

THE MINISTRY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT | 2 CORINTHIANS 3:6-18

- Verses 6-8 included in session 6
- Verse 9 -
 - The **ministration of condemnation** is (presumably) the same as the **ministration of death** in verse 7, and thus the old covenant of the Law (because it was **written and engraven in stones**, v. 7).
 - The Law did have its **glory**, in that it was a gracious provision of God to preserve the nation of Israel until Christ (Gal. 3:24) and thus was **holy, and just, and good** (Rom. 7:12).
 - If this is the glory of the Law, then the **ministration of righteousness** (i.e.: the New Covenant) has **much more...glory**.
 - Note that the present tense of verse 9 (concerning the **ministration of righteousness**) does not negate the future tense argument of verse 8.
 - In Greek, the verb is omitted for the first part of the sentence, but is an assumed present-tense verb (as in the KJV), even though the glory of the Law is past-tense.
 - In the same way, we would say, "If the past *be* glorious, the future *is* so much more glorious." Furthermore, verse 9 contains the same argument as verses 7-8, in condensed version.
- Verse 10 -
 - Paul says that the Law had glory, but **no glory in this respect**, that is, in the respect of **righteousness** (v. 9), because there is a **glory that excelleth** that makes the previous glory just a shadow.
- Verse 11 -
 - This verse can become confusing due to tenses.
 - By necessity, the translator must insert some tense-verbs.
 - The Law **is done away** (KJV), but the Greek is a *present passive participle*. The translation **is done away** makes it into a past, not present.
 - A literal rendering would be *that which is being done away*, thus Young's Literal says, "that which is being made useless."
 - Tense is important because Paul *has not put the glory of the law completely in the past* yet also has declared us to be **delivered from the law** (Rom. 7:4). How can the glory of law not be totally **done away** and yet we are totally **delivered** from it?
 - In like manner, he spoke of the Law in Hebrews 8:13 as that **that which decayeth and waxeth old** (using present passive participles) **is ready to vanish away** (literally, it is "near disappearing")?
 - Since Paul wrote the Book of Hebrews about 68-69 AD, *he still considered the Law to be at least partially in effect, but ready to vanish away*.
 - Paul wrote 2 Corinthians about 57-58AD, ten years earlier than Hebrews.
 - If the law was not presently **done away**, then for whom was it in effect?
 - I would propose that it was in effect for the same (and only) people to whom it was *ever* in effect: the Jewish nation.
 - It was in effect, yet *not for individual salvation* (for it never served that purpose), but for *messianic invitation*.
 - Even Peter encouraged the Jewish nation to display **good works** so that in **the day of visitation** the [unsaved] gentiles would **glorify God** (1 Pet. 2:12).

- Note: I have long taught that there is a period of transition with the revelation of the *mystery* of individual salvation, as the law *faded away* and the message of grace became prominent. A literal translation of the tenses of verse 11 would lend support to this idea.
- How does this concept correspond with Galatians 3:24-25, which teach that there is no need for the law now that **faith is come**?
 - The purpose of the book of Galatians is to teach individual salvation, an area in which the law is not (and never was) pertinent.
 - The purpose in 2 Corinthians 6:6-18 is to teach the New Covenant, not individual salvation, thus the context separates these passages, and the context for the New Covenant is always *national* and not *individual*.
- Even if one rejects this transitional view of the Law, there must be sufficient explanation as to why Paul said that the Law is "being made useless" (YLT) rather than "has been made useless."
 - The *present passive participle* must be addressed.
 - The same form is used in 1 Corinthians 2:6, speaking of the **princes of this world, that come to nought** (notice it is not *have come to nought* but *will or are coming to nought*).
- Summary: In Paul's day, **we are delivered from the law** (Rom. 7:6 - using an aorist verb, not a present) but the Law was **ready to vanish away** (Heb. 8:13) and still had a national purpose.
- Verse 12 -
 - The "we" has not been used since verse 5 (and "us" in v. 6), so Paul is again speaking of himself, Timothy, and Silvanus (see 1:19).
 - Paul speaks of **such hope**, using the word ἐλπίς [elpis], a word that is entirely based in the future and not in present reality.
 - The hope he speaks of is the hope **of the new testament** (v. 6), which is a *future* hope, not a present reality.
 - For the Jewish nation, the *hope* of the future was (and is) the New Covenant.