emphasis. The amplification role of statement # 66 referencing the unwillingness of many to accept the Gospel sets a context for integrity in ministry. Statements #s 67-68 stand as justifying assertions to the first three declarations affirming the meaning of statement # 65 especially. Paul promotes Christ, not himself in this ministry.

The phrase τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, *this ministry*, identifies the major thrust of Paul's discussion. διακονία looms large in Second Corinthians with 12 uses: 3:7, 8, 9 (2x); 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13; 11:8. The essence of διακονία for Paul was proclaiming the apostolic Gospel. Its use in 4:1 with the demonstrative pronoun τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην references the depiction in chapter three as what the Paul is talking about. Being granted such ministry, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, means becoming an object of divine mercy, καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν, *just as we have received mercy*. It is not a διακονία that one takes up under his own initiative, nor even volunteers for. Instead, it is granted by God as an expression of His mercy and compassion. Ministry perceived this way must then be carried out exclusively with integrity and proper motivation.

On the first side of the contrast stands ἐγκακέω in the present tense first person plural. The verb stresses the loss of one's motivation for actions or conduct. Thus one can easily become victimized by false motivations behind actions. This very Pauline oriented verb in the NT (5 of the 6 instances) is stressed strongly in vv. 4 and 16 of chapter four: οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, *we are not loosing our integrity for ministry*. Again as has been overwhelmingly the case in the first four chapters of Second Corinthians, the 'we' means Paul and his associates, especially Timothy (cf. 1:1). The present tense underscores ongoing motivation, rather than that at the beginning with can then fade into some less honorable.

The opposite idea is then ἀλλ' ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, *but we have renounced the secret things of shame*. This verb ἀπείπω only surfaces this one time inside the NT and means to strongly disown or renounce something. The direct object τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης references the implicit thrust of ἐγκακοῦμεν, i.e., losing proper motivation for improper ones (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς

αἰσχύνης). The idea is the doing of things which one hides out of a sense of shame.

Here those actions that one would try to hide include μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, *not living in deceitfulness nor falsifying the Word of God*. Both behavior and treatment of the apostolic Gospel must be driven by proper motives. The inner connection of these two negative oriented participle modifiers of ἀπειπάμεθα is clear. Paul renounced the twisting of the Gospel in order to justify questionable behavior.

With the series of modifiers of the core verb ἀπειπάμεθα (see above diagram), the apostle sets up an additional not this...but that, μὴ... μηδέ... ἀλλὰ, *not... neither...but*, structure. On the positive side then stands ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, *but in the manifestation of divine Truth commending ourselves to the scrutiny of every person as we will stand before God*. Of course, literal translation of this lengthy sentence, and even of this modifying participle, is impossible to do with clarity of idea expression. The core participle expression συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς, *commending ourselves*, is defined contextually as the opposite of the two negatives μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ which spell out what is hidden from view out of a sense of shame for its impropriety, τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης. Thus Paul conducts both his living and presentation of the Gospel with open transparency because he has nothing to hide. He and his associates open themselves up to the scrutiny of every one who can examine these leaders and see for themselves that integrity is central to what is being done.

The sense of πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων is emphatic here in emphasizing complete transparency toward every individual making a judgment about how ministry is being done. The translation of συνείδησιν as 'conscience' is misleading due the enormous baggage of the English word. Paul worked inside the framework of first century Greek understanding of συνείδησις as the human ability to make decisions, including evaluative decisions, about issues.<sup>12</sup> The larger context setting for doing ministry with this openness is ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, *in the presence of God*. Paul's ministry is carried out in the full awareness that judgment day is coming as he will describe in 5:1-10. This openness to people reflects anticipation of being completely exposed before Almighty God on judgment day.

Statement # 66 via the conjunction δὲ adds an amplification to the preceding two statements in #s 64-65.

<sup>12</sup>For a detailed exploration of συνείδησις in the NT see my article "[The Western Introspective Conscience: A Biblical Perspective on Decision Making.](#)" at volume 37 of the BIC commentary series in cranfordville.com.

It is structured as a concessive sentence with the protasis introduced by *εἰ καὶ*, *even if*, and the apodosis main clause *ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον*, *among those perishing it is veiled*. Paul sets up the hypothetical possibility of his Gospel message being veiled. That is, its meaning and ability to communicate the divine Presence in Christ is hidden from certain individuals. Here the language of veiling and unveiling goes back to chapter three where *τὴν δόξαν κυρίου*, *the divine Presence of the Lord* (cf. 3:18), is hidden to some individuals. These individuals are identified in the main clause as *ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις*, *among those perishing*. This plays off the earlier assertion in 3:7-11 that the reading of the Torah in the Jewish synagogues was veiled to those present in that they could not see the glory of God that Moses' had seen on Mt. Sinai. Their hardness of heart (cf. 3:14-15) kept them from sensing the Presence of God. Also, the only way to lift that veil is to turn to Christ (cf. 3:16-18).

