

VEILED HEARTS: THE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF 2 CORINTHIANS 3

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I. INTRODUCTION

Paul's interpretation of Moses' veil (Exod 34:29–35 as discussed in 2 Cor 3:7–18) is burdened with difficulties. The Greek is elliptical and allusive but precise in its use of vocabulary, albeit not in a manner interpreters find easy to handle.¹ As it appears in many translations, Paul says that Moses put on the veil so that the Israelites would not see that the glow in his face was fading away.² But there is no good reason for Moses to do this. Any attempt

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¹ I do not believe that the Greek text of 2 Corinthians 3 is served well in standard translations and in recent scholarship, and thus in what follows I devote a great deal of attention to translation issues. All translations of Greek below are original unless otherwise noted. For the sake of comparison, I make fairly frequent reference to standard English translations of 2 Corinthians 3. But this paper is not a survey of translations and I make no attempt to be exhaustive in comparing English versions, much less non-English versions, of 2 Corinthians 3. On the other hand, I have no reason to believe that the non-English translations of the text are substantially different from the standard English versions. See, e.g., the renditions of 2 Corinthians 3 in *La Bible: Traduction de Louis Segond* (1910), *La Bible du Semeur* (1999), *Parole de Vie* (2000), *La Bible de Jérusalem* (2003), *Die Bible nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers* (1984), and *Die Gute Nachricht* (1982).

² Among English translations, for example, see the renditions of εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου from verse 13 in the RSV, NRSV, NJB, REB, NIV, TNIV, NASB, and CEV, where the verb is either explicitly or implicitly taken to mean “fade.” The interpretation of καταργουμένου as a fading away is supported by E. Bernard Allo, *Saint Paul, Seconde épître aux Corinthiens* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956) 89–91; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 109; Linda Belleville, *2 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996) 104; and Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) 293. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (trans. Roy A. Harrisville; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985) 85, also seems to take it this way, commenting that the Israelites “were not to notice that Moses' δόξα was at an end.” Others recognize that “fade away” is an impossible translation but seem to have great difficulty providing a coherent interpretation. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (New York: Doubleday, 1984) 207, asserts that Paul is claiming that Moses put on the veil so that the Israelites would not see the end of “the entire ministry of the old covenant,” but this is an outlandish claim for the function of the veil. See also Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999) 52. Simon J. Kistemaker, *II Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997) 118–19, translates the line as “the end of what was set aside” but then struggles to explain what this means, finally making the improbable suggestion that Exodus teaches that the Israelites could not look at the glow because they had guilty consciences. The ESV translation, “the outcome of what was being brought to an end,” is equally opaque. Scott J. Hafemann, “The Glory and Veil of Moses in 2 Cor 3:7–14: An Example of Paul's Contextual Exegesis of the OT—A Proposal,” *HBT* 14 (1992) 31–49, argues strongly against a meaning such as “fade” at verse 13, but suggests that the veil

to conceal the fading would be trickery,³ and Exodus 34 never implies any such motivation on his part. In fact, Exodus 34 never indicates that the glow was fading at all. Also, in a move that seems arbitrary, Paul transfers the veil from Moses' face to his opponents' hearts at verse 15. According to many translations of verse 14, moreover, the veil is some kind of inability to understand Torah that can only be removed "in Christ." But in Exodus 34, the veil is purely a practical measure for dealing with the discomfort people had in looking at Moses' shining face.⁴ In fact, Paul seems to interpret Moses' actions in a manner that is absurd from the standpoint of what Exodus 34 actually says.⁵ It is, perhaps, for all of these reasons that NT scholars often treat 2 Corinthians 3 as though it really had little to do with Exodus 34,⁶ having no point of contact beyond the fact that Paul alludes to Moses' veil and glowing face.⁷

"brought the glory of God to an end in terms of what it would accomplish if not veiled, i.e., the judgment and destruction of Israel" (p. 40). But it is difficult to imagine how the verse could possibly carry such a meaning.

³ Mitzi L. Minor, *2 Corinthians* (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2009) 75–76, suggests that Paul means to portray Moses as duplicitous, but Minor herself is aware that Moses is a "hero" for Paul, and so she suggests that Paul's presentation of Moses as a fraud is mere "rhetoric" and not "theology." But this hardly helps to settle the issue.

⁴ Exodus indicates that the people found Moses' face alarming and thus that Moses put the veil on. Beyond that, no explanation is really necessary. Torah often does not spell out explanations of things that should be obvious to all.

⁵ Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009) 96–97, for example, argues that Moses donned the veil because he wanted to harden the Israelites' hearts. As a reading of Paul, this interpretation is wrongheaded, not seeing that the veiling is the result, not the cause, of the Israelites' hard hearts. As a reading of Exodus 34, it is impossible.

⁶ Furnish, *II Corinthians* 230, argues that apart from Moses' dazzling face (and later the veil), the exposition in 2 Cor 3:7–11 is based on Paul's own remarks and not on the text of Exodus.

⁷ Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) 291–96, is an exception to the rule of setting distance between Paul's interpretation and the intent of Torah. Watson argues that in Exodus 34 Moses actually is deceiving the Israelites, making them believe that the shining is permanent, and that Paul astutely perceives this act of deceit. Watson's conclusion is that "*the veiling of Moses' face signifies the fact that, apart from Christ and its own indirect testimony to Christ, the Torah itself promotes a belief in its own enduring and unsurpassable authority. . . . [Torah] conceals the fact of its own transitoriness, thereby encouraging a belief in its permanence and a disbelief in the gospel's claim that God's definitive self-disclosure occurs not at Sinai but in the raising of Jesus*" (emphasis original). This is wrong at every point. The most natural interpretation of Exodus 34 is that Moses put on the veil because the people found his face disturbing, not because Moses was trying to trick them. Exodus hardly presents the Sinai covenant as enduring, not least in the fact that it narrates how grossly Israel violated it, so that it was almost cancelled (with Israel's annihilation) at the very time of its inauguration (Exodus 32). Torah anticipates its own demise (Deut 29:21–29), the need for a new covenant (Deut 30:1–10), and a new lawgiver (Deut 18:15–19). Certainly Exodus, with its unending recital of Israel's failures, does not present Torah as sufficient and not needing any further divine intervention. Finally, if Torah were as Watson describes it, then Paul's opponents would not have a veil over their hearts at all, but would be reading Torah exactly as intended. Their only failing would be that they, unlike Paul, did not catch Torah in its deceitfulness. But Paul's point is not that Torah and Moses have pulled the wool over their eyes.

II. THE NARRATIVE IN EXODUS 19–34

The narrative context for the episode of Moses' glowing face actually begins in Exodus 19 with the arrival of Israel at Mt. Sinai. YHWH gives Israel the offer of a covenant, the essential provision being that if Israel will obey YHWH, he in turn will make Israel to be his special possession and a holy nation (vv. 5–6). Israel agrees (v. 8), and instructions are given on how to prepare Israel for the covenant ratification ceremony: limits are set around the mountain, the people wash their clothes, and they refrain from sexual activity (vv. 10–25). After this, the covenant stipulations are laid out (Exodus 20–23). This is the Book of the Covenant, the specific content of Israel's agreement with YHWH. Then the covenant ceremony takes place (Exodus 24), with a sacrifice binding both YHWH and Israel to their agreement. The people, after hearing the contents of the Book of the Covenant read to them, reaffirm that they will obey (Exod 24:5–8). At this point, Moses goes back to Sinai to receive instructions on the building of the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 25–36). This is altogether a positive development; the people and YHWH are now joined together in covenant, and YHWH will therefore sojourn among them in the Tent during their journey to Canaan and afterwards.

Meanwhile, however, calamity strikes: the people, in the absence of Moses, build a bull-idol and declare it to be their god.⁸ Though worship of the idol is ostensibly worship of YHWH, it soon degenerates into a pagan celebration (Exod 32:1–6). Moses then performs the arduous task of getting the people under control while also making intercession before YHWH. First, YHWH declares his intent to destroy Israel outright, but Moses by intensive pleading dissuades him from this course of action (Exod 32:7–14). Then, Moses descends to the people, destroys the idol, and by draconian measures restores order (Exod 32:15–29). After this, Moses ascends back to YHWH and again appeals for mercy for Israel, declaring that if YHWH will not relent, he should kill Moses himself then and there (Exod 32:30–32). YHWH then tells Moses that he will not at this time destroy Israel but that he will also not go with them and instead send only his angel. The reason is that if YHWH himself were among such a people, he might at any moment kill them all (Exod 32:33–33:3). The people, now alarmed and grief-stricken, display their remorse by removing their jewelry (probably Egyptian-style amulets that served as apotropaic charms; Exod 33:4–6). Moses then resumes his work as intercessor, seeking and obtaining a concession from YHWH that he would not abandon Israel but accompany them in the journey to Canaan (Exod 33:7–17).

At this point, Moses makes a request that seems to be a non-sequitur within the narrative: he wants YHWH to show him his glory (33:18). One must dispel two common errors of interpretation. First, the narrative does

⁸ C. J. A. Hickling, "Paul's Use of Exodus in the Corinthian Correspondence," in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996) 367–76, offers a number of observations on Paul's use of Exodus 32–34, but he wrongly concludes that Paul believed Moses was in Exodus 34 a flawed mediator (p. 374).

not indicate that Moses is suddenly grasped by pride, becoming desirous of an esoteric experience that would set him apart from all humanity due to his extraordinary communion with God.⁹ Second, the desire to see God's "glory" is not unprecedented.

