

From Glory to Glory

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

II Corinthians 3:18

Introduction:

1. It is our great privilege to live on this side of the cross of Christ, partaking in the new covenant with much greater glory.
2. There have been significant dispensational changes in the history of the world – patriarchs, the Law, and the gospel.
3. The progression of the three dispensations include greater revelation and glory as God reveals Himself more and more.
4. We live in the end of the world (Heb 9:26; I Cor 10:11), and it is our honor and privilege to be the best sons of God ever.
5. It is our duty by Spirit regeneration and gospel conversion to live transformed lives as certified followers of Jesus Christ.
6. It is our blessing to hear the simplicity of the gospel plainly preached without the hidden obscurity of Moses’ covenant.
7. We have fabulous blessings of liberty and power to grow in our Christian lives to be more gloriously like Jesus Christ.
8. It is our goal to take the power of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of Christ to grow more and more like Him in glory.
9. Having begun a defense of his ministry that he will pursue off and on for the rest of this epistle, Paul appeals to his results among the Corinthians and his superior gospel as evidence of his apostolic authority and integrity.
10. As in many other places, like Rome and the churches of Galatia, Paul had to deal with Jewish false teachers that corrupted the word of God by mixing the Law of Moses and traditions of the Jews with the gospel of Christ (Acts 15:1; Rom 2:17-20; II Cor 11:22-24; Gal 1:6-9; 2:1-5; 3:1-5; 5:1-10; Phil 3:1-11).
11. We shall see in this chapter a synopsis of the book of Hebrews, showing the gospel’s superiority to the Old Testament.
12. Our goal is not to create complexity or depth beyond the intent of the Holy Spirit, for this chapter is not that complicated; it is rather our goal to make the gospel manifestly simple, as we ought to speak (II Cor 3:12; 11:3-4; Col 2:8; 4:4).
13. It is almost a shame we have not had to deal with Jewish legalists in order to properly appreciate the glory of the gospel.
14. Beyond glorying in superiority of the New Testament, we should use it by the Spirit’s power to conform more to Christ.

Outline of Chapter 3:

- 1-3 Paul’s defense of ministry
- 4-6 Paul’s sufficiency of God
- 7-11 New covenant superiority
- 12-16 New covenant methods
- 17-18 Growth in grace by Spirit and gospel

3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

- A. Paul only began to defend his ministry and person against opposition of Corinth’s false teachers.
 1. He had just stated his triumphant ministry in Christ and personal integrity in preaching against the compromising and corrupting ministries of many false teachers (II Cor 2:14-17).
 2. The first question is a rhetorical negative, for he was not trying to merely commend himself; he was defending himself against false teachers and their foolish faction at Corinth (II Cor 10-12).
 3. He was not engaged in some foolish boasting to merely promote himself to the Corinthians.
 4. He had also defended his ministry and person in the first epistle (I Corinthians 3:10; 4:1-3,8-16).
- B. Paul did not need epistles of commendation to the Corinthians, as did the false teachers among them.
 1. The false teachers were Jews (II Cor 11:22-33), and they likely had brought letters of commendation from Judea, which was a general practice to confirm authority (Acts 9:1-2).
 2. Letters of commendation were a practice among the early churches (Acts 18:27; I Cor 16:3).
 3. Paul had come to Corinth with apostolic signs, wonders, and inspired preaching (Acts 18:1-11).
- C. Paul did not need letters of commendation from the Corinthians, for others accepted him readily.
 1. By not needing letters from Corinth, he showed his disdain for their approval (I Cor 4:1-3).
 2. By not needing letters of commendation from Corinth, he showed that others had accepted him.

3:2 *Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:*

- A. The Corinthian church was sufficient evidence of Paul's ministry to himself and others (I Cor 1:4-9).
 - 1. Paul did not need human approval, for he knew in his heart he had converted them; for though they had many teachers, he had been the one responsible for converting them (I Cor 4:15; 9:1-2).
 - 2. And as at Rome and Thessalonica, the conversion of these lascivious a people had been carried far and wide as proof of Paul's ministry in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:8; I Thess 1:6-11).
 - 3. Consider the past sins of some church members living in this lascivious city (I Cor 6:9-11).
- B. The Lord Jesus had taught before the measure of prophets by their spiritual fruits (Matthew 7:15-20).
 - 1. Let every minister mark himself by this standard: perfection of sinners in the fruit of the Spirit.
 - 2. Numerical growth is patently false and dangerous; but godliness is great gain (I Timothy 6:3-6).
 - 3. A great and rapid increase in numbers is more the evidence of heresy than it is of Spirit revival.
- C. It should be the goal of every church to be in heart and reputation the obvious children of God to all.

