

## Christ Alone

(Part III – The Ministry Dynamic)

### Today's Lesson Goal

Our series premise is that Jesus is our only sufficient source for all things that pertain to life and godliness. We have been discovering some unique, Christ centered, New Covenant dynamics. They include the *abiding dynamic (having especially to do with our power with God)*, the *resurrection dynamic (having especially to do with our spiritual warfare)*, and, most recently, *the glory versus suffering dynamic (having especially to do with our power in witness)*. Today, we are expanding that glory versus suffering discussion as we learn how our New Covenant ministry is authenticated in real, day to day life. We want to sculpt a more biblical world view in a matter of a few minutes, so fasten your seatbelt.

### Our Session Outline

**Introduction. I. The Old Glory Contrasted.** (2 Cor. 3:3-7, Exodus 19:17-19, Exodus 20:18, and back to 2 Cor. 3:7-10) **II. The New Glory Explained.** (2 Cor. 3:12-17) **III. The New Glory Experienced.** (2 Cor. 3:18, 4:1-6, and multiple N.T. passages)

### Introduction:

In June of 1963 I was hiking in the Idaho mountains with a few fellow students near Preston. After following a fast-flowing stream, I'll never forget arriving at the source, where its fresh flowing waters were literally gushing out of the side of the mountain. You and I have been on a similar biblical journey, locating wonderful artesian sources of real living waters, the kind which bring real refreshment and enablement to our walk.

**The Big Library.** The word Bible means library, and that is exactly what the Bible is. It is a collection of sixty-six books woven together so seamlessly as to really form only one marvelous book.

**The Big Promises.** This marvelous melding of sixty-six books into one seamless work is possible because all the scriptures are fabricated upon the framework of promises which God calls covenants. Three of these covenants form the framework for the whole Bible, much like a modern skyscraper is built upon its own framework.

These covenants are the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant - commonly called the Old Covenant or Old Testament, and the New Covenant, commonly called the New Testament. Both the Old and New Covenants are based upon the Abrahamic Covenant, a covenant which teaches

that all men must come to God by faith, and not by their personal goodness or works. In that way, these three covenants are alike.

However, what makes the *New Covenant* unique from the Old Covenant is far more than mere history. Like the Old Covenant, it is based upon the Abrahamic Covenant requiring us to be justified by faith, but unlike the Old Covenant, it requires that all men come to God by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Men must now come to God through Christ alone. Only Jesus can save. The first four books of the New Testament introduce God's Son and help us bridge all the covenants, not just the big three.

**The Big Mistake.** For many Christians, the discussion ends here. They preach from both sections of their Bibles, placing equal emphasis upon both halves, and by doing so they miss a very critical point. Because of the coming of Christ, the dynamics of the New Covenant are drastically different than the Old. We may accurately say that while wells may be found in the Old, whole rivers gush forth from the New.

The New Covenant is immensely powerful. It is dynamic. Unlike the Old Covenant which showed us our sin and pointed us to the coming Christ with its aquifers of truth, this New Covenant brings us to Him, offers Him to us as the all sufficient One who can meet our every need, and *empowers* us. This is the river bursting forth from the side of the mountain. He alone is abundantly sufficient. Do we sink wells into the aquifers of the Old Covenant? Of course, we do, but we do so especially to showcase the Person, plan, and program of our New Covenant Christ.

This series has been about *dynamics*. In a sentence, it has been about those powerful, life empowering truths which flow from the New Testament alone. We introduced the glory of God in our last session where we gave you two news flashes. Whether in the Old Testament or the New, God always manifests His glory for a particular reason. From our earthly vantage, God always manifests His glory to *authenticate* His Person, His name, and His message. It is about authentication. Secondly, we discovered that whenever we see glory discussed in scripture it is always in the context of suffering. We now purpose to expand what we know about the glory of God and its association with suffering.

**The Big Difference.** Turn with me to 2 Corinthians, chapters three and four and prepare to scan these chapters. We are going to find a remarkable discussion about New Covenant ministry on these pages. Paul has been discussing and defending his own ministry explaining that it is necessary that the **sufferings** of Christ and **His afflictions** must abound (1:5 and 6) and reminding these Corinthians that his own ministry to them has been out of much affliction and anguish of heart.

