

"THE TRAGEDY OF FADED GLORY vs. THE WONDER OF PERMANENT GLORY"



TEXT: 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

THESIS: To contrast the Old Covenant with the New Covenant.

INTRO.: A. We have all seen the brightness of the full moon in the fall and admired its beauty. But we have also seen how that same brightness fades when the sun rises. Both the sun & moon are visible, but there is no comparison in their brightness. The sun blazes and the brightness of the moon fades.

B. Paul reveals something similar as he compares the Law and the Gospel. The Law in all its original glory pales in its brightness when placed alongside the brilliance of the Gospel. It is the comparison between the Old Covenant next to the New Covenant.

I. FADING GLORY: v.7

A. The Ministry Of Death: (The O.T. Law)

1. Condemnation: (cf. v.9)

ILLUS.: The law always condemns the guilty. We have all seen the police cruiser suddenly appear in our rear view mirror and the first thing we do is check the speedometer & make sure our seat belts are buckled! Last night I was in back of a man about to run a red light. Half way through the intersection, he stopped & slowly backed up. I wondered what stopped him & when I looked to my left & I saw a police car!

- a. Paul uses the 10 Commandments ("...engraven in stones") as representative of the entire Law of God.
- b. He speaks of the glory that accompanied the Law.

ILLUS.: Though only Moses was permitted on Mt. Sinai, Israel encamped below saw & heard the *"thunder and lightning, darkness & death."* And when Moses came down from the Mt. his face glowed.

Exodus 34:29-30 *And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.*

- c. But the glory on Moses face faded just as the Law itself would fade.

ILLUS.: Somehow the glory of God in the face-to-face experience Moses had w/the Lord, was transferred to Moses, so that the people could not even look at him. He had to place a veil over his face. This was all connected with the giving of the Law, so that Paul writes of its glory, even though it was a fading glory.

- 1) The Law was glorious in the manner in which it was given.
- 2) It was glorious in its purity.

Romans 7:12-14 *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

3) It was glorious in the rituals associated with it.

II. EXCELLING GLORY: V.8-10

A. The Ministry Of The Spirit:

1. Justification:

- a. Paul now compares the glory of the ministry of the Spirit with the glory of the Law. V.8
- b. He says that the ministry of righteousness (of the Gospel) exceeds the ministry of condemnation.
- c. The ministry of the Gospel is a ministry of justification.

ILLUS.: Justification is operative for the believer due to his trust in the price of redemption paid by Christ on Calvary. It has nothing to do with the righteousness of the person, but everything to do with the righteousness of God. It deals with imputed righteousness based on acceptance of the finished work of Christ.

JUSTIFICATION

"A justified believer emerges from God's great courtroom with a consciousness that another, his Substitute, has borne his guilt and that he stands without accusation before God (8:1,33-34)"

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JUSTIFICATION

"Justification is a divine act whereby an infinitely Holy God judicially declares a believing sinner to be righteous and acceptable before Him because Christ has borne the sinner's sin on the cross and has become "to us . . . righteousness" (1 Cor 1:30; Rom 3:24). Justification springs from the fountain of God's grace (Titus 3:4-5). It is operative as the result of the redemptive and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who has settled all the claims of the law (Rom 3:24-25; 5:9). Justification is on the basis of faith and not by human merit or works (3:28-30; 4:5; 5:1; 2:16). In this marvelous operation of God the infinitely holy Judge judicially declares righteous the one who believes in Jesus (Rom 8:31-34).

(From The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (c) 1988.)

Occasionally there is an eclipse of the moon when the shadow of the earth comes between the sun and the moon. The light of the moon is hidden. So it is with the Law. The glorious light of the Gospel has eclipsed the light of the Law. The Law had its glory but it is overshadowed by the glory of the Gospel.

III. PERMANENT GLORY: v.11

A. The Ministry Of Life: (The N.T. Dispensation)

1. Redemption:

- a. The Law is still holy & just and good, but it is totally eclipsed by the grace of God in the Gospel of Christ which provides redemption to the believer.
- b. The Law has been "done away" & replaced by **"that which remaineth glorious."**
- c. There is a permanence of the Gospel which was never intended for the Law.
- d. The Law was our **"schoolmaster"** to bring us to Christ; i.e., it taught us limitations of the flesh, that we could not keep the righteous Law & had to come to Christ for redemption.
- e. The Law was by nature full of symbols, pictures, types and signs directing us or pointing us to **"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."**
- f. Glory is a permanent attribute of that which Jesus purchased w/His blood; it will never fade or pass away.

QUOTE: O. Greene: "The splendor that accompanied the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai – the bright, shining face of Moses, the rituals & institutions of the Mosaic economy – passed as the grace of God took over. The law was not intended to be permanent. It was to serve only until the Lamb of God came. The law was attended by much that was splendid and magnificent, but permanency was never part of it. The law as destined to be fulfilled and cease to be in power."

CONCL.: "THE TRAGEDY OF FADED GLORY" has been replaced by "THE WONDER OF PERMANENT GLORY." Praise the Lord we don't have to bring animals to sacrifice, to abide by long lists of do's & don'ts to be saved or stay saved!

We are trusting in the shed blood of Christ alone to deal with our sins! We have gone from condemnation to justification and redemption!