God had in fact already displayed his "glory" to Israel twice in the exodus narrative. The first was on the journey to Sinai, when Israel faced starvation and YHWH announced that he would provide manna as their provision (Exod 16:10). There, the vision of YHWH's glory was a promise to provide all that was needed for survival. The second manifestation was at the ratification ceremony of the covenant, where Israel "saw the God of Israel" (Exod 24:10), an event that again affirmed that God was with them. Both manifestations of glory were reassuring demonstrations of God's presence. Encouragement, in the narrative context of Exodus 34, is precisely what Moses desired.¹⁰ He had gone through a harrowing experience, having barely persuaded YHWH not to destroy Israel altogether, with himself then having to oversee the killing of many Israelites in order to get them under control. I think it is safe to say that the story intends us to see Moses as a physically and emotionally spent man at this point. What he seeks, therefore, is not Faustian knowledge of the secret things of God, but simple reassurance for himself and Israel.¹¹

YHWH does not respond with shock and alarm, as though Moses had asked for something outrageous. But interpreters often read the text as though Exod 33:20, "You are not able to see my face, for no human can see me and live," were the first words out of YHWH's mouth. In fact, YHWH's primary answer implies that he will give Moses more than he asked for, not less: he will see "all" of YHWH's goodness (v. 19).¹² The point that no one can see God's face and live is secondary. It explains the actions that follow (in which Moses sees only God's "back"), and it qualifies the "all" of "all my goodness" (pointing out that although Moses will fully experience the "goodness," there remains some ultimate essence of deity that humans cannot bear to see). This distinction among various degrees of seeing God, there being some final, extreme vision that no mortal can endure, is maintained right into John 1:14–18, which, using the language of Exodus,¹³ declares that the evangelist has seen the glory of God in the only-begotten Son but then qualifies that state-

⁹ William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40* (AB 2A; New York: Doubleday, 2006) 606, misses the point of the text with his comment, "Moses' persistent desire to see Yahweh emblemizes a common human sense of alienation from the divine. . . . Mythology is replete with cautionary tales of heroes who presume to obtain a full vision of a god."

¹⁰ See also Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC 2; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006) 704.

¹¹ J. Gerald Janzen, *Exodus* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 247, reads the text correctly when he comments, "If God would let Moses see his glory, he would know that all was well." But then Janzen veers off course by adding, "This time he asks more than is possible."

¹² Against, for example, John Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 452: "What Moses asks, however, is more than Yahweh is willing to grant."

¹³ As implied by the Tabernacle language, "and he had his tent among us" (καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν).

ment by adding that in fact no one except the only-begotten himself has ever “seen God” (in the ultimate sense). But in both Exodus 33 and John 1, the principal point is that one *can* see God’s glory, not that one *cannot* see it. When YHWH puts Moses into the cleft of a rock, covers Moses’ face with his hand, and then shows him God’s “back,” the text is communicating that Moses at that moment experiences as much of the glory and essence of God as any mortal can bear.¹⁴ That is, this is a revelation of God that surpasses the previous displays of God’s glory given in Exodus 16 and 24.

The revelation that Moses receives is of all of YHWH’s “goodness” (טוב). The implication is that YHWH’s kindness, compassion, and mercies are a greater revelation of the inner essence of God than an experience of bright light or of earthquake or of some dramatic apparition such as the bluish radiance that appeared in Exod 24:10. The words pronounced at the revelation, “YHWH, YHWH, God merciful and gracious,” are its essential content. In sum, the ultimate revelation of God’s glory focuses upon his grace and not on raw power or splendor. Once again, however, one should not allow secondary statements to obscure the main point. When the text goes on to declare that YHWH does not acquit the guilty but punishes them to the third and fourth generation, this does not mean that the revelation is equally about YHWH’s mercy and wrath. Rather, the latter is a qualification, meaning that YHWH’s mercy does not imply that he is indulgent of sin. The core message, however, is that YHWH is compassionate.

Moses, overwhelmed by the experience, falls before YHWH and again makes intercession (Exod 34:8–9). YHWH responds by telling Moses that he will renew the covenant with Israel (Exod 34:10). What follows is a recapitulation of the Book of the Covenant, repeating its essential content but focusing on the need to avoid idolatry and alliances with pagans (Exod 34:11–28).¹⁵ The important point here is that the covenant with Israel has been fully reaffirmed. When Moses goes down the mountain with two copies of the original tablets of the law and a text that reaffirms Book of the Covenant, this moment in the context of Exodus is an entirely positive development. It is not some kind of punishment or threat. It means that Israel is fully reinstated. After the making of the Sinai covenant and subsequent golden calf episode, YHWH had threatened to destroy Israel and then had asserted that he would no longer be with them. Now, after all of Moses’ labors at intercession and the climactic revelation of the divine goodness, Israel is fully reinstated as the special possession of YHWH. The Sinai covenant is reaffirmed and the making of the Tent of Meeting can commence (Exodus 35–39).

In between the renewal of the covenant and the building of the Tent of Meeting, however, a curious episode is briefly related (Exod 34:29–35). Moses

¹⁴ In Exod 33:20, the “face” (פנים) of YHWH refers to the absolute essence of deity. As the counterpart to this, the “back” (אחור) is simply a lesser and non-fatal manifestation of the divine being. That is, “back” is here defined only as a contrast to “face.” Beyond that, no literal or metaphorical meaning is implied.

¹⁵ Almost every clause of Exod 34:11–28 is derived from 20:22–23:33, much of it in the form of *verbatim* citations.

descends the mountain unaware that his face is shining.¹⁶ The people see and, alarmed, draw back. Yet after Aaron relays the problem to Moses, he calls everyone to himself and, with a face literally beaming, tells them the good news that YHWH has renewed the covenant and reaffirmed its prior terms. The people are disconcerted by the strange glow on Moses' face, however, and so he must conceal it with a veil in his day-to-day dealings with them. He removes the veil only when he is in the tent in the presence of YHWH. It is at this point that we turn to Paul's reading of the text.

III. AN ANALYSIS OF 2 CORINTHIANS 3

1. *The setting in 2 Cor 3:1–6.* Paul's discussion of Moses and the veil actually begins at verse 7, but we need to look at the context. At the beginning of 2 Corinthians 3, Paul turns his attentions to his rivals and opponents,

¹⁶ Interpreters have long been perplexed by the choice of the verb קָרַן for "glow" or "shine," since the word is evidently related to the noun קַרְנָה, "horn." Some translations, following the Vulgate, actually indicate that Moses had horns, and this has given rise to Michelangelo's frequently reproduced statue of the horned Moses. But if Moses' head sprouted horns, it is hard to see why the text would speak of them coming from his skin (Exod 34:29). William H. C. Propp, "The Skin of Moses' Face—Transfigured or Disfigured," *CBQ* 49 (1987) 375–86, suggests that it means that Moses' skin became blistered and then calloused through what was in effect radiation burns, but that the thickened, horny skin made him better able to withstand the power of the divine radiance. Hugo Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit; ein Kommentar zu den Mose-Sagen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913) 246–51, argues that it refers to a horned, cultic mask that Moses wore. Karl Jaroš, "Des Mose 'Strahlende haut': eine Notiz zu Ex 34:29, 30, 35," *ZAW* 88 (1976) 275–80 argues that Moses wore a mask with horns, but that P suppressed the idea by introducing the shining face. Against Gressmann, see especially Menahem Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography," in *In the Shelter of Elyon* (ed. W. Boyd Barrick and John R. Spencer; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984) 160–65, and also R. W. L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1983) 107–8. The recent interpretations are not widely accepted, but scholars have still wondered why, if the meaning is that Moses' face glowed, the text does not use the *hiphil* of אָרַר, to "give light." But that word is actually functional, meaning to "provide illumination" so that people can see (Gen 1:15; Exod 13:21; Num 8:2; Isa 50:11; 60:19; etc.). Had the text used this word, it would be like saying that people used Moses' face for a flashlight! The word can metaphorically mean that the face gives light in the sense of showing approval or favor (Num 6:25); but here again, usage of it would be confusing, as it would seem to communicate the metaphorical meaning rather than the simple, physical phenomenon of glowing. In my view, the use of קָרַן arises from the fact that in both ancient and modern imagery, a radiant body like the sun is portrayed with pointed, horn-like projections coming from it as an artistic representation of a glow. Thus, the horn-like projections from the Statue of Liberty represent a glowing head. In fact, our word "radiant" is from the Latin *radio*, -are, "to shine," which is itself probably derived from *radius*, a "rod" like the spoke of a wheel, which in turn may be related to the Greek ἄρδς, a "sharp point," like an arrowhead or a horn. Furthermore, the Sumerian word *si* is used for both horns and the radiance of the sun. See Seth L. Sanders, "Old Light on Moses' Shining Face," *VT* 52 (2002) 400–406, esp. 403; Sanders himself wrongly concludes from this that Moses becomes a kind of semi-divine figure, but the lexicographic analogy is helpful. Similar usage appears in Hab 3:4, קַרְנֵימָהוּרִים מִיָּדוֹ קוֹ ("he had horns [that is, beams of light] come from his hand"). In addition, Num 27:20 states that Moses was to impart some of his "splendor" (הוֹדֵר) to Joshua, his successor. This is not simply "authority" but a radiance of divine glory, and this usage has parallels ancient Near Eastern literature (see Menahem Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography," in *In the Shelter of Elyon* (ed. W. Boyd Barrick and John R. Spencer; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984) 165–68). In short, the term means that Moses' skin was glowing.