3:3 *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*

- A. The Corinthian saints were an obvious proof of Paul's ministry by their changed lives in the gospel.
 - 1. There was no need to explain their conversions, for the great work was visible and certain to all.
 - 2. Corinth was a sinful city, given over greedily to lascivious and licentious living with paganism.
 - 3. For there to be a church of Jesus Christ in such a place with many spiritual gifts confirmed Paul.
- B. Lives changed from pagan lasciviousness to holy Christianity prove a sure work of the Spirit of God.
 - 1. Rather than a written document confirming his authority, Paul had a spiritual church in Christ.
 - 2. Jesus Christ testified of Paul's authority and ministry by the epistle of these spiritual believers.
 - 3. How did Paul know the election of the Thessalonians? By their faith and works (I Thess 1:2-4)!
 - 4. Paul did not rely on an ordination certification or letter of recommendation written on paper.
 - 5. Paul had the most powerful credential, a church of saints converted from paganism (I Cor 9:1-2).
 - 6. It takes the power of the Spirit of God to thoroughly change men's lives from sin to holiness.
 - 7. A minister, no matter how faithful, cannot save men from Satan's will and grasp (II Ti 2:24-26).
 - 8. Even miracles do not prove anything, as Judas Iscariot illustrates. Holy living proves everything.
- C. Paul made his first allusion to the heresies of the Jewish false teachers by mentioning tables of stone.
 - 1. These deluded ministers of Satan worshipped Moses and the Ten Commandments in stone.
 - 2. But the salvation of Jesus Christ is based on a written work of the Spirit in the hearts of men.
 - 3. Though he began the verse with ink and paper, he ended it with references to writing in stone!

3:4 *And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:*

- A. Paul and other ministers with him trusted the evidence that the Corinthians were truly God's elect.
- B. They believed that what they saw in the Corinthians was evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- C. They believed that what they saw in the Corinthians proved their apostolic authority from Christ.

3:5 *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*

- A. Paul clarified that any ability or fruitfulness he had in the ministry was by the power of God.
- B. None of the changes in the Corinthians could be ascribed to ability or power of Paul and brethren.
- C. He had written earlier that ministers only planted and watered; God gave the increase (I Cor 3:5-7).

3:6 *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

- A. Paul was obviously an apostle of Jesus Christ by the evidence of the converted Corinthians (3:1-3).

- B. And the message Paul taught – the gospel or good news of Christ – was very different from legalism.
 1. Without naming the teachers and blasting them directly, Paul identified their inferior message.
 2. Paul had a calling from God far superior to any priest or prophet of the decayed Old Testament.
 3. Was Paul arrogant for claiming to be an able minister? Not hardly (I Cor 15:10; II Cor 11:5-6)!
 4. It is every minister’s duty to remember that he is a minister of the New Testament, not the Old.
 5. Paul here again made a rebuke at those false teachers corrupting the gospel with Moses’ Law.
 6. What does it mean when a testament is “new”? The other one is old and worthless (Heb 8:13)!
- C. Jesus had made Paul and his ministerial colleagues the serving ambassadors of the new covenant.
 1. The “letter” is synecdoche for the Old Testament (the next verse plainly defines the ministration of death by the written and engraven “letter”), which was based on God’s letters in stone, which the Jews worshipped above the Christ of the words (John 5:39; Romans 2:17,27,29; 7:6).
 2. The “letter,” or Old Testament, killed men, for it only revealed sinfulness without a sufficient sacrifice or sufficient ability to perform (Rom 3:9-19; 5:20-21; 7:7-13; Gal 3:19-29; Heb 9:8-12; 10:1-4; 13:9-14; Jas 2:10).
 3. The “spirit” is synecdoche for the gospel or New Testament, which was accompanied by the Holy Spirit in various ways, which was very different from the O.T. (Jn 6:63; Ro 8:2; Gal 3:1-5).
 4. The “spirit,” or New Testament, revealed eternal life by God’s superabundant grace in Christ through spiritual language to spiritual men (John 3:6-8; 6:63; I Cor 2:1-16; II Tim 1:9-10).
- D. There is truly a difference between letter and spirit in both covenants, but that is not taught here.

