

¹² Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, 2 Corinthians 3:12 The hope that Paul is referring to that should cause us to be very bold is that we are recipients of the new covenant. We have the answer that has been sought throughout the history of mankind. We know how to be right with God and have the promise of heaven. We have a glory greater than the shining face of Moses. We bring the words of life to a desperate and dying world. The life of Christ in us will work through us to bring light into the darkness of this world (Matthew 5:14ⁱ). We should be very bold, gracious but bold!

Too often I have hesitated to bring up Jesus in a conversation. You say His name and people are taken aback. They may mock you for your “ignorant” belief, or tell you how they have evolved beyond that, or say they know Him when all they know is some Jesus of their imagination. How they will respond does not matter. We have the living Christ in us, so let His glory shine (Isaiah 60:1ⁱⁱ). Say the words He gives you. Love them unconditionally. Share how He changed your life. Listen to them, but then tell them what the Word of God says about their belief. Tell them how much God loves them. Why? ...because *we have such a hope, we are very bold!*

We should never be obnoxious. Do not sound like a know it all or talk down to anyone. Patiently hear their opinions and ask questions to understand them. But then we should boldly give them Jesus as the answer to our greatest need (Philippians 4:19ⁱⁱⁱ). If you are confident in Christ toward God (vs 4^{iv}), and if He is your sufficiency (vs 5^v), if He has made you a sufficient minister of the new covenant of the Spirit who gives life (vs 6^{vi}), and you are a recipient of the permanently glorious new covenant (vs 11^{vii}), why would we not have a hope that causes us to be very bold? If the fruit of the Spirit is shining through us, it is bound to leave an impression (Galatians 5:22,23^{viii}).

People with beliefs that are illogical and have no basis in real history will confront us with boldness and self-assurance. We need to mature to the point that we are even more confident in the Lord and His Word to lovingly respond with holy boldness as He prompts us. It is not often the facts that convince someone, but the power of the Holy Spirit that brings the right verse or question for them and shows them genuine concern.

¹³ 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. 2 Corinthians 3:13 Paul contrasts our hope, boldness, and glory with that of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai and the glory of the Lord shone on his face. He put a veil over his face so the people would stop staring at him (Exodus 34:33^{ix}). That shining glory faded over time. Paul is saying that is like the glory of the old covenant of laws that came to an end when Jesus established the new covenant in His blood. Like the fading glory on Moses’ face, the glory of the law faded as the people found it to be a yoke of bondage. Surely, it gave them a better life than the cultures around them and pictured what was to come, but it became a tedious duty and men added thousands of rules around the 613 laws. They referred to their rules as a hedge to keep them from accidentally breaking the law. That made it even more burdensome. They needed to hear Jesus tell them that loving God with your all and your neighbor as yourself fulfilled all the laws of God (Matthew 22:37-40^x). But who can live that without the infilling of the Holy Spirit? And so, the glory of the old covenant faded until what was permanently glorious came: the new covenant.

¹⁴ 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. 2 Corinthians 3:14 Paul compares the veil over Moses' face to the veil that is over the mind of the Jewish people when they read the old covenant. The veil kept the people from seeing the glory on Moses' face fade. The veil over their minds keeps them from seeing the glory of the law fade. The veil is reinforced by rabbinical teaching that tells them to not even look at the "cursed" new covenant. It tells them Jesus was the bastard son of a Roman soldier and that He practiced sorcery. They avoid saying His name in Hebrew because it means salvation. Instead, they turn it into a derogatory term, yeshu, an acronym for "may his name and memory be obliterated."^{xi} This is just one example of how rabbis reinforce the veil, further hardening Jewish minds.

The results are a desperate effort to rely on works, which is a distortion of the law that is meant to convict us and show us the need for a Savior. It is the same with all false religions: "Do these things and God will accept you." That is to bring God down from His holy righteousness and have Him ignore the need for justice. Being holy is not a credit added to your soul like a gold star or so many points. Does a good deed outweigh a bad one? **Goodness is simply what we should do (1 Peter 1:15,16^{xii})!** But they have no answer for our sins. They say to repent, but why should God accept our repentance? Are five Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys enough to nullify our rebellious acts? Are the five pillars of Islam enough for a holy God? Is repentance alone enough? The only *just* reason to forgive us is that Jesus took our sin and the judgment we deserve upon Himself (Isaiah 53:6^{xiii}). That is why Paul concluded, *only through Christ is the veil taken away.*