Jewish teachers who have come from Jerusalem¹⁷ with letters of recommendation as their credentials. Alternative explanations for the teaching and background of these interlopers have been proposed (that they were Jewish “proto-Gnostics,” Hellenistic Jews who patterned themselves after Greco-Roman, charismatic miracle workers, or simply Jews who sought to interfere with Paul’s work).¹⁸ But these alternative reconstructions are not as persuasive as the simplest view, namely, that Paul’s opponents here are of the same sort that appear throughout the NT.¹⁹

Paul’s rivals in 2 Corinthians 3 are outsiders (thus the importance of the letters of recommendation). They are probably not connected to the earlier controversies over factions (1 Corinthians 1–3), over immorality in the church (1 Corinthians 5–6), over tongues and other charismatic gifts (1 Corinthians 12–14), or over the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), since those seem to be home-grown problems among the Corinthians.²⁰ By contrast, a focus on justification and Torah is in the background in 2 Corinthians 3. Here, Paul repeatedly describes the old covenant as obsolete and carrying death and condemnation. He would hardly have used such language if his opponents did not rely heavily upon Torah while teaching the Corinthian Christians.²¹ If the opponents did not focus upon Torah, why would Paul build such an elaborate argument that a veil is on their hearts when they read it (2 Cor 3:15)? If they did not teach the Corinthians that keeping Torah was essential for obtaining righteousness, why would Paul speak of the old covenant as a ministry of “condemnation” (2 Cor 3:9)?²² If Paul’s opponents were some

¹⁷ Cf. 2 Cor 11:22, which describes them as “Hebrews” and “Israelites,” indicating that they are Jewish with close ties to the Jewish homeland and not Diaspora Hellenists.

¹⁸ Belleville, *2 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1996) 34, summarizes the various major views. There are of course various eccentric views, such as William J. Dalton, “Is the Old Covenant Abrogated (2 Cor 3.14)?” *ABR* 35 (1987) 88–94, which states that the opponents in 2 Corinthians 3 are Gentile Judaizers.

¹⁹ There are also theories arguing that Paul was answering a midrash from his opponents, such as Siegfried Schulz, “Die Decke des Moses,” *ZNW* 49 (1958) 1–30. C. J. A. Hickling, “Sequence of thought in II Corinthians, Chapter Three,” *NTS* 21 (1975) 380–95, is dismissive of recent scholarly attempts to identify Paul’s opponents in 2 Corinthians 3, stating that they “indicate great ingenuity on the part of their authors” (p. 380).

²⁰ Although I do not agree with a great deal of his work, particularly his idea Paul’s opponents in 2 Corinthians were Hellenistic Jews who promoted the idea of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ, Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 315–17, is certainly correct that the opponents in 2 Corinthians are not the same as the problematic groups in 1 Corinthians (Georgi identifies the 1 Corinthians opponents as “Gnostics,” but I consider that to be anachronistic). For Georgi’s understanding of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ, see pp. 390–409.

²¹ Contrast Furnish, *II Corinthians* 48–54, who concludes that the enemies here are the same as the “super apostles,” that they are of Jewish origin, but that they are not Judaizers but itinerate charismatics.

²² An unpersuasive approach to the issue is Paul D. Duff, “Glory in the Ministry of Death: Gentile Condemnation and Letters of Recommendation in 2 Cor 3.6–18,” *NT* 46 (2004) 313–37, who argues that the law is a ministry of condemnation specifically toward the Gentiles because they did not receive and follow it. That is, Torah had limited glory because only Israel received it; the Gentiles did not, and for them it was death and condemnation. This interpretation fails in every way. It suggests that Paul believed Torah was lifegiving and sufficient for Israel and also that Gentiles, when

kind of Gnostic libertines or practitioners of charismatic power, why would Paul use as the premise for his whole argument the distinction between the letter that kills and the Spirit that gives life (2 Cor 3:6)? Such arguments are not well suited to a confrontation with proto-Gnostics or Jewish charismatics. And simply saying that they were opponents of Paul tells us nothing. What, precisely, did they teach? If not Judaism, then what?

One might argue that 2 Corinthians, unlike Romans or Galatians, does not refer to a demand for circumcision among the converts or describe other aspects of his opponents' teaching.²³ This objection fails to take into account the specific issues with which Paul deals in this letter in contrast to what confronted him on other occasions. Throughout his career, Paul faced the same kind of Jewish opposition, one that accused him of devaluing the Mosaic Law in his dealings with Gentile converts. But the circumstances of these confrontations varied greatly. At the Jerusalem Council, where dealing with recognized leaders of the church, he brought evidence of the work of God among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12). On a later visit to Jerusalem (prior to the riot), he sought to present himself as a dutiful and observant Jew (Acts 21:26–27). In Galatians, Paul was suddenly confronted with a Gentile church that was already becoming a congregation of proselytes, and he reacted accordingly: with anger, dismay, and urgent teachings on justification and grace. In Romans, many similar issues are raised, but Paul was still a stranger there, wanting to establish his teaching with that church by careful presentation and argumentation. In 2 Corinthians, Paul was presented with a group of teachers who claimed authority to teach and devoted a great deal of time to attacking Paul personally (e.g. 2 Cor 1:17, 18; 4:2, 5; 5:12; 10:2–4; 12:11). Paul's response naturally focuses on defending himself rather than on dealing with specifics of doctrine.²⁴ But 2 Corinthians 3 does not leave us wholly

they turn to God, should likewise come under the Sinai covenant. In light of Romans and Galatians, however, both ideas are demonstrably untrue. Duff also suggests that the "veil" over Jewish eyes refers to the fact that the Jews could not see that "the status of the gentiles before God has changed" (p. 328). But, in reality, the Jews who opposed Paul were only too happy to see the status of the Gentiles change—by having them come under Torah! Under Duff's interpretation, Paul should have been the most zealous of Judaizers. If one should counter that for Paul the Gentile converts "keep" the law even though they do not actually have to submit to the distinctive rules of Judaism (i.e. to become proselytes), then one has come full circle and in effect affirmed the traditional view.

²³ One might also argue that 1 Cor 7:18a ("Was someone circumcised when he was called?") suggests that there were at Corinth Jews who actually thought they had to become Gentiles in order to be accepted into the church. But this would be, I think, a highly eccentric position to take. Paul is referring to the common practice of Hellenistic Jews trying to hide their circumcision in order to be accepted in the larger Gentile world (especially for participation in the gymnasias). He does not suggest that this is a theological issue in the church. If anything, 1 Cor 7:18a is the foundation for his main point at verse 18b, the assertion that uncircumcised Gentiles should not seek circumcision. That is, he argues that just as Jews should not try to become Gentiles, so Gentiles should not try to become Jews. But at any rate, I do not think that 1 Corinthians 7 has any value in identifying the opponents in 2 Corinthians 3.

²⁴ See also Ralph Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco, TX: Word, 1986) lii–lxii, who describes the history of the conflict with the Judaizers. As Martin observes, this leads Paul to develop the thesis that his suffering helps to establish his credentials. But Paul also, here in 2 Corinthians 3, directly undermines the credibility of his opponents.

in the dark on the subject of the content of his opponents' teaching. When Paul speaks of himself as a minister of the new covenant and contrasts this with the ministry of the "letter" that "kills" (v. 6), the most reasonable interpretation is that his opponents espouse obedience to the law (he also at v. 3 links their theology to "stone tablets," a clear allusion to the tablets of the law).

Also, although 2 Corinthians 3 does not mention circumcision, its language has a close analogy in a text where circumcision is mentioned, Phil 3:3. This verse attacks Judaizers who "have confidence in flesh" and contrasts them with believers "who carry out priestly service by the Spirit of God" (οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες). This language is close to what Paul describes in 2 Cor 3:16–17, in which Moses regularly goes into the Tent of Meeting before the Lord, "and the Lord is the Spirit" (v. 17). In addition, the use of γράμμα in opposition to πνεῦμα at 2 Cor 3:6–7 has a strong parallel in Rom 2:27–29 and 7:6, where Paul is making a polemic against the attempt to find justification through obedience to Torah. The nature of the opposition to Paul, as described in 2 Corinthians 3, has parallels in Galatians. Paul's opponents in 2 Corinthians 3 claim the support of authorities who gave them letters of recommendation, implying that Paul did not have the sanction of these authorities. Similar attacks were apparently made upon Paul at Galatia, since he first claims that his gospel came by direct revelation from Christ (Gal 1:12) and then goes out of his way to undercut the prestige of the Jerusalem leadership, describing them as those who "seemed to be pillars" (Gal 2:6, 9) and recounting an episode of theological spinelessness on the part of Simon Peter (Gal 2:11–14). In all probability, therefore, 2 Corinthians 3 has the same concerns in its background as does Galatians.

Furthermore, whatever kind of reconstruction of the Corinthian letters we espouse, we certainly do not possess all the correspondence between Paul and Corinth. It is not in this case special pleading to suggest that Paul may well have addressed circumcision and the inability of Torah to justify in another, prior letter. The fact that Paul can casually speak of Torah as the "letter" that "kills" and of the old covenant as a "ministry of death"—without any supportive arguments or clarification at all—strongly suggests that Paul had already communicated to Corinth his essential views on the law. If he had not, his harsh language about Torah would only bewilder the Corinthians. Indeed, it would bewilder us as well if we did not possess Galatians and Romans.

Second Corinthians 3 gives us one other specific piece of information that points to the content of the teaching of Paul's opponents: their activity involves the reading of Moses (v. 15, ἀναγινώσκεται Μωϋσῆς). This is not a private reading for pleasure or edification. It refers to the teaching of Torah as was done in synagogues throughout the Roman world, as in Acts 15:21, Μωϋσῆς γὰρ ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων κατὰ πόλιν τοὺς κηρύσσοντας αὐτὸν ἔχει ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκόμενος ("For Moses has had, for generations untold [and] in city after city, those who proclaim him; [this occurs when] he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath"; cf. Acts 13:27). An appeal to the "reading" of Scripture is often an appeal for a binding

halakhic interpretation, as in Matt 12:5 and 19:4. It can refer to the resolution of a point of doctrine, as in Matt 21:42 and 22:31. When 2 Cor 3:15 speaks of how “Moses being read” among Paul’s opponents, it is describing the regular teaching of Torah.

We have in 2 Corinthians a text in which Paul defends the validity of his apostolic authority against teachers who sought to undermine him and to establish themselves, and Paul focuses less on their doctrine than on their spiritual incompetence. Nevertheless, we can confidently say this: nobody crosses land and sea just to attack another teacher. One does it in order to promote an alternative teaching. And we are not nearly so much at a loss for evidence of what they taught as some would suggest. They taught the “letter” engraved in “tablets of stone”: Torah.

