

• LESSON 11 (March 15) •

We All, With Unveiled Face, Are Being Transformed

Christians have been granted extraordinary access to the throne of divine grace. Jesus, the Lamb provided by God, has become our high priest. Entering once for all into the holy places by means of his own blood, Jesus has secured an eternal redemption and inaugurated a new and better covenant “enacted on better promises” (Heb 8:6).



But what makes this new covenant better? It's important that disciples of Jesus know the answer to that question. Consider these better promises and blessings from 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 • We Are the Aroma of Christ to God

Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.

- The LORD repeatedly described the sacrificial offerings of the Israelites as “a pleasing aroma” (Exo 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18; Num 15:3, 7, 10, 13-14, 24; 18:17; 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27; 29:2, 6, 8, 13, 36). What then does Paul mean when he describes Christians as “the aroma of Christ”?
- This “aroma” spreads to saint and sinner alike—“to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.” What does this mean?
- In what way is this new “aroma” better than the Old Testament offerings?

2 Corinthians 3 • We All, With Unveiled Face, Are Being Transformed

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation,

written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered 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.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

- In what way are living “letters from Christ” written on tablets of human hearts better than what had been written on tablets of stone in the days of Moses?
- Paul is referencing Exodus 34:29-35 as he describes the shining face of Moses in 2 Corinthians 3. “We are very bold,” but not like Moses. What is Paul’s point in 3:4-17?
- What is “the same veil” that remains “unlifted” over the hearts of some today (3:14)?
- What glorious truth is being unveiled by the Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:18?

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 • We Are the Temple of the Living God

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing;
then I will welcome you,
and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty.”

- What should we make of the Spirit’s stark warning in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16?
- In what way are Christians “the temple of the living God”?
- How is this new reality a better promise of a much better covenant?
- The Holy Spirit of God also led the apostle Peter to describe Christians in terms of a new and better temple (1 Pet 2:4-5). We are “living stones” being built on the cornerstone of Jesus Christ into a “spiritual house.” How does that figure, along with 1 Peter 2:9-10, amplify the good news of transformation in 2 Corinthians 3:18?

CLOSING THOUGHT: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2).