The adjectival functioning relative clause in 4:3 identifies this hardening of the heart as the blinding work of the Devil himself: *ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ*, *among whom the god of this world has blinded the thinking of unbelievers so that they cannot see the illumination of the Gospel that brings the divine Presence, Christ, who is the very image of God*. The relative clause here connects back to *τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις*, *those perishing*, as the antecedent of the pronoun *οἷς*. Thus those perishing are further identified as *τῶν ἀπίστων*, *unbelievers*, in the relative clause.

The unusual phrase *ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, *the god of this age*, is found inside the NT only here, but is very similar to the Johannine image of *the ruler of this world*, *ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου*, in Jhn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. Also Eph. 2:2 has a similar reference: *τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ αἴρος*, *the ruler over the power of the air*. All of these allude to Satan. The phrase here, *ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, would have had particular relevancy to the Corinthians caught up in the surrounding culture of massive polytheism. Additionally the use of the apocalyptic Jewish oriented phrase *τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, *of this age*, signals Paul's adoption generally of this diaspora Jewish terminology that divided human history into two periods of time: this evil age and the Messianic age to come. This echoes the earlier expression by Paul in Gal. 1:4, *ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ*, *out of this present age of the evil one*. Central to the idea of this present age being evil was the contention that Satan dominates humanity during this period. Although his powers are somewhat limited (cf. Rev. 20:1-6), he nonetheless can exert great influence over the lives of those outside the control of God in His kingdom on earth. These, as Paul declares

in Gal. 1:4, have been rescued out from under Satan's control by Christ: *τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἐξέλῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν*, *who gave Himself in behalf of our sins, so that He might rescue us out of this present age of the evil one according to the will of God, indeed our Father*. To the Corinthians, Paul asserts that when the Gospel is hidden from unbelievers to keep them from receiving Christ, it is due to the blinding impact of Satan upon their lives. Specifically Satan has *ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων*, *blinded the minds of unbelievers*. The idea of *τὰ νοήματα* is the ability to think coherently. Intellectually they can comprehend the concept of the apostolic Gospel, but they cannot grasp both its relevancy to their lives and its potency to transform their lives. Satan has convinced them that it has no value for them. Thus *εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ*, *so that they may not see the illumination coming from the Gospel, that is the divine Presence who is Christ, the very image of God*. Here is the great tragedy: they do not sense God's life changing Presence in Christ through the Gospel. Thus they continue living completely ignorant of the powerful Presence of Almighty God in this world. For the Corinthian critics of Paul, the issue of rejection of the Gospel is centered in the work of Satan and not in Paul's preaching of the Gospel itself.

In verses 5-6, comes a series of justifying statements (*γὰρ*) providing support for what he has just claimed in the preceding statements of vv. 1-4. These two declarations, #s 67-68, assert that Paul's preaching does not focus upon himself as the preacher (# 67). Instead, everything in his message centers on Christ as Lord and the apostolic leaders as servants of the people in behalf of Christ (# 68).

Statement 67 begins with a denial of promoting himself in preaching the Gospel:

4.5 γὰρ  
67 Οὐ ἑαυτοῦς κηρύσσομεν

Behind this very likely stands a self promotion in the preaching by some of Paul's critics at Corinth and possibly a criticism that Paul puts too much of himself in his preaching.<sup>13</sup> Given the mentality reflected in the first

<sup>13</sup>“This statement could be either apologetic or polemic, possibly even both. It would be apologetic if Paul is responding to criticism that in his preaching he puts himself forward, i.e. that he is more concerned to establish his authority as an apostle than to proclaim the gospel. It would be polemic if Paul is implying that, unlike others who put themselves forward in their preaching, he preaches the lordship of Christ.” [Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 104–105.]

letter to the Corinthians about the attitudes of Paul's critics, this latter angel is not likely. Egocentrism was central to their thinking. The apostle was seeking to advance the Kingdom of God on earth in his preaching, and not interested in building a personal empire as is often found in modern Christianity.

Intead of himself, his preaching centered on Christ as is set forth in # 68:

68 ἄλλ' (κηρύσσομεν) Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν  
 | κύριον,  
 | δὲ  
 | ἑαυτοῦς  
 | δούλους ὑμῶν  
 διὰ Ἰησοῦν.  
 4.6 ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν·  
 ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει,  
 ὃς ἔλαμψεν  
 ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν  
 πρὸς φωτισμὸν  
 τῆς γνώσεως  
 τῆς δόξης  
 τοῦ θεοῦ  
 ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