In 2 Cor 3:1–3, Paul implies that his opponents boast of their own letters of commendation while averring that Paul has none. Paul counters that he does not need to produce any letter of recommendation because the Corinthians themselves are his letter (ἐπιστολή) of recommendation, with the words of that letter written by God himself upon human hearts (vv. 2–3). Then, having already made a distinction between a *written text* and the work of the *Spirit*, he extends this line of argument, moving from the credentials of the false teachers (written documents) to the substance of their ministry (the written text of Torah). They are teachers of the letter (γράμμα) of Torah, but he is a minister of the Spirit under the new covenant (v. 6).²⁵

This gives rise to the premise of Paul’s entire discussion: “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (v. 6). This is itself an interpretation of the OT. It arises from the whole history of Israel’s inability to keep the Sinai covenant, and in particular from the fact that it must be replaced with a new covenant that can effectively bring all of its members into the knowledge of God (Jer 31:31–34). His assertion that the Spirit gives life reflects texts such as Gen 1:2, where the Spirit broods over the lifeless “waters,” or Job 33:4, which ascribes the life of an individual human to the work of the Spirit, or Ezek 37:14, “I will put my Spirit in you and you will come to life.” In short, the OT presents the origin of life in creation, the origin of life in an individual, and the origin of life in the eschatological era all as the work of the Spirit.²⁶ But the contrast with the death-dealing γράμμα serves here not as Paul’s main point but as the foundation for his main point, namely, that the Jewish

²⁵ Regarding the meaning of the antithesis of “Letter” and “Spirit” in Paul see Bernardin Schneider, “The Meaning of St. Paul’s Antithesis ‘The Letter and the Spirit,’” *CBQ* 15 (1953) 163–207, and Thomas Provenca, “Who is Sufficient for these Things?: An Exegesis of 2 Corinthians ii 15–iii 18,” *NovT* 24 (1982) 54–81 (especially pp. 62–73). The antithesis Paul intends is clearly not between a literal and a spiritual reading, as in the older allegorizing interpretation. Regardless of the precise meaning one ascribes to “letter” and “Spirit,” it plainly involves a Jewish interpretation of Torah and its requirements over against Paul’s conception of himself as a minister of the Spirit under the new covenant. Peter Richardson, “Spirit and Letter: A Foundation for Hermeneutics,” *EvQ* 45 (1973) 208–18, makes a somewhat confused attempt to relate “letter” and “Spirit” to Christian hermeneutics but still must acknowledge the original setting of the terminology.

²⁶ Against Bultmann, *Second Corinthians* 96–98, Paul’s understanding of the Spirit is not derived from “Hellenistic-Gnostic” sources.

teachers, his opponents, are spiritually unqualified. In order to see how Paul develops this point, however, we must first examine a verb critically important for this text, καταργέω.

2. *The abused καταργέω.* The verb καταργέω appears four times in 2 Corinthians 3 (vv. 7, 11, 13, 14). Many interpreters take it to describe how the glow on Moses' face "faded out"²⁷ (vv. 7, 13) and also to describe how the veil on the faces of readers of Torah can be "removed" in Christ (v. 14). But καταργέω actually means to "render powerless" or "make inoperative or ineffective." It is related to the adjective ἀργός (contracted from ἄεργος), meaning "idle."²⁸ From that meaning, it can in a legal or quasi-legal context also mean to "nullify" or "make obsolete" a legal requirement. Also, in the passive voice and with a person as subject, it can mean to be freed of legal obligations. A survey of the usage of καταργέω (especially as used in the NT) demonstrates that the word never means "fade" or "destroy," and that it would only mean "be removed," "be made obsolete," or "come to an end" in a *legal* sense. That is, one can speak of a legal obligation being "removed" (that is, being "nullified") with καταργέω, but one cannot speak of physically removing an object, such as a veil, with that verb.²⁹

a. *Classical and Septuagintal usage of καταργέω.* Pre-Christian Greek texts with καταργέω are very sparse, but they reflect the meaning "to render powerless" or "make non-functional." This can be illustrated by Euripides, *Phoenissae* 751–753:

ὄνομα δ' ἐκάστου διατριβὴ πολλὴ λέγειν,
ἐχθρῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν καθημένων.
ἀλλ' εἴμ', ὅπως ἂν μὴ καταργῶμεν χεῖρα.

To speak the name of each man would make for a long speech,
With enemies set against these very walls.
But I am going, so that we not make our hands idle.

Another example is from a text from the Augustan era, Athenaeus *Mechanicus*, *On Machines* 4.6: Ὁ γὰρ μόνος κληθεὶς δικαίως ποιητῆς οὐδὲ τὸν δοθέντα παρὰ τῶν θεῶν εἰς τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμῶν τοῦ σώματος ὕπνον παννύχιον εὔδειν ἐῤ. οὕτω πολλὴν φαίνεται ποιούμενος πρόνοιαν τοῦ μὴ καταργεῖσθαι τὴν διάνοιαν ἐπὶ πολλὸν χρόνον ("For the only poet who is justly called by that name does not permit slumber, that gift provided by the gods for the refreshment of our bodies, to last all night. In this, he seems to be creating a program

²⁷ Linda Belleville, *Reflections of Glory: Paul's Polemical Use of the Moses-Doxa Tradition in 2 Corinthians 3.1–18* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 204–5, defends the interpretation of the word as "fading" but gives no real supporting evidence.

²⁸ Gerhard Delling, *TDNT*, "ἀργός, ἀργεω, καταργεω" 1:452–4, provides a useful if somewhat flawed survey of the word and its meaning. He wrongly asserts that καταργεω can mean to "destroy," but he rightly points to the connection between καταργεω and ἀργός, "idle."

²⁹ Bible translators and NT scholars alike are arbitrary in their handling of καταργεω. See, e.g., the treatment of the verb in James D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (WBC 38A; Waco, TX: Word, 1988) 319.

to keep us from letting our mental facilities become unproductive for a long period of time”).³⁰

There are four occurrences of καταργέω in the LXX, at Ezra³¹ 4:21, 23; 5:5; and 6:8.³² All concern the failed effort to prevent the Jews from rebuilding Jerusalem and its walls, and all are grammatically similar, with the verb having the Jewish workers either as its direct object (4:21, 23; 5:5) or passive subject (6:8). In every case, the issue is whether the men will be made idle, not working, so that the walls would not be completed. Ezra 4:21 is typical: καὶ νῦν θέτε γνώμην καταργῆσαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐκείνους καὶ ἡ πόλις ἐκείνη οὐκ οἰκοδομηθήσεται ἔτι ὅπως ἀπὸ τῆς γνώμης (“And now issue a finding to stop those men from working, and that city will not be built any longer in accordance with the finding”). καταργέω cannot mean to “destroy” or “bring to an end,” much less to “fade away” or “remove,” in any of these instances. It describes causing a person to cease functioning in some specific work.

b. *καταργέω in the New Testament.* We will now survey, for the most part sequentially, every occurrence of καταργέω in the NT outside of 2 Corinthians 3. The intent here is not to provide anything like a complete exegesis of each text, but to demonstrate that the standard meaning described above for καταργέω is applicable in every case (as opposed to renditions such as “remove,” “destroy,” “cut off,” or “come to an end”). Indeed, by not adhering to the established meaning of the word, interpreters have sometimes missed entirely the point that a text is making.

In Luke 13:7, a landowner desires to dig up a fig tree that bears no fruit in order that the tree not “make the ground unproductive” (ἵνατί καὶ τὴν γῆν καταργεῖ). This illustrates the more ordinary, practical usage of the verb and is analogous to what we see in classical literature and in the LXX.

Paul uses καταργέω in the context of his discussions of justification and salvation history. In the quasi-legal language of Rom 3:3, the unbelief of some does not “nullify the faithfulness of God” (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει), rendering void God’s adherence to the covenants and his purposes in them. In Rom 3:31, Paul similarly rejects the idea that the gospel of faith renders the law inoperative (νόμον οὐκ καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ γένοιτο). Here, the meaning of καταργέω is established by contextual antonym, ἵστημι (ἰστάνω), in the clause ἀλλὰ νόμον ἰστάνομεν (“but we validate law”).³³ The point is that faith does not promote an antinomian indulgence in sin; it does not render inoperative the function of Torah as an instructor in righteous-

³⁰ He is referring to Homer *Iliad* 2.24. See David Whitehead and P. H. Blyth, *Athenaeus Mechanicus, On Machines: Translated with Introduction and Commentary* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2004) 67.

³¹ I am referring to LXX 2 Esdras, a fairly literal translation of Ezra-Nehemiah. This is not the same as the English 2 Esdras, an apocalyptic work called 4 Esdras in the Vulgate. The four verses cited above (4:21, 23; 5:5; 6:8) are in Ezra in the MT and the English Bible.

³² In every case the verb translates the Aramaic כּטל (pael stem), “to cause to cease working,” as in Ezra 4:21 אֲלֶיךָ אֲבִירָא אֲבִירָא לְבַשְׂתָּם שְׂמֵרָה שְׂמֵרָה אֲלֶיךָ (“Now make a decree to stop these men from working”).

³³ Cf. Mark 7:9.

ness.³⁴ Instead, faith validates the right of God to demand complete obedience. There is no implication of “destruction” or “removal” in *καταργέω* here.³⁵ In Rom 4:14, Paul argues that if those who are of the law are rightful heirs of Abraham, then faith is emptied of all effectiveness and the promise to Abraham is nullified (*κεκένωται ἡ πίστις καὶ κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία*). The verbs *κενώνω* and *καταργέω* are not synonyms, but they are used analogously, and both convey the idea of faith and promise becoming without value, meaning or power.³⁶ In Rom 6:6, the old self has been crucified “so that the body of sin may be made inoperative” (*ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας*).³⁷ These uses of *καταργέω* are in accord with the normal meanings of “to render ineffective” or “to nullify.”

