



FROM GLORY TO GLORY

SECOND CORINTHIANS CHAPTER THREE

SOME BACKGROUND

- **ONE OF PAUL'S MAIN CONCERNS IN THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF THIS EPISTLE IS RE-ESTABLISHING HIS CREDIBILITY IN THE MINDS OF THE CORINTHIANS. THEY HAD BEEN CONFRONTED WITH "PEDDLERS OF THE WORD OF GOD", PARTICULARLY THE JUDAIZERS WHO, SO OFTEN, MADE MESSSES IN THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCHES.**
- **NOTICE HOW OFTEN "CONFIDENCE" IS A THEME IN SECOND CORINTHIANS (2 COR. 1:12,15, 2:3, 3:4, 7:4, 16, 8:22, 9:4, 10:2, 11:17).**
- **THROUGH ALL OF PAUL'S TRIALS, HE CONSIDERED THE CORINTHIANS A GREAT SUCCESS STORY AND CONSTANT SOURCE OF COMFORT. HE NOW HOPES TO COMFORT THEM IN EQUAL MEASURE (2 COR. 1:3FF).**

- **“LETTERS OF COMMENDATION” – TRAVELERS WOULD OFTEN BRING SUCH LETTERS WITH THEM AS AN ENDORSEMENT. THIS INCLUDED EVANGELISTS AND APOSTLES. PAUL DOESN’T NEED SUCH THINGS, HOWEVER, AND USES THE “LETTER” AS A JUMPING-OFF POINT FOR A DEEPER DISCUSSION.**
- **“YOU ARE OUR LETTER” – REMEMBER THAT YOUR LIFE IS INTERWOVEN WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS. SOMEBODY IS EITHER BENEFITING OR HURTING FROM YOUR EXAMPLE AND INFLUENCE. OUR RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE DEEPER THAN THE SHALLOW “LETTERS” OF THE PRETENTIOUS PREACHERS – THEY ARE “HEART” RELATIONSHIPS.**

LETTERS

A dramatic sky scene featuring a crescent moon in the upper left corner. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds that are illuminated from below, creating a warm, orange, and yellow glow. The overall atmosphere is ethereal and majestic.

TABLETS OF STONE OR
TABLETS OF HUMAN HEARTS

SERVANTS OF A NEW COVENANT

- **“ADEQUACY” – IT IS PAUL’S INTENTION TO CONFRONT THE HEART OF THE ISSUE: SELF-DERIVED GLORY OR GOD-DERIVED GLORY. HE IS GOING TO DO THIS BY CONTRASTING THE “LETTER” AND THE “SPIRIT” IN THE COMING VERSES.**
- **THE “LETTER” IS THE OLD LAW (BOTH ITS SPECIFIC ORDINANCES AND ITS INHERENT GLORY) AND THE “SPIRIT” IS THE LIFE FOUND IN FOLLOWING CHRIST (IT IS CALLED THE “MINISTRY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”). THIS LANGUAGE SHOULD NOT BE ABUSED TO MEAN THAT THE SCRIPTURES HAVE A LITERAL INTERPRETATION THAT IS HARMFUL, AND A MORE SPIRITUAL, ENLIGHTENED SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION. NOTE 2 CORINTHIANS 1:13.**

FEELING INADEQUATE?

OF COURSE, THE APOSTLE'S MAIN CONCERN IS NOT ABOUT "MEASURING UP" IN OUR PARENTING, OUR JOBS, OUR SOCIAL STATUS, OR OUR RELATIONSHIPS. WE DERIVE A DEEPER ADEQUACY FROM GOD WHEN WE STOP THINKING WE CAN BE PERFECTLY ADEQUATE PEOPLE BASED ON OUR OWN MERITS. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE DEADLY LETTER AND THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT IS DRIVEN HOME BY THE SENSE OF INADEQUACY ONE FEELS WHEN HE TRIES TO BE PERFECT BASED ON WORKS OF THE LAW TO THE NEGLECT OF FAITH AND TRUST IN A LOVING, GRACIOUS GOD. LIKE ROMANS 7:4FF POINTS OUT, THE LAW ONLY AROUSED THE SINFUL PASSIONS AND EMPHASIZED JUST HOW SINFUL HUMANITY REALLY WAS. SOMEBODY MORE ADEQUATE THAN YOU AND ME HAD TO COME ALONG AND PROVIDE THE ADEQUACY FOR US (ROMANS 8:1-4).

DON'T WE ALL SOMETIMES...

- **“THE GLORY OF HIS FACE, FADING AS IT WAS” – THE LAW DID COME WITH GLORY, FOR ITS ARCHITECT WAS GOD (ROM. 7:12). IT WAS SO GLORIOUS, IN FACT, THAT EVERY TIME MOSES COMMUNED WITH GOD AND RECEIVED REVELATION, HIS FACE WAS LITERALLY ILLUMINATED.**
- **EXODUS 34:28-35 – MOSES DID NOT COVER HIS FACE BECAUSE ISRAEL WAS UNWILLING TO LOOK UPON HIS GLORY. ACTUALLY, HE DIDN'T WANT THE PEOPLE TO WITNESS THE GLORY FADING.**
- **THE LAW, THEN, WAS FADING *BY DESIGN*. GOD INTENTIONALLY MADE IT TEMPORARY, PASSING, WEAK (HEBREWS 8:13). JUST AS THE MOON'S GLORY IS OVERCOME BY THE SUN'S, SO THE LAW WAS SURPASSED BY CHRIST.**

THE GLORY OF MOSES

The background of the entire image is a dramatic sky. A thin crescent moon is visible in the upper left quadrant. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds that are illuminated from below, giving them a bright orange and yellow glow, similar to a sunset or sunrise. The overall color palette is dark with warm, fiery highlights.

PAUL'S BOLDNESS

**THOSE WHO PARTAKE OF THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT CAN BE SO BOLD
BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT ITS GLORY WILL NOT FADE. MOSES, ON THE
OTHER HAND, HAD TO TIMIDLY HIDE HIS FACE FROM THE ISRAELITES IN
ORDER TO HIDE THE FADING GLORY OF HIS MINISTRY.**

FIXATED ON THE OLD GLORY

- **SADLY, “THEIR MINDS WERE HARDENED” AND MOST OF ISRAEL’S DESCENDANTS COULDN’T SEE CHRIST’S GLORY. THEIR VISION WAS CLOUDED WITH THE SUPPOSED GLORY OF THE LAW AND ALL ITS TRAPPINGS.**
- **THEY SAW THE GILDED TEMPLE, BUT NOT THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY AFTER WHICH IT WAS MODELED. THEY SAW THE PRIESTS, BUT NOT THE PEOPLE MOST SPIRITUALLY QUALIFIED TO SERVE. THEY HEARD THE SONGS, SMELLED THE SACRIFICES, READ THE LAW, KNEW THE HISTORY, AND WANTED THE THRONE, BUT MISSED OUT ON THE MORE SPIRITUALLY SUBSTANTIAL VERSIONS OF THOSE THINGS.**