3:7 *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:*

- A. Paul’s able ministry of the New Testament was far superior to any ministering of the Old Testament.
 1. Anyone preaching a “gospel” of legal works of Moses’ Law was a minister of death! Wow!
 2. Anyone preaching a “gospel” of legal works of Moses was preaching a perversion (Gal 1:6-9).
 3. Anyone preaching a “gospel” of legal works of Moses was preaching another gospel (11:3-4).
- B. As is plainly evident from the next verse, Paul contrasted the glory of the Old Covenant to the New.
 1. The first argument, which was introduced in the previous verse, is the superiority of life to death!
 2. The second argument, also introduced, contrasts writing in stone to spiritual writing in hearts!
 3. The third argument, seen here, contrasts the permanent New Testament to the temporary Old, which is the whole reason for their names, old and new (Heb 8:7-13; 9:15; 12:26-29).
- C. The ministration of the Old Testament by Moses was definitely a glorious event in its own right.
 1. The account recorded by Moses is surely a glorious event in the history of Israel (Ex 19:1-25).
 2. Moses himself was exceedingly fearful of God’s glory revealed on Mount Sinai (Heb 12:18-21).
 3. When Moses returned after forty days, he wore a veil to cover his shining face (Ex 34:28-35).

3:8 *How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?*

- A. If preaching the Old Testament of Moses was glorious, how much more Christ’s New Testament!
 1. The Old Testament was letter, death, and temporary; the New was spirit, life, and permanent.
 2. The book of Hebrews is given to show from every angle the superiority of the New Testament.
- B. Jesus Christ and the N.T. are infinitely superior to the O.T., as the book of Hebrews clearly proves.
- C. A message of life, written in our hearts, that is to last forever is far superior to a message of death, written only in cold stone, which was only a temporary institution prior to the permanent! Glory!
- D. The new covenant is called the ministration of the spirit because of the abundant blessings of the Holy Spirit that accompanied the preaching of the gospel from the Day of Pentecost forward.
 1. The apostles were given a superabundant portion of the Holy Spirit for miracles and teaching.
 2. Those who believed received confirming signs of the Spirit to confirm them in the faith.

3. There was a work and possession of the Spirit for the ability and conviction to obey the gospel.
4. There was a sealing of the Holy Spirit as an earnest of their eternal inheritance.
5. There was a gift of the Holy Spirit by which God's adopted sons call Him, "Abba, Father."
6. There was a Spiritual revelation of divine truth as opposed to mere writing in stone.
7. There was a Holy Spirit work in the inner man to truly grow in grace and knowledge of Christ.
8. There was a very definite and real change in the hearts of men by the work of the Spirit.
9. There was the revelatory ministry of the Holy Spirit to open the Scriptures and truth to men.

3:9 *For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.*

- A. Here is Paul's fourth argument for the superiority of the New Testament – it brings righteousness.
- B. The Old Testament left men condemned, but the New Testament brings the good news of salvation.
 1. The old covenant was a ministration of death – it revealed and enforced death on the disobedient.
 2. The law was brought into make man's offences against God to abound – to condemn all men as worthy of the judgment of God (Rom 3:19-20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:7-13; Gal 3:19-23).
 3. No man can go to the Law for safety or salvation, for it only condemns to death; it does not save.
 4. Yet the New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the perfect Substitute and Sacrifice for all sins.
- C. A gospel minister has the highest calling on earth – to bear glad tidings of the glory of Jesus Christ.

3:10 *For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.*

- A. Here is a play on glory! While the Old Testament was glorious in certain respects, it truly did not have any glory when compared to the infinite glory of the New Testament! Glory!
- B. No matter what aspect of the Old Testament you care to consider for its glory, the New Testament is far superior in that particular aspect and in all others as well. Glory!
- C. A candle in a dark room is very glorious to obtain light; but a candle in broad daylight of a sunny day is absolutely nothing; so is the glory of the old covenant compared to the glory of the new.
- D. Choose any perspective in which you wish to compare them – the new covenant was far superior.

3:11 *For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.*

- A. Again, Paul argued for the superiority of the New Testament by its permanent and lasting character.
 1. Without saying so directly, Paul continued to jab the false apostles for an out-of-date covenant!
 2. The Jews never called their Scriptures the Old Testament, for only Christians know it is now old!
 3. God had promised to shake the earth once more to get rid of the Old Testament (Heb 12:26-27).
 4. Why in the world did Jesus declare the "new testament in my blood" at the last supper? Glory!
- B. When something is old, by means of a replacement called new, it is to be thrown away (Heb 8:13)!