Now, listen. He wants them to know that these sufferings and afflictions which both he and they are experiencing are the true evidence that his ministry is authentic. Unlike the charlatans and

hucksters around them who minister in deceitful ways (1:12), this New Covenant ministry is grace driven. As he winds up chapter 2, Paul makes it indelibly clear – there can only be two responses to the presence of suffering in ministry. Some (meaning the world) will see this suffering and affliction associated with the gospel as a sure token that God has no part in it, and that, at best, it is an evidence of His judgment. God’s people will always be seen as the offscouring of the world. That is one way to look at this strange phenomenon.

But there is a second way this sacrificial suffering and affliction associated with the gospel could be seen as just that. It could be a sweet savor, unto God (2:15). Now, in chapter three and four, Paul is going to explain to us exactly how this plays out with our **glory** and **suffering** discussion, and he will do it in a most amazing way. Look over this third chapter with me and I lift three main ideas about glory which Paul is bringing into the discussion:

### **I. The Old Glory Contrasted. (2 Cor. 3:3-7, Exodus 19:17-19, Exodus 20:18, and back to 2 Cor. 3:7-10)**

We have established that the very Corinthians to whom Paul is writing are *misinterpreting* his own struggles and afflictions as evidence that God is not behind his ministry. Paul, of course, is going to stress the very opposite. Those very struggles are authenticating His ministry – a very unhappy thought for the *name it and claim it* crowd.

In effect, Paul claims in **verse 1** - “*Do you really need letters of recommendation in order to approve me? You folks ARE my letter of recommendation. You have witnessed my ministry and are the products of it!*” And then, speaking of letters and epistles, Paul segways to where he has been heading all along in verse 3 with an ingenious contrast. We need to view verses 3-7 as a group.

*“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:” (2 Corinthians 3:3–7)*

**Verse 3:** You yourselves, are epistles of Christ, written not with ink but by the Holy Spirit, not in tables of stone (such as was the OLD Covenant first inscribed in what we call the Ten Commandments) but in the fleshy tables of their own heart.

**Verses 4-5:** Because this is true, we can boast of the sufficiency which is God-ward in Christ. In other words, He is sufficient. He alone authenticates our ministry.

**Verse 6:** The real, essence of the comparison becomes clear. Paul was not an administrator of the Old Covenant, but rather, of this New Covenant.

Now, this *contrast* provides a whole lot for you and me, as Gentiles, to chew on. We have **Two epistles**: Ten Commandments and the Corinthian believers. **Two: Styli**: The finger of God and the Spirit of God. **Two writing surfaces**: stone and flesh. And most importantly: **Two Covenants**, the Old and the New. **Two results**: One leads to death and one leads to life. Now, those are big differences. We have one more contrast to add to the mix:

Look at **verse 7 and 8** and notice we have **two glorious ministrations**: There are two manifestations of God's glory. There was a glory surrounding the Old Covenant, the ministration of death, and there is a glory surrounding the New Covenant, the ministration of the Spirit and of life. Paul is about to camp out on the differences in these glories.

Perhaps you are quietly asking, *"Help me out here, Jim! Are you really saying that the Ten Commandments were the ministration of death?"* We'll hear what Paul says, but notice the backstory first.

The story plays out in Exodus 19 and 20 when the Old Covenant was given, and it is the most terrifying story you can find anywhere, except at the cross. Verses 17-19 read:

*"And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." (Exodus 19:17-19)*

And, again, in **verse 18** of chapter 20:

*"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off." (Exodus 20:18)*

So, what is going on here? God is *authenticating* this covenant with an array of evidences of His glory, a scorching, terrifying, earth quaking, ear shattering glory emanating from a thick dark cloud which was emitting lightnings and voices. I can only imagine that every single hair of every Israelite was standing straight up as virtually every one of their senses were stimulated beyond capacity.

Further, you may be assured that the collective memory of Israel continues to be refreshed to this very day. This memory of God's authenticating glory was tattooed into the corporate DNA of Israel for all time.