Clearly this point in made. The triple direct object of Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον is best taken as **Jesus Christ as Lord**. With the repeated use of κύριος as a reference to God in 3:12-18, the apostle now shifts the emphasis to Christ as the divine κύριος which is central to the apostolic Gospel. But in the compound set of objects, ἑαυτοῦς shows up again but with the appositional qualifier δούλους ὑμῶν, **ourselves as your servants**. This is a huge difference than the unqualified ἑαυτοῦς in statement # 67. This echoes the earlier declaration of Paul in 1:24, οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως ἀλλὰ συνεργοὶ ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν· τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε, **I do not mean to imply that we lord it over your faith; rather, we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith**. The apostle well understood the servant minister teaching of Jesus as set forth in Mk. 10:41-45, 43 οὐχ οὕτως δὲ ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ὃς ἂν θέλῃ μέγας γενέσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος, 44 καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος. 43 **But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.**

This posture in preaching is further defined as διὰ Ἰησοῦν, **because of Jesus**. That is, accepting Jesus as κύριος translates into becoming the διάκονος / δοῦλος, **servant to others in the Gospel**. This defines συνεργοί, **fellow workers**, in 1:24.

This concept of servanthood in ministry is so central to the teaching of the NT that it must not be overlooked or neglected. And neither can it be reduced down to

ceremonial ritual or used as a facade to cover up a dictatorial approach to ministry. Modern Christianity across the theological spectrum has become guilty of explaining away both Jesus and Paul here. The depraved nature of humanity craves the possession of power and fears surrendering it completely to others. But both Jesus and Paul recognized that the way to influence people toward God was through serving them, not bossing them. Many in the Corinthian church had not yet learned this principle, as is also the case for many Christian leaders in today's world.

The elliptical ὅτι clause in v. 6 provides the basis upon which Paul preaches Christ and himself as a servant of Jesus: ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν, Ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ. **For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

The scripture allusion Ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει seems to recall Gen. 1:3, καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς Γενηθήτω φῶς. καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς. **And God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light.** Additionally it reminds one of the language of Isaiah in Isa. 9:2, (LXX 9:1), 1 ὁ λαὸς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐν σκότει, ἴδετε φῶς μέγα· οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου, φῶς λάμψει ἐφ' ὑμᾶς. **The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined.**

The application of this OT image of God's light shining is then made with the relative clause modifier, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ. **who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** The God who spoke is the One who has illuminated believers down to the deepest part of their being. Thus the God of Abraham is identified here as working in Christ. The ἔλαμψεν, **shined**, links back to the future imperative λάμψει, **let the light shine**. God commanded it to shine and it did. The phrase ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, **in our hearts**, stresses the interior part of our existence, and especially the volutational aspect.

The intent of this illumination action of God is πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, **for the enlightenment of knowledge of the glory of God**. This overly literal translation of these 'stacked up' genitive case nouns doesn't make much sense. The sense of φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως, **enlightenment of knowledge**, moves along the lines of throwing light into our inner being that provides



us with experiential understanding and insight. The noun φωτισμός, used only here in vv. 4 and 6, is a salvational term like φῶς tends to be in the NT. This form φωτισμός stresses the action of shining in a manner similar to the verb λάμπω used here. Thus φωτισμός defines the moment ὃς ἔλαμψεν, *who shined*, from the perspective of a noun reference.

Paul's own conversion experience on the road to Damascus likely stands in the background here, given the similarity of language used.<sup>14</sup> Yet the use of the plural ἡμῶν, *our*, argues strongly against limiting the picture of shining just to Paul's earlier experience. Consistently in these first four chapters the plural 'we' has referenced Paul and his associates. In the context of Paul's continued defense of the preaching of the apostolic Gospel by him and his associates, the plural here should be taken to refer primarily to all of them. The use of the Lukan language of conversion from Acts merely provides a background setting for seeing the ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, *Who has shined in our hearts*, as alluding to the believer's conversion from hearing the apostolic Gospel message. And thus it stands as further confirmation of the correctness of Paul's message.

The next set of genitives τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, *of God's glory*, reaches back to the repeated use of δόξα to reference the divine Presence of God. Where do we discover this divine Presence of God? Moses discovered it on Mt. Sinai, but now we become aware of it ἐν προσώπῳ

<sup>14</sup>“What makes an allusion to Paul's Damascus encounter with the risen Christ likely are the many similarities in thought and diction between 2 Cor. 4:6 and the three Lukan accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts. In both sets of data there are inward and outward aspects to the conversion, but while Paul emphasizes here the inward, the Acts accounts stress the outward phenomena.

2 Cor. 4:6	Acts
ἔλαμψεν	περιήστραψεν (9:3) περιαστράψαι (22:6) τὴν λαμπρότητα (26:13) περιλάμψαν (26:13)
ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις	hearing (9:4; 22:7, 14–15; 26:14) “seeing” (9:17, 27; 22:14–15; 26:13, 16 [twice], 19)
φωτισμός τῆς δόξης	φῶς (9:3; 22:6, 9, 11; 26:13) τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτός ἐκείνου (22:11) ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου (26:13)

ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον (22:14)<sup>111</sup>

“The plural ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις (ἡμῶν) may seem a difficulty for the view that 4:6 refers primarily to Paul's Damascus experience since in 6:11 the singular ἡ καρδιά (ἡμῶν) refers to Paul alone. It may be, however, that this plural is a hint that Paul viewed his own conversion experience, seen as the advent of light and the dispelling of darkness (not as involving a christophany), as a paradigm for all Christian conversion.<sup>112</sup>”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 336–337.]

[Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ, *in the face of Jesus Christ*. As Paul asserted earlier in 3:7-18, this is a greater Presence than with Moses, and an ever greater awareness of it is a continuing experience of the believer (3:18).

The privilege of proclaiming such a message as this was a humbling experience for the apostle. But proclaim and live this message was central to Paul and his associates' existence. The Corinthians had been richly blessed to have begun their Christian community on the basis of this very message. To turn away from it and its messengers would make no sense at all.

### 10.2.3.1.6.2 Illuminating the presence of God, 4:7-15

7 Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν 8 ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι, ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι, 9 διωκόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι, καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι, 10 πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ. 11 αἰεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν. 12 ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν. 13 ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν, 14 εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγεῖρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. 15 τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. 11 For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you. 13 But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—“I believed, and so I spoke”—we also believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. 15 Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Out of the marvelous privilege just described in vv. 1-6, the apostle now heightens the contrast of this precious Gospel message with the frailty of its carrier, himself and his associates. The analogy of precious treasure stored in clay pots (v. 7) provides the background

4.7 δὲ  
**69 Ἔχομεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον**  
 ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν,  
 ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ  
 καὶ  
 μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν.

4.8 ἐν παντί  
**70 (ἔσμεν) θλιβόμενοι**  
 ἀλλ'  
**οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,**  
**ἀπορούμενοι**  
 ἀλλ'  
**οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι,**  
 4.9 **διωκόμενοι**  
 ἀλλ'  
**οὐκ ἐγκαταλείπομενοι,**  
**καταβαλλόμενοι**  
 ἀλλ'  
**οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι,**

4.10 **71 (Ἔχομεν) πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ**  
 ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες,  
 ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν  
 ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ... φανερωθῇ.

4.11 γὰρ  
**72 ἀεὶ ἡμεῖς...εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα**  
 οἱ ζῶντες διὰ Ἰησοῦν,  
 ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ  
 ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν.

4.12 ὥστε  
 ἐν ἡμῖν  
**73 ὁ θάνατος...ἐνεργεῖται,**  
 δὲ  
**74 ἡ ζωὴ (ἐνεργεῖται)**  
 ἐν ὑμῖν.

4.13 δὲ  
 Ἔχοντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως  
 κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον·  
 | ἐπίστευσα,  
 | διὸ  
 | ἐλάλησα,  
 καὶ

**75 ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν,**  
 διὸ

**76 καὶ λαλοῦμεν,**  
 4.14 εἰδότες  
 ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν  
 καὶ  
 ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ  
 καὶ  
 παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν.

setting for this discussion. In the unfolding of the image in the subsequent verses the emphasis is given to the clay pot, since he has already described in detail the treasure as nothing less than τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ, [God's divine Presence in the face of Jesus Christ](#) (vv. 1-6). This depiction ran counter to

what the Corinthians had been conditioned to believe, that Gospel preachers were super heroic figures who could rise about dangers and their own failty. That is, they were Greek and Roman like heroes.

The internal organization of ideas becomes clear

77 τὰ πάντα (έστίν)

δι' ὑμᾶς,

ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα...τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ

διὰ τῶν πλειόνων

εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

with an analysis of the above block diagram. Statement # 69 sets up the discussion as a topic sentence through the contrastive analogy of a treasure contained in a clay pot. Then statements #s 70-71 develop and apply the analogy but only by amplifying the 'clay pot' side. The 'treasure' side has already been explained and is alluded to by the demonstrative pronoun modifier τοῦτον in #. 69. Thus with # 70 in applying the 'clay pot' he goes through an eloquently structured listing with four pairs of *this but not that* expressions. Statement # 71 then summarizes statement # 70. These are then followed by a justifying statement # 72 (γάρ) with inclusive reference to the listing in statement # 71. The consequence of #s 69-72 (ὥστε) is sketched out in #s 73-75. Note that the plural 'we' / 'you' dominates until statement # 75 where the scripture reference Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, *I have believed, thus I have spoken*, inserts a first person singular angle. But this is turned back into the 'we' / 'you' frame of reference in #s 75-77. This pattern of thought development, although not overly common in modern western thinking, is typically scribal Jewish thinking with segments linked together in various ways.

### 10.2.3.1.6.2.1 The Analogy, v. 7.

7 Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν. *7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.*

69 Ἔχομεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον

ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν,

ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ

καὶ

μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν.

The core expression Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον, *and we possess this treasure*, signals both a summation of the previous discussion and sees the apostolic Gospel as indeed a θησαυρός, treasure.