3:12 *Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:*

- A. Since Paul and his colleagues had the most glorious testament, they used great plainness of speech in presenting the simplicity of the gospel to their hearers (II Cor 4:1-7; 11:1-4; Col 2:8,16-23).
 1. They had the hope of the new covenant, which was far superior in every respect to the old.
 2. A gospel minister has the most illustrious and wonderful message of hope ever conveyed to men.
 3. The primary ambition of a New Testament minister should be for simplicity to all hearers (Acts 4:13; Rom 16:25-26; I Cor 2:1-5; 14:19; II Cor 2:17; 4:1-7; Col 4:4; II Tim 1:9-10,13; 4:1-4).
 4. The greatest compliment for a gospel minister is that he made it simple and easy to understand.
 5. May God raise up men to make God's word plain for His saints to run in obedience (Hab 2:2)!

- B. In order to corrupt the New Testament with the Old Testament, there is an essential need for complexity of language and poor defining of terms in order to mix the two contradictory covenants.
 1. You need to hear a Presbyterian defend their infant baptism by appealing to male circumcision!
 2. You need to hear a Seventh-Day Adventist defend the Sabbath by appealing to Adam and Moses.
 3. You need to hear a Roman Catholic defend instruments, incense, and/or priests for the N.T.
 4. You need to hear a Dispensationalist try to eliminate the church and kingdom in favor of Jews.
 5. You need to hear a Mormon mix God, Adam, Jesus, and Satan into a hodge-podge of paganism.
 6. You need to hear Reformers arguing for church and state and covenant salvation for babies.
 7. You need to hear an eternal sonship advocate defining the mysterious process of eternal generation and contrasting occidental and oriental sonship in the title Son of God for Jesus.
- C. The New Testament is full of hope! There was none in the Old Testament, but by way of prophecy.
 1. Eternal life by the free grace of God without works of any kind is the most helpful message ever.
 2. The resurrection of the dead was proven by the Lord Jesus Christ and taught by the apostles.
 3. Though a few O.T. saints had hope does not prove the rest had much (John 8:56; Job 19:25-27).

3:13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

- A. New Testament preachers do not do anything to veil or disguise the glorious simplicity of the gospel.
 1. Paul is still following his argument from the previous verse of using great plainness of speech.
 2. Moses had to disguise the glory of his ministering face; it was too much for those fearful people.
 3. Moses literally needed a vail to dull his shining face from God, as Scripture says (Ex 34:28-35).
 4. But Paul used it as an allegory here of the spiritual blindness that God put on the Jews to miss the purpose and future of their temporal covenant: they could not see Jesus and the gospel.
 5. Moses had to hide God's glory from Israel, but ministers now reveal it all openly and plainly.
 6. True ministers of the New Testament do not fuss with shadows and types, for we know the details of the covenant, which are to be plainly taught far and wide to all hearers (I Tim 3:15-16).
- B. The children of Israel could not clearly see the purpose or end of their temporal covenant by Moses.
 1. The priests, sacrifices, and ordinances were all figures of Jesus Christ (Col 2:16-17; Heb 9:1-10).
 2. Paul used the actual event of Moses wearing a vail to create an allegory about Jewish blindness.
 3. Paul is introducing much more than the Jews being protected from Moses' shining face. Think!
 4. God judicially blinded Israel from clearly seeing their covenant as temporal and prefiguring, and it was the vail on Moses that indicated God would conceal the truth in Israel's religion.
 5. Israel could not and would not see, hear, or understand the spiritual truth in their carnal religion.
 6. God had intended from the beginning to abolish the Old Testament when Jesus Christ came, which is all declared and defined whenever we use the words Old or New Testament!

3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

- A. The Jews were nationally blinded to not see beyond the letter of the Law to the promises of Christ.
 1. The obscurity of the Old Testament is taken away by Jesus Christ, Who fulfilled its whole intent.
 2. Yet God's judicial judgment on the nation, general blindness to the gospel, was still in place.
 3. The blindness was not in total, for there were many Jews fully converted to believe on Christ.
- B. The obscurity of the Old Testament, a judgment on the nation of Israel, ended with Christ's coming.
 1. The Law of Moses was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, Who then appeared (Gal 3:23-25).
 2. The vail, or obscurity of the Old Testament, was done away by the appearing of the fulfillment.
 3. The Old Testament ceremonies, sacrifices, and prophecies are obscure until Jesus Christ came.
 4. Jesus and His apostles then revealed the mysteries of the gospel (Rom 16:25-26; II Tim 1:9-10).
 5. Jesus preached light to a dark generation; He preached plain truth boldly to those in darkness.