Romans 7:2 illustrates the passive use of *καταργέω* with a personal subject in a legal context. It states of a woman that when her husband dies *κατήργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός*. The woman is the subject, but of course she is not herself “nullified” or “rendered powerless” (nor does she “fade away,” “come to an end,” or “get removed”). The woman is subject strictly in her capacity as the bearer of legal obligations, and it is this status that has been nullified. Thus, translating woodenly but bringing out the underlying grammar, this is, “She, in her status as a party operating under contractual constraints, has experienced a nullifying of the husband’s legal claims.” In more natural English, it means, “Her legal obligations to her husband have been nullified.” But the legal significance of *καταργέω* is in this verse obvious; it refers to laws and obligations being voided. Romans 7:6 uses the passive of *καταργέω* in precisely the same way, stating that, having died with Christ, we are released from all obligations to the law (*νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου*). As a side note, we should observe that while it is true that in English one could perhaps say that a nullified legal provision has been “removed,” this does not mean that *καταργέω* can describe the *physical* removal of an

³⁴ 2 Tim 3:16 similarly asserts that Torah and the rest of the Scriptures continue to function to instruct believers in principles of right and wrong.

³⁵ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975) 1:223 asserts that *καταργέω* is Paul’s translation of *לבוש*, to “cease working” (see Eccl 12:3). While I agree that *καταργέω* essentially has this meaning, I believe that the meaning of *καταργέω* should be sought in Greek lexicography and not from hypothetical Hebrew antecedents. See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 252 n. 37.

³⁶ As Cranfield, *Romans* 1:240, n. 4, points out, a good analogy for the meaning of *κεκένωται ἡ πίστις* here is 1 Cor 15:14, *εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν*. This, in turn, illustrates the significance of *κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία* in Rom 4:14.

³⁷ Dunn, *Romans* 305, wrongly translates this as “in order that the body of sin might be done away with.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 316, cites H. Frankemölle, *Das Taufverständnis des Paulus: Taufe, Tod und Auferstehung nach Röm 6* (SBS 47; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1970) 76, to the effect that *καταργέω* means to “annihilate” and that this should not be “watered down” to mean “ineffective.” But the proper thing is to translate the verb as accurately as possible, not as emphatically as possible. Paul’s point is not that the *σῶμα* is “annihilated” by the cross, a metaphor that is at any rate difficult to make sense of in this context. Rather, with respect to its ability to dominate a person for sin, the *σῶμα* is made ineffective and powerless (*τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ*).

object such as a veil. To make such a claim only demonstrates linguistic incompetence. One can no more use *καταργέω* with that sense in Greek than one can meaningfully say in English that a veil has been “nullified.”³⁸

In 1 Cor 1:28, God chooses the “things that are not” so that he might “nullify (or render impotent) the things that are” (ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ). The substantive τὰ ὄντα refers to persons and institutions that presently have power, prestige, wealth, reputed wisdom, and so forth. To “nullify” them is to render them powerless and to void their claims to status.³⁹ The text does not mean that they are “destroyed” or “removed.” In 1 Cor 2:6, similarly, the powers of this age are becoming impotent or nullified (τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταργουμένων). That is, in the face of the power of the crucified and risen Christ, the powers have lost the ability to set the standards by which the world operates and so to govern the minds of people.

In 1 Cor 6:13, Paul declares τὰ βρώματα τῇ κοιλίᾳ καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν (“food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food”), ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ταύτην καὶ ταῦτα καταργήσει. The latter clause is routinely but wrongly translated that God will “destroy” food and the stomach (e.g. NRSV, ESV, and NIV).⁴⁰ That is far too violent a rendition for *καταργέω*.⁴¹ The word means that God will render them inoperative, as their role in preserving the life of the natural body (which Paul in 1 Cor 15:44 calls the σῶμα ψυχικόν) will be obsolete in the eschaton. In the new creation, God nullifies the former standards, the rules by which the old creation functioned. In saying that God will render food and the stomach inoperative, Paul describes the establishment of a new order of existence. By failing to translate *καταργέω* properly, one is unable to see properly the eschatological dimension to Paul’s statement and converts it into an insipid aphorism to the effect that all flesh will one day pass away,⁴² albeit one in which God is strangely spoken of as actively causing this by “destroying” the stomach. The point is that in the resurrection, which Paul claims that God will bring about and which he says should be the entire focus of the Christian’s hope, the life of the body will not be sustained by current natural processes. Therefore, Christians should not unduly focus on stomach and food now.

³⁸ William R. Baker, “Did the Glory of Moses’ Face Fade? A Reexamination of *καταργέω* in 2 Corinthians 3:7–18,” *BBR* 10 (2000) 1–15, commits the same fallacy, apparently reasoning that since to “render something ineffective” is to “block” it from working; the verb can mean to physically “block” the shining of Moses’ face. This translation is *ad hoc*; Baker has no evidence that the word means to “block,” and at any rate this translation is impossible at 2 Cor 3:11, 14.

³⁹ The use of *καταργέω* in conjunction with τὰ ὄντα is lexicographically helpful. See Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 185–86. I think that Thiselton is taking “nullify” too literally when he translates it here as “bring to nothing” (*καταργέω* does not literally carry a connotation of a literal void), but the verb does perfectly suit the metaphorical significance of τὰ ὄντα as a reference to prestige and power.

⁴⁰ The translation “destroy” is also followed in some scholarly treatments, such as David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 230.

⁴¹ Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* 293 n. 42, could hardly get it more wrong than when he states, “In virtually all Pauline uses of *katargein*, the reference is to a (potentially violent) bringing-to-an-end.” The verb does not mean “bring to an end” and it carries no implication of violence.

⁴² As seen in Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 110.

In 1 Cor 13:8–11, Paul uses *καταργέω* four times. The usage in verse 8 might suggest that *καταργέω* and *παύομαι* are synonymous, with both meaning to “cease”⁴³ (εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλῶσσαι, παύσονται [“whether prophecies—they will become inoperative;⁴⁴ whether tongues—they will cease”]). But this conclusion would be erroneous. In the same verse, Paul says that “love never falls” (ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει). The word *καταργέω* no more means to “cease” than either it or the word *παύομαι* mean to “fall” (πίπτω). Similarly, Rom 4:14 (κεκένωται ἡ πίστις καὶ κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία [“faith has been emptied and the promise has been nullified”]) does not imply that *καταργέω* indicates physical emptiness (κενόω). In both Romans 4 and 1 Corinthians 13, Paul uses *καταργέω* with words that have some semantic similarity to it but that are by no means synonymous with it. The point of *καταργέω* in 1 Cor 13:8–11 is that when the perfect means of knowing God has come (the direct encounter with him in the resurrection), then all other modes of knowing him (prophecy, tongues, and the like) will be “non-functional.” That is, they will be obsolete, have no operational purpose, and so will no longer be in use. Prophecy, like tongues, will indeed cease (*παύομαι*), but that is not what is conveyed by *καταργέω*. When the child becomes a man, his former toys may or may not have ceased to exist, but he no longer employs them, and thus they become pointless for him (v. 11, ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου [“when I became a man, I let the things of my childhood become idle”]).

In 1 Cor 15:24–26, every authority and power and finally death itself will be rendered powerless in the resurrection (ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν . . . ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος). This does not mean that these things will have been “destroyed”; it means that the powers (the principles that govern this world, including the law and ultimately Satan as the accuser) will have no legal claim over the saints, and thus that death will have no power to act against them. Paul’s point is not that death will no longer exist or will have been “removed,” as though it were a physical presence. His meaning is that Christ’s resurrection nullifies all claims that the law and death have against the church. That is, the resurrection is an essential element of justification. Analogous usage to 1 Corinthians 15 is found in 2 Tim 1:10 and Heb 2:14. The 2 Timothy text speaks of Christ as the one who “annulled (the power of) death” (*καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον*). Hebrews 2:14 states that Christ in his death made the devil, the one who held the power of death, powerless (ἵνα διὰ τοῦ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν τὸν διάβολον). In none of these cases does the word mean “destroy.”

In Galatians, Paul uses *καταργέω* to describe how the power of the gospel is annulled by reversion to the law. In Gal 3:17, contrasting the giving of the

⁴³ Thiselton, *First Corinthians* 1061, for example, translates *καταργηθήσονται* as “will be brought to an end” alongside of *παύσονται*, which he translates as “stop.”

⁴⁴ Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* 225, actually takes *καταργηθήσονται* to mean “be destroyed” here, but this truly makes no sense. What does it mean to say that prophecies are “destroyed”?

law (Exodus 19–24) with the promise and covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12 and 15), Paul argues that the law that was introduced 430 years after the covenant with Abraham could not revoke that covenant so as to nullify the promise (οὐκ ἀκυροῖ εἰς τὸ καταργῆσαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν). In Gal 5:4, using a passive of καταργέω that is analogous to the usage in Romans 7, he argues that any Christian who seeks justification by the law—that is, by becoming a proselyte—has annulled the benefits of knowing Christ (κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε). Once again, the individual is the grammatical subject of the verb, but it is the effectual status of being a beneficiary of the grace of Christ that is actually annulled. Expansively translating it, the verse means, “All of you who seek to be justified by the law have undergone a cancellation of the benefits of Christ under the new covenant.”⁴⁵ In Gal 5:11, Paul similarly asserts that if he preached circumcision along with his preaching of Christ, then the scandal of the cross, as well as its power, would be rendered non-functional (ἄρα κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον τοῦ σταυροῦ). That is, if Paul preached that one must proselytize if one wishes to join the people of God, he would not offend any of his Jewish opponents, but baptism into Christ would lose all significance and effect.

