

## 2 Corinthians 3

### 2 Corinthians 3.1-3

**V1** – Paul is defending his ministry, which was being attacked by the Judaizing teachers

-**Who were the Judaizing teachers?** False teachers claiming to be "Christians," but they were trying to bind things from the Old Testament on the New Testament Christians

-Paul: "Do some think I am patting myself on the back?"

-A possible reference to *2 Cor. 2.17* – **A self-compliment?**

-Paul had foes at Corinth and maybe figured they would take *2 Cor. 2.17* as being egotistical--

**Are we all familiar with the practice of a person taking a letter of recommendation with him when he moves to another congregation?**

-It is practiced by some congregations today, but not enough

-When a person moves into our area and wants to place membership at a congregation, the elders should ask for a letter from the previous church, or the new family should bring such a letter with them = **See Romans 16.1-2** - concerning Phoebe

"*Some*" in *v 1* – a reference to the false teachers at Corinth – They wanted letters of recommendation for the church at Corinth from Paul

-They were saying sarcastically, "Where is Paul's letter of recommendation?"

Scriptural basis for such a letter:

-*Romans 16.1-2* – Paul's letter for Phoebe

-*1 Cor. 16.3* – "with letters" – certify the men

-*Acts 18.26-28* – letters for Apollos

-*Acts 9.26-27* – a verbal letter

-*1 Cor. 16.10* – Paul's endorsement of Timothy

-There are many other references to gospel writers commending someone at a certain church

**What are the advantages of such letters?** It keeps charlatans and false teachers from going from congregation to congregation and causing trouble

**V2** – **What was Paul's letter of recommendation?** The church at Corinth

-Paul's deep love for the Corinthians is seen here

-Corinth was the center of travel; other Christians knew about his work there

-It was widely known in the church of the first century

**V3** – **What comparison did he make here?** False teachers = written letters = Old Testament

-Paul = spiritual letter (Corinthian church) = New Testament

-Therefore, Paul doesn't need a letter of recommendation – the church is his letter, written on the human heart, not on tablets of stone

### 2 Corinthians 3.4-6

**V4-5** – **What is Paul saying about his success at Corinth?**

-*1 Cor. 3.6* – *I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth*

**V6** – The Old Testament = letter (outward action counted)

-New Testament = the spirit (the heart counts)

- Why does the letter kill? We can never keep it perfectly
- Read Heb. 12.18-24 – Comparison of Old Covenant and New Covenant (what a contrast!)

## **2 Corinthians 3.7-11**

**V7** – "If" – **Did it come this way?** Yes, they could not look at the face of Moses

**V8** – **How glorious was the New Covenant going to be?** More so

**V9** – **Did the Old Testament have value ("glory")?** Read Gal. 3.24

-How would we be worse off without the Old Testament? Great moral lessons, great examples of faith, Heb. 11, etc.

**V10** – But the New Testament far surpasses the glory of the Old Testament

**V11** – The Old Testament had faded away – the New Testament would always be glorious

**Conclusion for v 1-11** – Paul's ministry was based on the New Testament – it was far superior to anyone's preaching based on the Old Testament (he is attacking the Judaizing teachers)

## **2 Corinthians 3.12-18**

**V12** – **Two effects of preaching from the New Testament?**

1. **Hope** – **How can we have more hope under the New Covenant?** We can stand justified in God's eyes

2. **Boldness in our preaching**

-Remember the veil of Moses – See Exod. 34.28-35

-There was no veil over Paul's face – He could preach the truth the way it really was – no holding back

**V13** – The Children of Israel could not look directly at the face of Moses

-**Explain: "The end of what was fading away"** The Old Testament

**V14** – **Old Testament prophecies about Jesus?** Gen. 3.15, Isaiah 7.14, Isaiah 53, Micah 5.2

-**Did the Jews ever get the veil lifted?** No

-It is the same today – the vast majority of the Jews still cannot see Christ in the Old Testament (the veil is still there, whenever we try to talk to them about Christ)

**V15** – They reject the very Christ that Moses and the prophets wrote about

**V16** – **Purpose of the Old Law?** To lead people to Christ

**V17** – **In what sense is there liberty in the New Covenant?** Romans 6.1 – We are changed into new people

-That never really happened under the Old Covenant – there was no action similar to

baptism, no sanctification, no transformed people

**V18** – The image of Christ is reflected off of a mirror (the word of the New Testament) - we become like that image as we see him in the New Testament

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