- C. The individual and personal veil was not lifted until a Jew would submit to the apostolic gospel.
 1. Paul dealt with elect Jews that needed to submit to Christ's righteousness (Romans 10:1-5).
 2. Paul will further indicate this individual and personal turning in just a few verses (3:16).

3:15 *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.*

- A. Though Jesus Christ had come and fulfilled the entire Old Testament, the Jews could not see Him.
- B. Paul is playing off earlier references to Moses "letter," though the whole O.T. is being considered.
- C. Consider the numerous examples of Jewish blindness to the obvious Person and ministry of Christ.
 1. The most repeated prophecy in the New Testament is Israel's blindness to the truth of the gospel (Isaiah 6:9-13 cp Matt 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26; Romans 11:8).
 2. Paul met with the Jewish leadership at Rome and discovered the great blindness (Acts 28:17-29).

3:16 *Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.*

- A. Personal conversion by the Spirit opening hearts and turning to Christ will remove the veil.
 1. Consider that many individual Jews of Israel did turn to the Lord (Acts 9:34-35; 14:1; 21:20).
 2. After all, Paul himself was a Jew, whom God had turned from Moses to Christ (Romans 11:1-8).
 3. And there were many thousands in Jerusalem, Judea, and other places that had been converted.
 4. It was no great thing to do so, for they were natural branches in the olive tree (Rom 11:23-24).
 5. God the Holy Spirit could regenerate a man and turn Him to the Lord Jesus Christ, after which the man could have the veil lifted by the preaching of the apostolic gospel.
 6. The singular "it" is referring to a collective noun that is plural, as indicated by "their heart" (3:15) and "their minds" (3:14), which we understand as individuals of the collective nation.
- B. While commentaries may want to speculate on a future general conversion of the Jews, they are unable to find the details of such a monumental event or any Scriptural confirmation of it.
 1. God has already broken down the middle wall of partition and put Jews and Gentiles together.
 2. The Deliverer coming out of Zion was future to Isaiah: Jesus has already come (Rom 11:26)!
 3. The true Jews are saved Gentiles (Rom 2:28-29), which make up David's Israel (Acts 15:13-18).
 4. The generational blindness of Israel was somewhat lifted after the conversion of the Gentiles.
 5. For more on Israel's generational blindness ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/romans-eleven.pdf>.

3:17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

- A. This verse has absolutely nothing to do with national politics or the freedom of the United States, and any such quotation or use is a gross pretext by stealing these words from their obvious context.
 1. An easy step to heresy is the use of a verse for some purpose other than what it was inspired for.
 2. This verse does not teach, imply, or suggest America had or has the Spirit for political liberty.
 3. The liberty is freedom from the bondage and blindness of the Law, sin, death, and condemnation.
 4. The gospel commissioned and blessed by the Spirit was a message of such liberty to believers.
 5. The gospel is the perfect law of liberty, declaring His will for saved men (Ja 1:25; 2:12; Gal 5:1).
- B. What turns men to the Lord, so they are delivered from blindness? The Spirit of God in regeneration.
 1. Lydia's heart was opened that she attended to those freeing things spoken by Paul (Acts 16:14).
 2. Jesus taught that the Father must draw men in order for them to believe on Him (John 6:44,65).
 3. The Holy Spirit creates the liberty, Who writes His gospel in the fleshy tables of the heart (3:3).
- C. When Lord is used in a context like this, we are to understand it of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
 1. It is the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, by which all liberty is produced in dead human souls.
 2. The Spirit of God's dear Son, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, is what opens hearts (Ga 4:4-6).
 3. It is the Spirit of Christ (note the terminology) that is the evidence of eternal life (Romans 8:9).
- D. It is the Son of God, by His blessing of the Holy Spirit, which truly makes men free (John 8:31-32).
 1. It was the Spirit that brought all things to their understanding, by Christ's promise (Luke 24:45).
 2. It was Christ indwelling Paul by the Spirit that gave him strength to do all things (Phil 4:13).