The usage of καταργέω in Eph 2:15 is distinctive, as it concerns the requirements of Judaism that function as a boundary between Jew and Gentile. Christ created a unified people of God by annulling⁴⁶ the law with its stipulations (τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας). The word καταργέω does not imply a physical removal of a barrier, analogous to the destruction of a wall. The metaphor of the dividing wall is employed in verse 14, but this is governed not by καταργέω but by λυνῶ, the clause being καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας (“and he has brought down the partition barrier”). But in verse 15, the meaning is that the stipulations of the law, the requirements of Judaism that actually separated Jew from Gentile, have been legally nullified.

A very different but lexically helpful usage appears at 2 Thess 2:8. This text speaks of the “lawless one” (ὁ ἄνομος) whom Christ will remove by the breath of his mouth and render powerless by the appearance of his presence (ὃν ὁ κύριος ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ). The second clause, governed by καταργέω, is not synonymous with the first, governed by ἀναίρεω (“remove”). The two clauses

⁴⁵ As elsewhere, scholars and translators here abuse καταργέω with *ad hoc*, unprecedented, and groundless translations. Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990) 228, translates this as “you . . . are alienated from Christ.” English translations variously have “cut . . . off” (NRSV), “separated” (NJB), “severed” (ESV), etc. The verb does not mean to be “alienated” or “cut off” or the like.

⁴⁶ Here, καταργέω is often translated as “abolish,” and this is acceptable so long as one remembers that it has this meaning in a context of law or fixed policy. But scholars abuse the verb by illegitimately transferring the meaning “abolish” to an unsuitable context. Thus, Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word, 1990) 128, reconstructs what he believes to be the original hymn behind the Ephesians text and creates the line τὴν ἐχθρὰν καταργήσας, which he translates in his rewritten verse 15 as “having abolished . . . the hostility” (p. 123). But it would be peculiar indeed to have ἐχθρὰ as the direct object of καταργέω. Lincoln’s reading is a particularly egregious but not atypical example of the misunderstanding and misuse of καταργέω in Christian scholarship.

speak of two different matters. The first is indeed a removal, and is accomplished by a divine word of judgment (“by the breath of his mouth”). The second is the nullification of certain claims, and is accomplished by the mere presence of the true Christ (“by the visible manifestation of his arrival” [τῆ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ]). This usage, in which a person is “nullified,” is analogous to what we see in Romans 7: just as the widow is “nullified” with respect to her legal obligations to her late husband, so the lawless one is “nullified” with respect to his messianic claims. The point is not the physical destruction⁴⁷ or removal of the person. In the case of the lawless one, it is that his pretense of being a savior is abruptly rendered void by the *parousia* of the actual Christ.

We have not yet considered 2 Corinthians 3, but our conclusion thus far is that καταργέω is in no place correctly translated as “remove,” “destroy,” or “come to an end,” much less to “fade away.” Had Paul in 2 Cor 3:7 meant that the glow on Moses’ face was fading out, the proper word to use would have been μαραίνω. This is a common Greek verb; it is used of a fire that fades out, as in Homer, *Iliad* 23.228: τῆμος πυρκαϊῆ ἐμαραίνετο, παύσατο δὲ φλόξ (“then the pyre faded out; the fire ceased”). The term μαραίνω can, then, refer to anything that gradually fades away. It can be used intransitively (to “fade out”) in the passive voice or transitively (to “make something fade away”) in the active. The chorus in Sophocles’ *Ajax* 714 sings πάνθ’ ὁ μέγας χρόνος μαραίνει (“Great Time makes all things fade”). The word was extant in NT times and appears in Jas 1:11, where the withering of vegetation under the sun’s heat is the analogy for how, in the passage of time, the wealthy with all their business dealings fade away (οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται). Throughout Greek literature, μαραίνω is used of fires dying, of beauty fading, of rivers drying up, of flowers withering, and of winds and waves abating,⁴⁸ and it was entirely suited to Paul’s meaning if he had he wanted to say that the glow on Moses’ face was fading out. Similarly, we already know what word Paul used to signify the “removal” of a veil: περιαιρέω (2 Cor 3:16). Thus, it is highly improbable that Paul uses καταργέω in 2 Corinthians 3 with the anomalous meanings “fade away,” “come to an end,” or “remove.”

2. *The meaning of 2 Cor 3:7–18.* The structure of this text is not complicated. First, Paul asserts that the old covenant had surprisingly great “glory” (considering that it was the “ministry of condemnation”), but that the new covenant has far greater glory. Thus, it is foolish to have a ministry that is based upon the “letter” that was subject to cancellation, the old covenant (vv. 7–11). Then, Paul contrasts Moses’ veiling of his face before the Israelites (vv. 12–15) with his unveiling of his face before YHWH (vv. 16–18). In the former case, he speaks of two counterparts: the ancient Israelites,

⁴⁷ F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45; Waco, TX: Word, 1982) 172, translates καταργέω here (without comment) as “bring to an end.”

⁴⁸ LSJ, “μαραίνω.”

whose hardened hearts kept them from understanding the significance of Moses' face and forced him to put on the veil (vv. 12–14a), and Paul's opponents, who likewise have hardened hearts that have effectively given them an internal veil when they read Moses (vv. 14b–15). Both parties are cut off from the glory of God. Similarly, the final section (vv. 16–18) speaks of two counterparts: Moses unveiled in the presence of the Lord, and new covenant believers unveiled in the presence of the Lord. Both parties experience the transformative glory.

a. *Glory within the two covenants: verses 7–11.* Paul begins in verse 7 by speaking of how even “the ministry of death, engraved in letters on stone” had glory. His harsh description of the law reflects his overall view that, people being the fallible creatures that they are, the Sinai covenant of itself had no real hope of success. But this is certainly not a description of the ministry of Moses himself; the whole of Moses' efforts in Exodus 32–34 were directed toward obtaining forgiveness for Israel, as described above. Far from being a minister of death, Moses pleaded for the lives of the Israelites (Exod 32:11–14, 31; 33:16–17; 34:9). But Moses, the one who carried down the Law engraved in stone, still represents the Sinai covenant, and it is in that context that the “glory” in his face was part of the “ministry of death” and “condemnation.” It was “glory”—obtaining mercy from God—but in the context of a covenant that in the end could not save.

Furthermore, the “glory” in Moses' face is not to be defined as the glow he had; that glow was a visible manifestation of the glory, an epiphenomenon and not the thing itself. In every other case where Paul speaks of glory in this text, it belongs to either the old or the new covenant and not to Moses personally. In the first half of verse 7, when he says that the old covenant (ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου) came into existence “with glory” (ἐν δόξῃ), the “glory” is certainly not Moses' shining face; it is a feature of the covenant. Similarly, in verse 8, the new covenant (ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος [“the ministry of the Spirit”]) comes with glory. In verse 9, too, glory is an attribute of both covenants. We see the same again in verse 10, which describes the old covenant as “the thing that had been glorified” (τὸ δεδοξασμένον). In verse 11, context demands that τὸ καταργούμενον (“the thing becoming null and void”) and τὸ μένον (“the abiding thing”) refer respectively to the old and new covenants,⁴⁹ and both of them are characterized by δόξα (“glory”).

In verse 7, therefore, the glory that is called τὴν καταργουμένην is a glory that is located within τὸ καταργούμενον, the old covenant, in verse 11. The participle καταργουμένην is feminine in verse 7 because it is used adjectivally with δόξα; it is “the old covenant glory of his face.” In other words, the language alludes forward to the substantive use of καταργούμενον in verse 11. It does not literally mean that the glory is being nullified. By analogy, one could say, “The glory of Old Kingdom Egypt was founded in a despotic, theocratic state. One can still see that despotic glory in the pyramids.” Even though the grammar of the latter sentence strictly identifies “glory” as the

⁴⁹ See Belleville, *2 Corinthians* 101.

despotic thing and makes the pyramids the locus of that glory, it does not really mean that either glory or the pyramids were despotic. It means that the Old Kingdom's glory, made visible in the pyramids, was founded upon a despotic system. One must distinguish between grammar and rhetoric. The glow in Moses' face by synecdoche represented the glory of the old covenant, but it was the covenant, not the glow, that was "becoming null and void."

More profoundly, we cannot understand this passage if we think of "glory" as something spectacular (fire, thunder, earthquake, a great shining light, or a glowing face). When Paul speaks of the old covenant's "glory" in verse 7, he does not have in mind the fire and earthquake of Sinai (Exodus 19)—things that, like the fire and earthquake that Elijah experienced on Sinai, did not really convey the meaning of YHWH's presence (1 Kgs 19:11–12). He is thinking of Moses' direct experience with the divine presence in Exod 34:6–8, 28, 34. What Paul describes and what he himself now displays "unveiled" before the nations is the goodness of God. Paul calls this "glory" because of the context of Exodus 33–34. Moses at Exod 33:18 asked for a vision of YHWH's glory (כְּבוֹד) as a source of reassurance. YHWH responded to Moses in Exodus 33–34 by demonstrating to him his "goodness" (טוֹב), which, as described above, is fundamentally his grace and saving compassion (Exod 34:6–7). Paul speaks of the reception of grace as "glory" (δόξα) not just because it was visually reflected in Moses' face but because it alludes to the specific words of Moses' request ("Show me your glory"). But what Paul calls "glory" is equivalent to what Exod 33:19 calls "goodness" (טוֹב) and to what C. S. Lewis routinely called "joy." It is divine love that reclaims the human soul.

But since even the "ministry of death" came about with an experience of this kind of "glory," the new covenant, a ministry of life, must have correspondingly greater "glory," a point that Paul goes to some lengths to establish (vv. 8–11). He asserts that what had been glorified now has no glory at all in comparison to the present glory of the new covenant (v. 10). But again, this does not mean that the new covenant is somehow more dazzling than the old, as though it were a matter of a 200-watt light bulb being compared to a 15-watt light bulb. The greater "glory" is the release of the power of the Spirit. It is the fact that access to the transformative grace of God, an experience that Moses alone had in Exodus 34, is now made universal.