More precisely this treasure is φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ, *the illumination of God's divine Presence in the face of Jesus Christ*



(v. 6). Such a marvelous Presence of God is contained, however, ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, *in an earthly pot*. Even though saved by God's grace, the apostle knew quite well that we believers remain fragile and limited in our physical existence. Conversion does not turn us in super humans! This fragility will be the focus of attention in the next two declarations (#s 70-71). The adjective ὄστράκινος, -η, -ον simply means *made of earth or dirt*. And σκεύεσιν, from σκεῦος, is the ambiguous 'thing' or 'object.' But a ὄστράκινον σκεῦος normally designates a container made from clay in which various items would be stored; cf. Lk. 8:16; Jhn. 19:29; Rom. 9:21; 2 Tim. 2:20-21 et als. Thus in the analogy the divine Presence is contained in the frail humanity of Paul and his associates.

The apostle knows this all too well, but he sees in this a marvelous intention of God: ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν, *so that the extraordinary power may be God's and not from us*. This adverbial purpose ἵνα clause here in the introductory statement provides a platform for three subsequent amplifications:

v. 10: ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ, *in order that also the life of Jesus may be made clear in our body*.

v. 11: ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν, *in order that also the life of Jesus may be made clear in our mortal flesh*.

v. 15: ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ, *in order that abounding grace through more and more people may extend thanksgiving for God's divine Presence*.

When taken together the fuller richness of Paul's statement # 69 in verse 7 becomes clear. For the apostle -- and hopefully for all believers -- absolutely everything revolves around Christ. The marvel is that a holy God would choose to implant His sacred Presence in us sinners and thus enable

service in the Gospel to be given back to Him through ministry to others. When we present Christ to others it is not us working but God through His Spirit at work. When that presentation is accepted, we are not to take glory for it, but everything goes exclusively to God in honor of His transforming work in the Gospel. This the apostle knew profoundly and this thinking framed his living and ministry completely. He understood clearly that only God's power can transform a sinful life. This the Corinthians must understand, if they are to experience the full transforming power of the apostolic Gos-

pel in their lives. So the apostle goes to great lengths to underscore this point to them.

### 10.2.3.1.6.2.2 The application, vv. 8-15.

<sup>4.8</sup> ἐν παντί  
**70** (ἔσμεν) θλιβόμενοι  
 ἀλλ'  
 οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,  
 ἀπορούμενοι  
 ἀλλ'  
<sup>4.9</sup> οὐκ ἔξαπορούμενοι,  
 διωκόμενοι  
 ἀλλ'  
 οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι,  
 καταβαλλόμενοι  
 ἀλλ'  
**71** <sup>4.10</sup> (Ἔχομεν) πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ  
 ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες,  
 ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν  
 ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ... φανερωθῇ.

The application of the analogy centers on Paul and his associates as 'clay jars' containing the marvelous Gospel message. He does this first through four pairs of contrasts which continue the sentence begun in verse seven. It is summarized in a concluding expression in v. 10 which brings the sentence of vv. 7-10 to a close.

The use of ellipsis by Paul becomes challenging in seeking to understand his thought pattern. Statement # 70 is considered by some Greek text editors to simply be a continuation of the modifiers of the verb Ἔχομεν in v. 7. But the better understanding is reflected in the above diagram where two distinct elements of amplification of the 'clay jar' side of the analogy are set forth in abbreviated style. The two adverbial modifiers ἐν παντί, *in every way*, and πάντοτε, *always*, are important assertions to these statements. This contrastive weakness/strength theme stands as all encompassing and constant in the lives of Paul and his associates. It was not spasmodically when they experienced these challenges. There was no 'end around' for them where they could escape such experience. Their frailty was an unrelenting pressure put upon them in ministry.

Note the four pairs of contrasts:

- θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,  
*being persecuted but not being abandoned*
- ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔξαπορούμενοι,  
*being perplexed but not being brought to despair,*
- διωκόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι,  
*being hunted down but not being left behind,*
- καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι,  
*being knocked down but not being destroyed,*

The this but not that structure set up with ἀλλ' οὐκ underscores the negative stricks against Paul and his associates. But it asserts that in spite of the negative

strikes nothing really overwhelms them because of the grace and Presence of God in their lives.

The four pairs of contrastive perspectives is interesting to analyze. θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι

*is being oppressed but not crushed.* ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔξαπορούμενοι *is being pushed into confusion but not being driven into despair.* διωκόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι *is being persecuted but not being abandoned.* καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι *is being struck down but not being ruined or destroyed.* Divine strength in very adverse circumstances of both physical and mental pressures is the point being made. The uniform use of the present tense participles throughout stresses the ongoing nature of these experiences. In 11:16-33, we

find a listing of these adverse circumstances that the apostle had experienced thus far to the time of the writing of Second Corinthians in the mid 50s. What he did not know at this point was that even worse pressures lay ahead for him before he finished his earthly life.