Oh, and that's not all. Moses himself was exposed to that divine radiation, and he glowed. And this is no gentle glow on the face of a woman in waiting. This is an unspeakable glow. And the Bible says that as he came down out of that mount they covered or veiled his face immediately.

There was not a man, woman, or child anywhere in that multitude that doubted, for even one second, that they had just had an encounter with the living God who had revealed some of His glory to them. The glory of God had *authenticated* the message of this Old Covenant.

And yet! And yet! Get this now! And yet, Paul says, this was no big deal (my words)! That is, it was no big deal when this glory is *compared* to our glory, to the New Covenant glory!

We're back in 2 Corinthians now, looking at verses 7-10.

*"How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth."* (2 Corinthians 3:8-10)

Now, that's a contrast! As glorious as the Old Covenant was, it was nothing more than a 4<sup>th</sup> of July sparkler compared to the glory which is present in the ministration of the New Covenant!

I felt it my duty to teach my 19-year-old grandson a lesson in glory a few weeks ago. We had a very dim light in our storage room, and I could not see a thing. So, I picked up one of those new LED things from Costco which promises to shed 8,000 lumens, and I had Zac climb the ladder and screw it in for me. You know where this is heading. I "accidentally" turned on the switch and blinded my grandson on the spot. He is still carrying a cane, and he is still hurling unkind invectives. Now, that is one bright light, but if you will pardon the pun, it cannot hold a candle to this New Covenant glory. Frankly, I couldn't have stared in into the light of the old bulb, but this new one was far more glorious.

Look at the "much more" in verse 11.

*"For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."* (2 Corinthians 3:11)

Let's get on to our second point, because Paul says there is more to this *glorious* story.

## **II. The New Glory Explained. (2 Cor. 3:12-17)**

### **A. The Glory Observed.**

In verse 12, Paul reverts back to the core of his discussion that he has been stressing all along:

*"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:"* (2 Corinthians 3:12)

That word plainness can also be rendered boldness, or frankness, or bluntness. Our message of Christ is fully authenticated, and we most assuredly do not need to hawk our wares like some peddler or politician.

### **B. The Glory Obscured.**

But then... just when we think we're getting a handle on this glory thing, Paul slides in a curve from the pitcher's mound, and we encounter something we simply did not see coming. I need to read verses 13-17 in a group:

*"And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:13-17)*

Did you miss the curve ball? Do you remember when we were talking about Moses having his face covered? Oh, I'm sure the brightness terrified them, but Paul makes a point which almost seems to argue the opposite. He tells us that Moses' face was veiled so that Israel would not see the *fading* glory. Get this now: It was not time yet for Israel to see that the glory of her own special covenant was only temporary. You see, this covenant was going to be replaced by a more glorious one, the New Covenant.

By the way, for those of us who have not had the opportunity to read our Bible's through yet, let me tell you that this glory of God would remain with Israel in her tabernacle and temple, located in the Holy of Holies around the mercy seat for centuries to come. The day finally came when Israel's apostasy was so bad that the temple no longer represented God's Covenant and the glory departed in stages. But that is another discussion for another time.

Now, look over these verses again and allow me to put some words in Paul's mouth. It is as though Paul is saying *"As long as we're on the subject of veils and glory, let's set aside Moses' veil for a minute and let's talk about another veil, Israel's own veil, a veil which has blinded her."*

A veil over the face is one thing. I am puzzled by those who would veil the faces of women but who do not veil their own faces in everyday commerce, but I shall leave that discussion for another time. What we do want to make clear here is that we are not merely talking about a face covering veil. Israel's veil is also over her eyes. It is a blinding veil which remains to this day.

This prepares us for the question of the hour, the one about our own New Covenant. On the one hand, we are the ministers and priests of a glorious covenant which makes the glory surrounding the Old Covenant more like a candle. We may speak our message from God with full authority and we certainly do not need to set up false authorities of any kind. That's the one hand. On the other hand, the eyes of our listeners, both Jew and Gentile, are veiled. To add insult to injury, the eyes of Israel are blinded, even though the Bible is read each week in her synagogues.