We should also reevaluate the meaning of ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει in verse 10. It is sometimes translated as "in this case,"⁵⁰ but the evidence for this translation is rather thin. The word μέρος essentially refers to a "part" (of a larger whole) or a "turn" (within a rotation of events, duties, or a given sequence). It can refer to one's share in something (Rev 20:6). In a geographical description, τὰ μέρη ("the parts") refers to a "region" within a larger territory (Mark 8:10). Used of people, it describes a part (of a larger group) that has something in common, be it a common ideology (Acts 23:9) or occupation (Acts 19:27). The meaning "part" can also be used for taking part in a task. Polybius, describing his willingness to take on the task of writing a history of Rome and the Punic Wars, states that if someone else had had been

⁵⁰ Following BDAG, "μέρος," 1.B.θ.

willing to do this, πολὺ γὰρ ἂν ἤττον ἔγωγε πρὸς τοῦτο τὸ μέρος ἐφιλοτιμήθην (“I would have been much less ambitious for this share [in the task of writing a history]”; *Histories* 1.4.2). From this, one might conclude that μέρος sometimes means “business” or “matter.” Although this is a possible translation, it is not precise, since the idea of having a “share” of something is fundamental to the word’s meaning.⁵¹ One should be careful about claiming without qualification that the word means “matter” or “case.”⁵² For the more neutral meaning “matter,” without any implication of a “part” or “share,” πρᾶγμα or λόγος would be a better equivalent (Matt 18:19; Mark 9:10; Acts 15:6).

On the other hand, the meaning “turn” is appropriate in a phrase such as ἀνὰ μέρος (“in turn”; 1 Cor 14:27). Similar usage is seen, for example, in Herodotus 3.69.6, speaking of a harem woman whose turn has come to go to bed with the ruler: ἐπειτε αὐτῆς μέρος ἐγίνετο τῆς ἀπίξιος παρὰ τὸν Μάγον (“when it became her turn for being with the Magus”). Also, in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 290–291 we read:

ὁ δ’ οὔτι μέλλων οὐδ’ ἀφρασμόνως ὕπνω
 νικώμενος παρήκεν ἀγγέλου μέρος

And he, neither delaying nor senselessly by sleep
 overcome, did not neglect his turn as a messenger.

But at 2 Cor 3:10, “in this matter” (or “in this case”) is the standard translation of ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει. Analogous language in the NT appears at 2 Cor 9:3 and Col 2:16. The former has ἔπεμψα δὲ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ἵνα μὴ τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κενωθῆ ἐν τῷ μέρει τούτῳ, and this verse is the best candidate for a translation such as “in this matter.” But a more precise interpretation would be, “But I have sent the brothers so that our boasting about you would not prove hollow in this (your) share (of the business of collecting a donation).” Such a rendition is well in accord with standard Greek usage.

⁵¹ A similar example from Polybius appears at 18.35: κατ’ ἰδίαν μέντοι γε περὶ πλειόνων ἀνδρῶν ἐν Ῥώμῃ θαρρήσαιμι’ ἂν ἀποφίνασθαι διότι δύνανται τὴν πίστιν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει διαφυλάττειν (“And indeed I might dare say that privately the majority of men in Rome would show that they are able to maintain honesty in this particular”). He is speaking of the traditional Roman aversion to taking bribes during the early days of the Republic. Here, ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει can be translated “in this particular,” but one should understand that it specifically refers to a part of a larger whole (in this case, the matter of bribe-taking as one part of the larger realm of public duties and ethics).

⁵² An example that is wrongly cited (in BAGD, “μέρος,” 1.B.θ) as meaning “in this matter” is Josephus, *Antiquities* 15:61 τὰ γε μὴν εἰς τὴν πολυτέλειαν τῆς ἐκφορᾶς καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπεδείξατο πολλὴν μὲν τὴν παρασκευὴν περὶ τε τὰς θήκας καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν θυμιαμάτων ποιησάμενος πολλὴν δὲ συγκαταθάπτων κόσμον ὡς ἐκπλήξαι τὸ λυπηρὸν τῆς ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν ἀλγηδόνας καὶ παραμυθῆσθαι τούτῳ τῷ μέρει (“And in fact, the things that tended toward excess in the funeral also functioned rather to display that he had made great preparation about the caskets and about the abundance of incense and also to display a great volume of burial goods, and so through sheer amazement to drive away the pain of grief in the women and by this aspect of the affair to give comfort”). Here, τούτῳ τῷ μέρει does not broadly mean “in this matter.” It is instrumental and means that “by this aspect of the affair” of Herod’s overall scheme of murdering Aristobulus (that is, by the elaborate funeral) Herod was able to deflect public outrage and suspicion away from himself.

That is, it does not refer in some broad sense to a “matter” or a “business” but more specifically to the “share” or “part” Corinth has in raising the Jerusalem offering.

The latter occurrence, Col 2:16 (Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων), means, “So let no one judge you in regard to food and drink or in regard to a festival cycle or a new moon [cycle] or [a cycle] of Sabbaths.” The phrase ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς does not mean “with regard to a festival” (ESV; other translations are similar). The preposition ἐν without the use of μέρος already means “in regard to,” as in the example ἐν βρώσει, which plainly means “in regard to food.” Rather, ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς κτλ. refers to the observance of an annual progression of feasts, new moons, or Sabbaths; this usage, translated above as “cycle,” follows the standard meaning of “turn” for μέρος.

For 2 Cor 3:10, therefore, a translation such as “in this case” is not as well attested as one might suppose, and at any rate it is not at all clear what “in this case” means in this context.⁵³ But the meaning of verse 10 is actually clarified by what follows, as implied by γὰρ (“since”) in verse 11. The latter verse points to a distinction between the cancellation of the old covenant (τὸ καταργούμενον) and the appearance of the new (and abiding) covenant (τὸ μένον). This indicates that in verse 10 ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει is concerned with the change from one era to another. That is, ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει is “in this turn” and it refers to the coming of the present era of the new covenant. This is in contrast to the previous era of Sinai, which is by implication ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ μέρει (“in that turn”). “When οὗτος and ἐκεῖνος refer to two things before mentioned, ἐκεῖνος prop. belongs to the more remote, in time, place, or thought, οὗτος to the nearer.”⁵⁴ The implied contrast I am suggesting has an analogy in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6.1.11, where ἐν τῷ μέρει ἐκείνῳ means “in that (my) turn”.⁵⁵ εἰ δ’ ἄπεισιν ἐκ τῆς χάρας, δῆλον ὅτι ὁ μὲν Ἀσσύριος

⁵³ Edmund Hill, “The Construction of Three Passages from St. Paul,” *CBQ* 23 (1961) 296–301, fairly wrenches the verse from context and asserts that Paul is contrasting two things within the new covenant: “the service of condemnation” and “the service of justice” (pp. 299–301). To sustain this, he gives a translation of verse 10 that is, to me, incoherent: “Though in fact, the thing glorified in this (latter) case has not been (manifestly) glorified, because its glory is so overwhelming” (p. 300). Yet another view is William J. Dumbrell, “Paul’s Use of Exodus 34 in 2 Corinthians 3,” in *God who is Rich in Mercy* (ed. David Broughton Knox, Peter Thomas O’Brien, and David Gilbert Peterson; Grand Rapids: Lancer, 1986) 186, who interprets ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει as “for in this respect (that is, with respect to the power to confer righteousness and life).” But the translation relies on the dubious rendering in Col 2:16 as a precedent, and the accompanying interpretation reads too much into the text. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* 51, prefers “in this case” as a translation and takes it to mean, “in comparison with” the new covenant glory. Martin, *2 Corinthians* 64, provides some rationale for this interpretation. He accepts the meaning “in this case” and explains that this means “as far as concerns the glory of the Gospel.” From this, he translates ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης as “compared with the surpassing glory” (p. 57). But the reasoning is strained and the translation is impossible. Neither the English “in this case” nor the Greek ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει means “in comparison with.”

⁵⁴ LSJ, “ἐκεῖνος.”

⁵⁵ The translation “in my turn” is not original to me but is employed by Walter Miller in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* (trans. Walter Miller; 2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914) 2:127.

ἀναπνεύσεται, οὐ τίνων ποινὰς ἦν τε ὑμᾶς ἐπεχείρησεν ἀδικεῖν καὶ ἦν ἐμὲ ἐποίησεν· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐν τῷ μέρει ἐκεῖνῳ πάλιν δώσω δίκην ὅτι ὑμῖν φίλος ἐγενόμην (“But if he leaves the country now, it is clear that the Assyrian will breathe a sigh of relief at there not being any penalties for the wrongs he has attempted to do to you and for those which he has done me. But I, in my turn, shall pay the penalty to him since I have been your ally”). In this instance, the implied ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει refers the nearer event, the “turn” of retribution that the Assyrian will escape, and the stated ἐν ἐκεῖνῳ τῷ μέρει refers to the more distant event, the Assyrian’s subsequent retribution against the speaker. In 2 Corinthians 3, therefore, the phrase ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει could be translated as “when [the new covenant] had its turn.” We should note that the two meanings “part” and “turn” for μέρος are not as far apart as they appear to be in English. Each covenant, both the old and the new, has a “part” in the history of salvation, and the “turn” of the new comes after the old.