The summarizing statement # 71 brings to a climatic summary of these four pairs of contrasts: πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ, *we are always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that also the life of Jesus may be made clear in our body.* Here the full contrast is laid out. Our sufferings reflect the suffering of Christ on the cross. But ironically these same bodies locked in a death grip by suffering reflect at the same time the resurrection life of Christ that ultimately overcomes the sufferings. And best of all, the ἀλλ' οὐκ, *but not*, segment of the above four pairs reflects the growing clarity that Christ is alive and present in the life and ministry of these missionaries. If questionable human motivations stood behind their ministry, they would have been overwhelmed and would have given up long ago. But no! The presence of the resurrected Christ in their life and ministry made difference. Overcoming victory, not defeat, was what came about through Christ. Hopefully the Corinthians will see and recognize this difference in Paul's and his associates' lives.

The further justification principle is then introduced with γὰρ in # 72. ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν. *For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.*

This general principle stands under the victorious suffering points in vv. 8-10 above as foundational. Note

4.11 γάρ  
**72** ἀεὶ ἡμεῖς...εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα  
οἱ ζῶντες διὰ Ἰησοῦν,  
ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ  
ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν.  
θνητῇ  
σαρκί,  
that is,  
flesh  
doomed

the pre-position of the temporal adverb ἀεὶ, *always*, for emphasis. Again note also the pre and post positions of the adverbial modifiers. Not only is ἀεὶ positioned before the verb παραδιδόμεθα, *we are being handed over*, but also εἰς θάνατον, *into death*, is as well. Both these modifiers reach back conceptually to the previous discussion in vv. 8-10. εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα, *into death we are being handed over*, is essentially defining πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, *always the death of Jesus in our bodies carrying around* (v. 10) but with more emphasis upon the physical dangers being faced rather than the spiritual thrust as in v. 10. While the meanings of πάντοτε and ἀεὶ are essentially the same, *always*, the use of the more eloquent Greek ἀεὶ is particularly appropriate to an especially principled statement such as # 72 in v. 11.

The verb παραδιδόμεθα is present tense passive voice from παραδίδωμι and is especially significant since it is often used to express the betrayal of Jesus on Good Friday both in the gospels and in Paul's writings. Jesus was 'handed over' to the authorities for crucifixion. Paul and his associates in their ministry are being handed over to physical death constantly. That is, they face being executed for their work continuously.

The post modifiers διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν define spiritual aspects of this constant facing of death by Paul and his associates. This is done with a prepositional phrase and a dependent purpose clause. First, διὰ Ἰησοῦν, *for Christ's sake*, defines the spiritual basis of constantly facing death. This is due to their unwavering commitment to Christ and His Gospel message. If ministry were self-motivated, they would be seeking ways to avoid the danger of execution by those hostile to the Gospel. But their commitment is unconditionally to Christ which brings them into very real personal danger.

The motivation behind this facing of death is stated in ἵνα clause, which comes as [the second amplifying purpose statement](#) behind the purpose statement in v. 7, is defining one aspect the demonstration of ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ *the superior power of God*. How does the divine power become clear to the surrounding world? In v. 10, the ἵνα clause defined it in terms of the resurrection life of Jesus being made clear in the body of the believers. Now in parallel to this, as the adverbial function of καὶ signals, this life of Jesus is made clear in our mortal flesh. Paul does not glorify our physical life as humans, as some of the Greeks did. Neither does he condemn it as worthless due to total corruption as did even more of the Greeks. But it is nonetheless τῇ

to die physically. Note that the adjective θνητός, -ή, -όν is built off the identical root stem for θάνατος, death.<sup>15</sup> What this constant facing of death communicated was the sacrificial life of Christ given in service to others. There was not any seeking of personal fame from this, as in some Greek philosophical circles where facing death heroically was thought to bring immortal fame and remembrance.<sup>16</sup> Rather, Paul's and his associates' willingness to constantly face death in Gospel ministry had the single objective of revealing even clearer the sacrificial love for others that Christ had demonstrated. And in this the surpassing power of God became clearer. People could take one look at the selflessness of these Christian leaders doing ministry and recognize that such commitments did not originate within human strength but instead came from without and from God. This, in turn, then stood as a powerful confirmation that their message and ministry reflected the leadership of God, and was not human based. Paul's critics in Corinth had their criticism of the facing of death as a denial of a God led and blessed ministry turned on its head. Paul argues the opposite point that such selfless ministry stands as undeniable confirmation of a God led and blessed ministry. His critics at Corinth were still enslaved to their Greek cultural way of thinking, and thus could not -- or would not -- see God at work in the ministry of Paul and his associates.

**What then is the conclusion? ὥστε, so that, of this (v. 12)?** ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν, *So then death is at work in us, but life in you.*

4.12 ὥστε  
ἐν ἡμῖν  
**73** ὁ θάνατος...ἐνεργεῖται,  
δὲ  
**74** ἡ ζωὴ (ἐνεργεῖται)  
ἐν ὑμῖν.