3. The divine power to bear much spiritual fruit is by Christ's Spirit (Rom 15:13; II Pet 1:3-4).

3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

- A. Contrary to the blinded Israelites, Paul and all saints have a clear view of the glory of Jesus Christ.
 1. The "we all" here are Christians, for they are distinguished from the blinded Israelites in general.
 2. Though Paul did have a clearer view of Christ than did any other men (II Cor 4:5-7; Eph 3:1-12).
 3. The words, "with open face," are a contrast to Moses having a facial veil. Christians see the glory of Jesus Christ clearly in all the magnificent splendors of the perfections of God, without the obscure, vague, distorted, figurative shadows of Moses, illustrated by looking through a veil.
 4. The words, "as in a glass," refer to the perfect reflection in a good mirror (I Cor 13:12; Jas 1:23).
 5. The full, magnificent glory of Jesus Christ is revealed by the gospel to all believing Christians.
 6. Yet, as soon as we open chapter four, we shall read of Gentiles blinded to Christ's glory (4:3-4).
 7. Jesus Christ is the express image and glory of God the Father to believers (Heb 1:3; John 1:14).
- B. The Spirit of the Lord, the One Who writes in our hearts, is the source of all spiritual growth (3:3).
 1. Regeneration by the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit is necessary to see anything (John 3:3), and any growth beyond that first view of Christ's kingdom requires the Spirit of God (Eph 1:17).
 2. Salvation is to conform men to Christ's image, who is the image of God (Rom 8:29; Col 3:10).
 3. By Spirit power and the gospel, we are changed to His likeness by degrees, from glory to glory.
 4. The Spirit's divine power gave us all things for life, godliness, glory, and virtue (II Peter 1:3-4).
 5. Paul thanked God for saving the Thessalonians from the lies of Antichrist and to the glory of Christ, and he ascribed it to the Spirit's sanctification and his gospel preaching (II Thess 2:9-14).
 6. Preaching the gospel reveals the glory of God in Jesus Christ shined into our hearts (II Co 4:4-7).
 7. God gave glory to Jesus Christ as His Son, and similar glory to us as His sons (John 17:22; 1:14).
 8. How much glory is possible by growing in Christ? Joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Pet 1:8).
 9. Once God has begun this work in one of His elect, He will continue to perfect it, as long as we are working out what He has worked in; we are not fatalists (Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; 3:8-14).
 10. Paul sought perfection of the Thessalonian saints in every way (I Thess 3:11-13; 4:1; 5:23-24).
 11. Yet we also take the word of God and grow in the grace in Christ Jesus (I Pet 2:1-3; II Pet 3:18).
 12. There are dimensions of Christ's glory we are to seek by the power of the Spirit (Eph 3:14-19).
 13. Our duty and goal is to grow and progress in Jesus Christ until all things are new (Rom 6:4; 12:1-2; 13:14; II Cor 5:17; Gal 5:6; 6:14-16; Ep 4:22-24; Col 1:25-29; 3:10; II Pet 1:3-11; 3:18).
 14. And a day is coming in which we shall be fully and finally glorified and made fit for heaven!

Conclusion:

1. It is to fulfill this last verse in you that we have recently embarked on a sermon series entitled *Higher Ground*.
2. If we choose to be *strangers and pilgrims* in the earth, then let us grow in the glory of Christ (I Pet 2:11-12).
3. The real evidence of a minister's calling is the spiritual fruit in the lives of his hearers (3:1-3; Matt 7:15-20).
4. We have a holy duty to be living epistles of Jesus Christ, which declares the gospel to all (3:2; Matt 5:16).
5. The pure and true religion of Jesus Christ is of the heart, not merely outward knowledge or reformation.
6. We are entirely dependent on the Spirit of God in our hearts for any good that is acceptable to God.
7. Christ's ministers should have an emphasis on the New Testament, for it is the spiritual message of life.
8. Ministers of the gospel have the greatest office and work in the world – declaring the glory of God in Christ.
9. What folly to go to the law for any spiritual benefit, since it was the ministration of death and condemnation.
10. A required trait of New Testament ministers must be a clear, plain, manifest presentation of the gospel (3:12).
11. Many read even the New Testament with little or no understanding of what they read, for they are blinded.
12. The purpose of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and our salvation is to be conformed to the image of Christ.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "[Living Epistles](#)," which uses II Cor 3:1-18 to teach practical living of Christ before the world.
2. The sermon outline, "[Higher Ground](#)," which identifies those areas or aspects of the gospel demanding our growth.
3. The sermon outline, "[The Prophets of God](#)," which details the glorious work of God's ministers in revealing the truth.
4. The sermon outline, "[The Mysteries of Hidden Wisdom](#)," details the glorious revelation of truth through the gospel.
5. The sermon outline, "[The Great Mystery of Godliness](#)," which explains the glorious gospel of I Timothy 3:16.