The veil of good works being good enough for God is not just a Jewish problem. It is worldwide. The standard is Jesus. The standard is not if we are better than Jeffrey Dahmer, Hitler, or the guy next door. Isaiah learned that when Jesus lifted the veil from his eyes. Isaiah 5 is a chapter filled with Isaiah condemning his culture for all their sins. Then in chapter six he saw the Lord and repented for the sins that rolled out of his own mouth (Isaiah 6:5^{xiv}). It became personal. Through Christ the veil is taken away. His repentance was only accepted because the day would come when Jesus would take the sins of Isaiah and yours and mine upon Himself (Isaiah 53:4,5^{xv}).

Jesus is lifting the veil around the world today because we are nearing the end of the age (Luke 21:24^{xvi}). In Israel and in Islamic nations closed to missionaries, Jesus is revealing Himself to people who are seeking the truth. And when they see Him, like Isaiah saw Him, the veil is removed. They realize their good deeds are not good enough. In fact, the most reported words of Jesus that people say He spoke to them is right out of John 14:6^{xvii}. They suddenly realize their rules or the five pillars of Islam or all their good deeds have been a veil, and what they really need is a Savior who loves them and gave Himself for them (Ephesians 5:2^{xviii}).

In Israel, one of the most respected rabbis of our time, Yitzhak Kaduri, had a revelation of the Messiah in 2003. Then just before he died at the age of 108, he gave the disciples he was mentoring a sealed envelope and told them to lock it away until one year after his death as it had the name of the Messiah. When they finally opened the envelope, they posted the cryptic note on the group's internet site. For two weeks no one questioned the message. They just did not understand it. Then someone finally saw the first letter of each word spelled out Yehoshua, the Hebrew name for Jesus. Suddenly the Jewish world was in an uproar trying to disprove it. Meanwhile Rabi Kaduri's disciples began

evangelizing. I think it was probably a tract in Hebrew from these disciples that Michael's brother found one night on his way home. It asked which rabbi said he is a light to the world? Which rabbi said he was the only way to the Father? Which rabbi healed the sick with his touch, and on and on. Then it invited people to come to a congregation to find out. Jews are seeing visions of Jesus, like the Muslims do, and the veil is lifting. Never in history have so many Jews and Muslims had the veil lifted from their eyes by a revelation of Jesus. Only through Christ is it taken away.

¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 2

Corinthians 3:15 The reaction to the Rabbi Kaduri revelation was swift and strong. They tried to discredit it. Kaduri's own son took the note and put it in acid and threw it into the Dead Sea. Why did he not have the writing analyzed to prove it was a fraud? A well-known rabbi and radio voice in Israel, Rabbi Singer, denounced it and claiming it was a fraud. But where was all the skepticism the first two weeks it was posted before they realized the message within? No one doubted the authenticity then. Even in Sedona, Rabbi Singer's denunciation of the revelation keeps local Jews from receiving the revelation and missing the hundreds of Messianic predictions in the Old Testament that line up with the life of Jesus.

If Jesus was not the Messiah, where is the line of David promised to produce the Messiah? I only know of one man who claims to be able to prove his lineage back to David and he wants to be a king, not a messiah. The most troubling passage for those who deny Jesus is the Messiah is found in Daniel 9:26^{xix}. It predicted that the Messiah would be killed before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Anyone claiming to be the Messiah since then would have to be a fraud.

Jews for Jesus in Israel approach their fellow Jews with a Hebrew Old Testament and read to them Isaiah 53 and ask them who it is about. Sometimes the listener responds by telling them they should not be reading the Christian Bible. Then they show the person it is from their prophet Isaiah. Their own acknowledgement that it describes Jesus convicts them. That is why the Torah schools and the readings in the synagogues do not study Isaiah 53. But they cannot stop the veil from lifting!

¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 2 Corinthians 3:16 Paul took Exodus 34:34^{xx} and slightly reworded it. In that passage, Moses would take off his veil when he went into the tent of meeting to commune with the Lord. Paul wrote that when one turns to the Lord, as Moses turned to enter the tent of meeting, the veil is removed just as Moses removed his veil before the Lord. When a Jew starts to open their heart to the fact that Jesus may be the Messiah, only then are they willing to look at all the prophecies that were fulfilled in His life. Even more importantly, they realize the ultimate sacrifice for their sins has already been slain and they can have peace with God. Michael told me he cried for a week when he realized Jesus was his Savior. All he wants to do now is to evangelize his people. The prediction that the 144,000 will be Jews does not surprise me at all (Revelation 7:4^{xxi} 14:4,5^{xxii}). I see their zeal once they realize the truth. The pressure of the Law and the Jewish animosity toward Christians only makes the freedom in Christ even more glorious. That is what happened to the apostle who wrote this letter to the Corinthians. He is describing his own experience.

We should understand that Jews have a reason to be skeptical. Christians, and I use that word "Christian" in the sense of culture not faith, have persecuted Jews as Christ killers. But their persecutors were not followers of Jesus who told us to love our enemies

(Matthew 5:44^{xxiii}). Did you know that when Iranians become believers, they suddenly find that they love the Jewish people, people who they once wanted to destroy? Recently the Jewish people are finding they have a friend in the followers of Jesus.

You will notice in our culture that those who like to call everyone a bigot are often bigoted against the Jews. They side with terrorists. The Jewish people are as diverse as Christians. There are liberal secular Jews who hate the Orthodox. There are Orthodox who think the secular Jews are keeping the Messiah from coming and are destroying the faith. And there is everything in between, including those who do not think there should be a Jewish nation. When we speak with Jews, we can remind them of their diversity to help them understand the diversity within Christianity.

There is a shift taking place in the Israeli attitude toward Christians. They see Christian organizations feeding the poor in Israel and serving in the military. It would have been unthinkable just a decade ago to have Christians of rank in the military or parliament, but now it is accepted. The veil is lifting. It is a fascinating time to be alive!

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 2 Corinthians 3:17 Hallelujah! We are free from the constant worry about whether we are breaking a rule. Jesus has fulfilled the Law for us and given us His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21^{xxiv}). We are free not to do what our old nature desires, but to walk in the Spirit and let the Spirit behind the law guide us in the path of righteousness. Our load of guilt is lifted when we come to the cross and cast it upon our Savior.

Someone once said that the problem with humanity is that our wanter is broken. We desire all the wrong things. But when we come to Christ, the big change is the Spirit of God lives in us to fix our wanter. We begin to have a distaste for the old desires and want to know God's Word and let Him live in us. We want to experience His love and love Him in return. We want to be more like Jesus every day that passes. That is freedom from the old nature that kept us in bondage to desires that were ultimately harmful to us. Those old desires sometimes brought momentary pleasure, but they never fulfilled us like we hoped they would. And the cost is always more than we expected.

The Lord who lifted the veil is the Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are our Lord. When He takes up residence in us, we are free from the old things that held us back from being who God created us to be. We are free to say no to sin and yes to the Spirit. We are free to experience the fruits of the Spirit and reject selfishness, discouragement, and pessimism.

¹⁸ 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. 2 Corinthians 3:18 This is one of my favorite verses. The veil is lifted by the Lord when we turn to Him. Our heart softens and then we begin to see Him in His Word and in the details of lives. We see the amazing coordination of circumstances that had to have been orchestrated by God, and we are instruments in God's hands for Him to touch people through us.

We also behold the glory of the Lord in the beauty of creation. Our educational system has really done a number on us to dull us to the glory of God all around us. The heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1^{xxv}). An astronomer explains that what we see is all just a big cosmic explosion without meaning, and stardust just came together in the right way to form the incredible instruction manual for life that we call DNA. "No need to wonder at the glory of God in living things, for it is all an accident," they say.

But our faces have been unveiled and we see the absurdity in their explanations to try to discredit our wondrous Creator. No, we *can* see the glory of God in all created things. And as we behold the glory of God in His creation, in prayer, in circumstances, and in the Word, we are increasingly transformed. The Greek word is metamorphoo - transformation from a worm to a butterfly. One day that will be physically true (1 Corinthians 15:51,52^{xxvi}), but right now that should be taking place in our spirits as we behold the glory of the Lord and are changed *from one degree of glory to another*.