This is the first of two distinct conclusions that Paul

<sup>15</sup>Note the complex of Greek terms built off this same Greek stem: θάνατος, θνήσκω, ἀποθνήσκω, συναποθνήσκω, θανατόω, θνητός, ἀθανασία (ἀθάνατος) → ζωή. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:7.]

<sup>16</sup>But as the Homeric heroes hazard their lives for fame,<sup>9</sup> so κλέος (δόξα) offers the opportunity of bringing death as an act into life. Those who fall in glorious battle live on immortally in their renown on earth,<sup>10</sup> and perhaps the dead hear something of this renown.<sup>11</sup> [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:9.”]

reaches from the disussion of vv. 7-11. The second one comes in the single sentence of vv. 13-14 and is followed by the justifying declaration in v. 15 which is summarizing by nature.

Note the rhetorical structure of #s 73-74:

ἐν ἡμῖν, in us = ὁ θάνατος, death

ἐν ὑμῖν, in you = ἡ ζωὴ, life

The verbal action for both is ἐνεργεῖται, is at work. The English word ‘energize’ comes from this Greek verb, and gets relatively close in meaning also.

Paul’s contrast between death at work in his and his associate’s life to life at work in the Corinthians’ life must be understood contextually in order to avoid misunderstanding of his words here. The contrast between ἐν ἡμῖν, in us, i.e., himself and his associates, and ἐν ὑμῖν, in you, i.e., the Corinthians, draws a clear contrast between the messengers and the Corinthian audience. This is similar to Paul’s more detailed statement in 1 Cor.

4:8-10. For the messengers to bring the life generating message of the Gospel a death dynamic is at work in their lives: ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται. Their sacrificial suffering

<p>4.13</p> <p>For the messengers to bring the life generating message of the Gospel a death dynamic is at work in their lives:</p> <p>4.14</p>	<p>δὲ</p> <p>ἔχοντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον·</p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p>καὶ</p> <p>ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν,</p> <p>διὸ</p> <p>καὶ λαλοῦμεν,</p> <p>εἰδότες</p>	<p>ἐπίστευσα,</p> <p>διὸ</p> <p>ἐλάλησα,</p> <p>καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν.</p>
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described in vv. 8-11 is summed up by this declaration.

But for the Corinthians who have received this message a life producing dynamic is at work: ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν. In 3:4-18, Paul has laid out the details of the life giving message of the apostolic Gospel by contrasting it to the Jewish Torah system of religion. The Gospel has brought spiritual life and existence to the Corinthians. Thus the cross principle of *life through death* continues on with the preaching of the message of Christ to the Corinthians. In this way the Gospel that Paul proclaimed finds validation. The messenger walks in the path of suffering and endangerment of his life in order to bring this life giving message.

For those, evidently including some at Corinth, who thought that the Gospel brings only blessings and enables one to avoid the unpleasanties of life, Paul affirms that such just doesn’t happen. Believers experience blessings from God through the Gospel to be certain. But one’s struggles and difficulties with life and living do not disappear at all. In fact, some of them will intensify with Christian commitment. And this is partic-

ularly true for those devoting their entire lives to the spreading of this message, such as Paul and his associates. Every kind of “prosperity gospel” stands utterly condemned by the apostle here.

**That shared in common: vv. 13-14.** In spite of these different dynamics at work between the apostle and his associate and the Corinthians, some very precious is shared in common between the two groups as vv. 13-14 assert: 13 ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον· ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν, 14 εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. 13 But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—“I believed, and so I spoke”—we also believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence.

Here Paul reaches back to Psalm 116:10 (=LXX 115:1) for an affirmation of his and his associates willingness to speak the Gospel message. One should note that Paul uses the LXX Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, which is very different in meaning from the MT Hebrew text: :אָמַן אֲנִי עַתָּה כִּי אֲדַבַּר אֲנִי (116:10), *I kept my faith, even when I said, “I am greatly afflicted.”* Yet the larger context of Psalm 116 provides some basis for the LXX highly interpretative translation of this part of the psalm. The essential principle of speaking out of a faith commitment is asserted in the psalm. Paul merely applies it to a different situation than that of the psalmist.

He makes the valid point in the participle phrase ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως that he shares the same kind of faith commitment in negative circumstances which the psalmist spoke of when being opposed by people around him. It is somewhat unclear what Paul meant by τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, *the same spirit*. But given the link to OT faith commitment, the idea most likely is the same disposition toward faith exhibited by

the psalmist in Ps. 116.<sup>17</sup> When abused he found God's strength and protection, now he celebrates this in the presence of the assembly in praising God.

In like manner to the psalmist, Paul and his associates are compelled to speak the words of praise to God for what He has done for them through the Gospel of Christ: καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν, and we believe, therefore we also speak.