These two facts place us on the horns of a great dilemma. Where is that New Covenant glory right now, and what good does that New Covenant glory do if it shines on blind eyes? Well, these questions lead us to our third point of the hour:

### **III. The New Glory Experienced. (2 Cor. 3:18, 4:1-6, and multiple N.T. passages)**

**A. Where is that New Covenant glory right now?** We need look no further than our next verse, 2 Corinthians 3:18:

*“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

This has served as one of our two anchor passages in this entire series. As I like to say: When the child of God looks into the Word of God and sees the Son of God He is changed by the Spirit of God into the Image of God for the Glory of God.

Friends, this is not merely a doctrine, this is a dynamic, another New Covenant dynamic. We may be changed just as surely as Moses, and, we might add, in far greater ways. This New Covenant glory is a reflected glory, just as in a mirror. Now, I do not like mirrors. Every glance reveals a new flaw, a cold reminder that this flesh is losing its dignity at a rapid rate. I think God wants me to see my fading glory. He wants me to be focused on quite another image.

The Spirit of God changes us, one glance at a time, as we behold our glorious Savior. And here is the wonder of it all. This glory is not confined to one place as was the Old Covenant glory. It is not enclosed in a room which one priest could visit one time a year. It is not a scaled down version of Moses' glory. It is an upscaled version freely given and provided for all of God's New Covenant children everywhere.

So, the answer to the first question is simple. God's glory is right where it belongs. It is in God's temple, His body, His church, changing us from day to day as we behold Christ. How silly it is, then, for some theologian to come along and tell me I cannot know absolutely and for sure that I am saved until I die. Why, I have Christ living right in me! ...And the second question?

**B. What good does that New Covenant glory do if it shines on blind eyes?** You did tell us that we are “able ministers” of this New Covenant? What good is that if folks are blinded? Folks, this is where that whole suffering and glory thing comes together in a beautiful marriage.

The first six verses of chapter four serve as kind of a wrap before Paul drops the other shoe. Again, scan them as I speak:

**Verse 1.** Now that we know we have this ministry we do not need to become discouraged or puzzled.



**Verse 2.** We do not have to use the world's ways to propagate our message. In fact, we renounce them.

**Verse 3.** Fact: When our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to the lost who need the light of the gospel

**Verse 4.** Fact: The god of this world does not want the glorious light of the gospel to shine unto them. He does not want them to behold the image of Christ and be changed.

**Verse 5.** Fact: It just makes sense then, we are to preach Christ and not ourselves.

**Verse 6.** Fact: It is all about light and darkness and a God who commands His light to shine in the face of Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you? Can the scriptures be any sweeter than what you just read? Can life be any grander? Folks, salvation is not merely from something, it is to Someone who wants to fill our lives with His light and change us into His image!

**C. How do these truths relate to my life?** Where is this authenticating power, this glory about which Paul speaks? Where is the glory when I need it? Where is the authentication?

Just grab onto a few of these verses in chapter four as we do our wrap. We will take both our answer *and* the reason for it from the lips of Paul himself in verse 7 where he begins with one very big adversative, the word "but":

*"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)*

This treasure, the treasure of the gospel authenticating glory of God is in earthen vessels. It is in us. It is in frail, fragile, flawed clay vessels, as it were.

Now, frankly, folks, that is a very bad way to do business. That is not good product placement. When you want to sell your Lambo you don't drive it into the ghetto and find a homeless person to model it. That's just craziness! And yet, that is an exact equivocation of what God does. He takes simple, ordinary, broken people who have been changed by His grace and He uses us to spread His gospel. Are you broken? Are you torn? Are you a mess? Then, you're qualified. You are qualified to be a vessel through which the glory of God can shine!

You see, we live in a star struck world, whether we are talking athletics, entertainment, science and education, or preaching and teaching! Sadly, our Bible testifies that God chooses very few of these kinds of folks to manifest His glory. That's because He does not want the glory to go to human flesh, to the wise of this world, the beautiful, the successful and the driven.



No, not one spec of this glory can go to human flesh. The focus is on Christ.

And, look who's talking. It is Paul. In verses 8-10 he talks about his own struggles and afflictions.