When Moses came down from the mountain, he did not know that his face shone (Exodus 34:29^{xxvii}). In a similar way when we spend time with the Lord, we will not be aware that people see something of the glory of the Lord upon us as we manifest the fruits of the Spirit. It just becomes an increasing part of our behavior and way of living. The likeness of Christ is seen in us (2 Corinthians 4:10^{xxviii}). That is what the Holy Spirit is doing in us if we are beholding the glory of the Lord (Ezekiel 36:26^{xxix}).

From one degree of glory to another we are changed. It does not happen all at once, but little by little. Yes, the old is gone and the new has come at the moment of salvation (2 Corinthians 5:17^{xxx}) but working that out in our speech and actions takes time. Trees do not mature in a week or a month. Their roots need time to grow. Old habits sometimes die hard. Patterns of thinking take time to be changed by meditating in the Word of God. Reliance on self must sometimes be broken by hardship and defeats. But it is a work of the Spirit, and He is consistent and faithful.

You say you want to speed up the process. You are tired of the old man or woman taking back over the throne of your heart. Then slow down and spend more time beholding the glory of the Lord. Let Him speak to you in His Word. Marvel at the goodness of God in your life and in creation. See how He intervenes in your days and stop and give Him praise as you behold His glory. And the more you do, the transformation will come from the Lord who is the Spirit. That is the same as saying that the transformation will come from our Master who is the Spirit. Learn to sense His voice, His gentle taps on the shoulder, His stirring within and stop, be still, and behold the glory of the Lord (Psalm 46:10^{xxxi}).

Principal Rainy challenged the congregation at the Communion Table in Edinburgh with the following words: "Do you believe your faith?" he asked; 'do you believe this I am telling you? Do you believe a day is coming, really coming, when you will stand before the throne of God, and the angels will whisper together and say, 'How like Christ he is!' That is not easy to believe. And yet not to believe is blasphemy. For that, - not less than that, is what Christ promises."^{xxxii} Church, behold His glory and be changed from glory to glory. If you really want to change, behold His glory!

Questions:

- 1 Why should we have holy boldness? 2 How is that manifested?
- 3 To what does Paul compare the glory on Moses' face?
- 4 Compare the glory of the old covenant with that of the new.
- 5 Why is there a veil over the Jews when they read the Law?
- 6 How is the veil removed? 7 How did the actions of "Christians" reinforce the veil?
- 8 How can we help change the impression they have of Christians?
- 9 To what liberty are we set free?
- 10 How do we become more Christlike?

ⁱ **Matthew 5:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

ⁱⁱ **Isaiah 60:1 (ESV)**

¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Philippians 4:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

^{iv} **2 Corinthians 3:4 (ESV)**

⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.

^v **2 Corinthians 3:5 (ESV)**

⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God,

^{vi} **2 Corinthians 3:6 (ESV)**

⁶ 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.

^{vii} **2 Corinthians 3:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

^{viii} **Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)**

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

^{ix} **Exodus 34:33 (ESV)**

³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

^x **Matthew 22:37-40 (ESV)**

³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

^{xi} Carl Gallups, *The Rabbi, the Secret Message, and the Identity of Messiah*, pg 57

^{xii} **1 Peter 1:15-16 (ESV)**

¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

^{xiii} **Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)**

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

^{xiv} **Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)**

⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

^{xv} **Isaiah 53:4-5 (ESV)**

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

^{xvi} **Luke 21:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

^{xvii} **John 14:6 (ESV)**

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

^{xviii} **Ephesians 5:2 (ESV)**

² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

^{xix} **Daniel 9:26 (ESV)**

²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.

^{xx} **Exodus 34:34 (ESV)**

³⁴ Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded,

^{xxi} **Revelation 7:4 (ESV)**

⁴ And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

^{xxii} **Revelation 14:4-5 (ESV)**

⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

^{xxiii} **Matthew 5:44 (ESV)**

⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

^{xxiv} **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{xxv} **Psalms 19:1 (ESV)**

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

^{xxvi} **1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (ESV)**

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

^{xxvii} **Exodus 34:29 (ESV)**

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.

^{xxviii} **2 Corinthians 4:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

^{xxix} **Ezekiel 36:26 (ESV)**

²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

^{xxx} **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

^{xxxi} **Psalms 46:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

^{xxxii} A. J. Gossip, *From the Edge of the Crowd* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.), p. 12.^{xxxii}