This has the solid basis of the Gospel message as expressed in the causal participle εἰδότες phrase: εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν, because we know that the One who worked in the Lord Jesus also works in us with Jesus and will raise us together with you.<sup>18</sup> This certainty grows out of the awareness of the continuity of God's working with Christ and continuing to work with the followers of Christ. He empowers both to do His will even under the hardest of circumstance. And that empowering culminates in being brought into His holy presence on the day of judgment, as 5:1-10 explains. Here with σὺν ὑμῖν, he brings the Corinthians into the picture di-

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<sup>17</sup>"If πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit, τῆς πίστεως will be an objective genitive, 'the same Spirit, who prompts faith.'<sup>77</sup> If, on the other hand, πνεῦμα here means 'disposition' (as in 1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:23; 1 Pet. 3:4),<sup>78</sup> genitive πῆς πίστεως may be either objective, 'the spirit imbuing our faith' (Cassirer), or more probably adjectival, 'the same spirit of faith'<sup>79</sup> (= 'the same spirit that is marked by faith,' 'the same disposition that believes').<sup>80</sup> τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα clearly implies a comparison, so the question arises, With whom does Paul share this 'spirit of faith'? Some argue that since in v. 12 Paul has emphatically distinguished his experience from that of the Corinthians, he now wishes to stress their common faith.<sup>81</sup> But the preceding context contains no reference to the πίστις of the Corinthians, and it is arbitrary to equate πίστις with ζωή (v. 12b). It is more natural to see τὸ αὐτὸ as anticipating the formula κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, '(that is) in accordance with what stands written (in Scripture),'<sup>82</sup> so that Paul views himself as sharing 'the same spirit of faith' as was expressed by the psalmist when he said 'I believed, and therefore I spoke.'<sup>83</sup> [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 351.]

<sup>18</sup>"The closing part (v 14) of the sentence (that begins in v 13), which is heavy with stereotyped phrases betraying the presence of traditional material, is in an expected Pauline style.<sup>351</sup> He will elsewhere employ paraenetic matter from tradition and then add a comment to apply it to his readers' situation. So he writes: 'and lead us with you [σὺν ὑμῖν] into his presence.' This is an elliptical remark, lacking a complement to the verb παραστήσει, 'will present'; it would be ἐαυτῷ, 'to himself,'<sup>352</sup> which is associated with the Parousia of Christ (Rom 14:10) or the final day of God's purposes (Eph 5:27). But it can be a more immediate reference to entry into the Lord's presence here and now (1 Cor 8:8; Col 1:22, 28). The future tense, however, points to a final consummation, with the note of judgment struck, a thought Paul will return to in 5:10." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 235.]

rectly by affirming their hope of the future as well.

The placing of σὺν ὑμῖν at the end of the lengthy sentence in vv. 13-14 allows easily for the justifying statement (γὰρ) found in v. 15: τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων<sup>19</sup> τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ, for everything is for your sake, so that His grace having been richly given through His wealth may abound to thanksgiving for the glory of God.<sup>20</sup> With this declaration the apostle asserts the foundation of ministry for him and his associates rests on serving folks like the Corinthians so that God may receive the praise for the spiritual transformations that take place. In this Gospel comes the grace of God in abundant measure and generates profound thanksgiving to God for what He has done. Both the messengers and the audience are greatly blessed.

Thus the apostle repeatedly and from several angles makes the point that the spiritual life of the Corinthians is all about God, and nothing about human endeavor. He and his associates are merely carrying out their calling to deliver this life saving message in the Gospel not just in their preaching but also in the way they live.

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<sup>19</sup>The use of the comparative form τῶν πλειόνων from πολὺς, πολλή, πολὺ is ambiguous here. As a masculine substantival adjective it would mean 'more and more people.' But as a neuter form with the identical spelling, it means 'more and more wealth,' which is the adopted meaning. The abundance of God's grace comes through His greater 'wealth.' Clearly Paul is playing off of πλεονάσασα, πλειόνων, and περισσεύσῃ with inner connected meanings. But this is lost in translation.

<sup>20</sup>"There are various possibilities for reading this purpose clause. Is the verb pleonazō ('to increase') transitive or intransitive? The same question can be asked regarding perisseuō ('to abound'). Furthermore, what is the grammatical function of the accusative 'thanksgiving'? We take the first verb to be transitive (with 'thanksgiving' as direct object), the second intransitive. In his commentary Alfred Plummer appropriately notes / the play of words between charis and eucharistia, and the alliteration, pleonasasa ... pleionōn ..., and the climax from pleonasasa to perisseusē' (Commentary 134). Regarding the vocabulary and the redundant, overloaded character of this clause, cf. 2 Cor 8:7; 9:8a; 9:12; Rom 5:15; 5:20; 6:1; 1 Thess 3:12. One has the impression that this text unit comes to a close at this point. [Daniel J. Harrington, *Second Corinthians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 8, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 75.]