Have you ever started off with a wrong impression? I once visited a church which made such a bad impression on me that I promised myself I would never visit again. No one even shook my hand. The usher was beyond obnoxious, he was downright insulting about a fellow who wore a beard. I couldn't wait to get out of there. Within the course of one week, my whole life changed, and these dear folks rallied around me, gave me a place to live, visited me in the hospital, and reached out to my family and won my affections over.

These Corinthians had been making the same mistake about Paul. Those very afflictions which Paul describes here were evidence of God working in and through Him. Like His Lord who went before Him, Paul had become a channel of the glory of God. Now, let's not make the same mistake when evaluating servants of Christ today.

Are your heroes great teachers, great scholars, and great personalities? Do you assign value to them based on how much God has "blessed" them? Is that how your spiritual world rocks? Are you enamored by their pedigrees and blood lines? Are you mesmerized by Christian movers and shakers?

Friend, God is not *against* great people who can wow us with their skills and usefulness. But be ever so clear on this: God never tells us, not even once, to look for such men and to measure ourselves by them. In fact, God hates that! Would you like to know exactly how to locate and identify the truly great in God's eyes? Let me help you.

You will find these sisters and brothers living sacrificial lives of service, rarely in the spotlight, rarely having been on a stage or a platform, and rarely having written a bestseller. You will find them on the streets of life taking in the strays and the broken and caring for someone else's child. You will find them giving up their homes and countrymen to reach the nations in the far-flung corners of this world. You often find them living in substandard conditions so that they can give more of themselves, their time, and their substance for Christ. You will find them paying the price. You will find them giving up their earthly treasures for heavenly causes. You will find them being rebuked and mocked for their godly stands in the media. You will find them suffering. You will find them following the footsteps of our Savior as He described His own ministry to us using the words of Isaiah as recorded in Luke 4:18-19:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."* (Luke 4:18-19)

It has been said that love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage, or like a hand and glove, and I certainly agree with that. But there is another pairing which is even more dynamic, and more powerful. It is the pairing of *suffering and glory*.

**Now, I want to end this message in an entirely different manner.** I simply want to read some scriptures to you, a sampler package of sort, mostly without comment. These scriptures are randomly excerpted from the apostles in the New Testament. We will let them make our final comments on *suffering and glory* for us. As we listen to them, let's ask ourselves, have we *opted* for the path of suffering which our Lord has laid out for us? \* Just listen...

*"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* (Romans 8:16–18)

*"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,"* (Hebrews 2:9–11)

*"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."* (Hebrews 13:13)

*"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;"* (2 Timothy 1:8)

*"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."* (2 Timothy 2:9)

*"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."* (2 Timothy 2:10)

*"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"* (2 Timothy 2:12)

*"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."* (2 Timothy 4:1–5)

*"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"* (Philippians 1:28–29)

*"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"* (Philippians 3:8)

*"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:"* (Colossians 1:24)

*“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”* (Colossians 1:28–29)

**Peter, who spoke often of the suffering and glory of Christ also reminded us that we were called to that same end:**

*“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”* (1 Peter 2:21)

*“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”* (1 Peter 4:14)

*“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:”* (1 Peter 5:1)

*“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”* (1 Peter 5:10)

**And, of course, we can't help but notice those words in the very end of the chapter we have been studying:**

*“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* (2 Corinthians 4:17–18)

**It's no wonder then, that our Lord writes to the Laodicean church, a church so much in sync with our churches:**

*“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”* (Revelation 3:17–19)

**Now, I saved this verse 'til last. The hour of testing may well be upon our generation. This may be our time to stand in the place of those who have gone on before. We do not want to miss our golden day! This is the hour of our fortification:**

*“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”* (1 Peter 1:6–7)

**It's time to buy gold. Most gladly, therefore, let us glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us!**

\* Romans 8:16–18, Hebrews 2:9–11, Hebrews 13:13, 2 Timothy 1:8, 2 Timothy 2:9, 2 Timothy 2:10, 2 Timothy 2:12, 2 Timothy 4:1–5, Philippians 1:28–29, Philippians 3:8, Colossians 1:24, Colossians 1:28–29, 1 Peter 1:6–7, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Peter 4:14, 1 Peter 5:1, 1 Peter 5:10, 2 Corinthians 4:17–18, Revelation 3:17–19