Verse 11 sets two things in contrast to one another. These are the Sinai covenant, which is τὸ καταργούμενον (“the thing becoming null and void”), and the new covenant, which is τὸ μένον (“the thing remaining in force”). The verb μένω here is the opposite of καταργεῖω and, used of a covenant, means to “remain in force.” Analogous usage is in Herodotus 4.201.3: κατέρρηξαν δὲ τοῦδε εἵνεκα τὴν ἐποίησαν γέφυραν, ἵνα ἐμπεδορκόειεν, ταμόντες τοῖσι Βαρκαίοισι χρόνον μένειν αἰεὶ τὸ ὄρκιον ὅσον ἂν ἡ γῆ μένη κατὰ τότε εἶχε· καταρρήξασι δὲ οὐκέτι ἔμενε τὸ ὄρκιον κατὰ χώραν: “They broke down the causeway they had made for this reason, that that they might [formally] keep the terms of their oath, since they had made a covenant with the Barcaeans that the oath would remain in force (μένειν) for so long a time as the land maintained the status it had at the time [that the covenant was made]. But since they had broken down [the causeway,] the oath no longer remained in force (οὐκέτι ἔμενε) with respect to the territory.”⁵⁶ In the Herodotus text τέμνω, like the Hebrew כרת, means “to make a covenant,” and μένω refers to its terms remaining in force. In 2 Corinthians 3, similarly, the contrast between τὸ καταργούμενον and τὸ μένον concerns one covenant that is cancelled and another that remains in force.⁵⁷

In 2 Cor 3:11, τὸ καταργούμενον is a pejorative circumlocution for the old covenant, and every use of καταργεῖω in this chapter points toward the old covenant. The usage is consistent and evidently proceeds from Paul’s theological conviction that the old covenant has been annulled by the new, but this terminology also flows from the narrative of Exodus 32–34 itself, where YHWH comes very near to cancelling the Sinai covenant (by killing all the Israelites!). From this standpoint, τὸ καταργούμενον might be translated as “(the covenant) subject to cancellation,” since the exodus narrative shows that it came perilously close to cancellation even before the arrival of

⁵⁶ Herodotus is describing how the Persians conquered the Barcaeans by trickery, keeping the letter but not the spirit of a treaty they had made.

⁵⁷ The REB confuses the reader badly by translating τὸ καταργούμενον in verse 11 as “what was to fade away,” suggesting that Paul has the glow on Moses’ face in mind.

the new covenant. For Paul, this sets old covenant against the covenant that is μένον, “not subject to cancellation.”

We have noted that Paul describes the old covenant in extraordinarily negative terms. It is the “letter” that “kills” (v. 6), “the ministry of death” (v. 7), “the ministry of condemnation” (v. 9), and the “thing that was in process of becoming null and void” (v. 11). Only once is it described in positive language, as “the thing that had been glorified” (τὸ δεδοξασμένον; v. 10), but even that is negated by Paul’s claim that it turned out to have no glory at all (καὶ γὰρ οὐ δεδόξασται τὸ δεδοξασμένον). On the other hand, Paul does use neutral, non-pejorative language to refer to the actual text of Torah, calling it “the old covenant” (v. 14) and “Moses” (v. 15). In short, Paul distinguishes Torah (a canonical text) from the Sinai covenant (a pedagogue-like rod for chastising Israel, an agent of judgment and death, a covenant that could not justify the sinner, and above all, a temporary arrangement).

However, this concept of the death-dealing function of the old covenant is not so much taught here as it is presumed. It is the *premise*, not the *thesis*, of 2 Corinthians 3. The astounding thing, and the main point at this stage of Paul’s argument, is that even this covenant, the “ministry of death,” came with the “glory” of Moses’ direct encounter with God’s mercy. So then, we can better understand why Paul repeatedly speaks of the deadly effects of the old covenant and also why he so emphatically insists that the new covenant has greater glory. The forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of God, and the new heart make up the very definition and function of the new covenant (Isa 11:9; Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 36:26), just as death and condemnation make up the essence of the old. Paul is not simply making an *a fortiori* argument because he is schooled in rabbinical rhetoric.⁵⁸ His meaning is that we get a glimpse of “glory,” the transformative work of the Spirit, even in the deadly context of the old covenant, but that the full expression of “glory” is in the new, where life and forgiveness is of the essence.

To summarize: “glory” in this passage is the transformative grace of God that is displayed within the two covenants; it is not a glowing face or any other superficial splendor. As such, the “glory” of verse 7 is Moses’ experience of God’s grace on Mt. Sinai in the course of his pleading for Israel’s forgiveness, and this glory was reflected in his shining face. This reflection of glory shone so brightly in Moses’ face that the Israelites could not look at it. This brilliance demonstrates that even the old covenant, although a ministry of condemnation, did have a substantial amount of “glory.” Even so, that glory was experienced under the constraints of a covenant that was deadly and “becoming void.” The new covenant is a ministry of life, and thus it by definition has far more “glory.” This greater glory is the fact that the new covenant is abiding, not dependent on human ability, writes its precepts on the heart, and carries a sure offer of forgiveness and life. Paul does not claim that the shining of Moses’ face was fading away.

⁵⁸ It is seemingly *de rigueur* for commentaries on 2 Corinthians to observe that Paul uses a *qal vahomer* (“lesser to greater”) argument in 3:7–11. But this tells us nothing; it is only a label for a rhetorical device. The critical question is why he does it.

b. *Paul's open ministry and Moses' veil: verses 12–14a.* In verse 12, Paul directly addresses his opponents' charges. He can employ boldness, he says, because he is a minister of the new covenant. The greater "glory" of that covenant gives him a superior "hope" to believe in and proclaim. He therefore does not need to be embarrassed about his role as an envoy of Christ in dealing with his churches (that is, Paul does not employ a metaphorical veil). What Moses had to conceal can now be openly displayed. If Paul were to proclaim the new covenant in a way that wrapped it in the Sinai covenant—as his Jewish opponents did—he would in effect be concealing the glory of the new covenant in a veil.

The second half of verse 13, however, is notoriously difficult. Paul says that Moses put on the veil so that the Israelites would not stare εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου. This could be translated literally as "into the end of the thing being nullified." If one were to stretch the meaning of καταργέω to an unreasonable degree, one could claim that the "thing being nullified" is the glow on Moses' face and so render the clause to mean that Moses "put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away" (NIV). But this is impossible. Apart from the anomalous usage of καταργέω, if Paul had simply meant that Moses put on the veil so that the Israelites should not gape *until* the glow "faded away," one would expect a clause such as ἕως ἂν μαρανθῆ. ⁵⁹ If he had meant that Moses did not want them to see *the fact that* the glowing would "fade away," Paul should have used ὅτι μαρανθῆ. Using εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου would be a very odd way to say either. In other words, if Paul meant what the NIV and other translations indicate, his choice of words was semantically unnatural, contrary to his usual usage, and very cumbersome. What remains at issue, therefore, is the meaning of the prepositional phrase εἰς τὸ τέλος ("into the end") and the referent for τοῦ καταργουμένου ("of the thing being nullified").

In and of itself, the prepositional phrase εἰς τὸ τέλος (or without the article, εἰς τέλος) simply means "utterly," "completely," "for the long run," or "forever." That is, to do something "to the end" is to do it "completely" or "forever." In the LXX of Josh 3:16, the waters of the Jordan ceased flowing εἰς τὸ τέλος, "completely." In the LXX of Gen 46:4, God promises Jacob that he will bring him back up from Egypt εἰς τέλος, "forever," meaning that Israel will never again have to sojourn in Egypt. In Josh 8:24, the Israelites defeated their enemies and pursued them εἰς τέλος, "utterly," that is, not allowing stragglers to escape alive. In LXX Ps 9:19, the poor will not be forgotten εἰς τέλος, "forever." Nor is this usage confined to Septuagintal Greek; there are similar examples in classical literature, such as Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* 161: θνητῶν δ' ὄλβιος ἐς τέλος οὐδεὶς ("no one of mortals is forever happy").

Every other usage of εἰς τέλος in the NT has a similar meaning. Matthew 10:22 (also Matt 24:13 and Mark 13:13) has ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος

⁵⁹ This language is used, for example, in Byzantine texts of equine veterinary medicine of the third to fifth centuries that describe various ointments one should apply to a wound or injury "until it fades away" (ἕως ἂν μαρανθῆ). See *Hippiatrica Cantabrigiensia* 99.1.4–5 (TLG 0738.006).

σωθήσεται, “the one who has endured steadfastly will be saved.” Because εἰς τέλος can here be understood in a fairly literal rendering, “unto (the) end,” interpreters have not recognized that this is a standard Greek idiom for doing something with constancy or completely. It is the idiomatic usage that accounts for the lack of the article here; εἰς τέλος of itself does not mean “until the end of the present age.” In the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:5), the unjust judge says that he will take care of her problem “so that she not keep coming forever and wear me out” (ἵνα μὴ εἰς τέλος ἐρχομένη ὑπωπιάζη με). John 13:1 says of Jesus that “having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the uttermost” (ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους τοὺς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς). Here, εἰς τέλος does not strictly mean that he loved them to the end of his life, although that is implied as well. It is adverbial, meaning that he loved them steadfastly and completely. In ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ’ αὐτούς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος (1 Thess 2:16), although εἰς τέλος could possibly mean that the wrath of God has overtaken them “at last” (as many translations have it),⁶⁰ it probably means, “The wrath of God has overtaken them completely” (meaning that there is no escape). The only appearance of the phrase εἰς τὸ τέλος (with the article) in the NT is at 2 Cor 3:13, but the presence of the article on τοῦ καταργουμένου explains this, and it does not modify the meaning.

The object at which the Israelites were staring is self-evident: it was Moses’ glowing face. But Paul’s language in 2 Corinthians 3 is elliptical, not explicitly mentioning what is obvious, and we must supply “Moses’ face” as the object of people’s staring. Apart from the addition of the participle τοῦ καταργουμένου, in fact, Paul is asserting no more than Exodus 34 itself asserts: Moses put a veil on his face so that the people, whether in fascination or in horror, would not keep looking at it. If he had simply written πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τέλος, it would mean no more than “so that the Israelites would not keep on staring (at his face).” As it is, however, Paul does add τοῦ καταργουμένου.

Since verse 11 already identifies τὸ καταργούμενον as the old covenant, τοῦ καταργουμένου surely refers to the same thing. Like the phrase “the ministry of death,” it is a circumlocution for the old covenant. To someone who understands the Greek idiom and the contextual meaning of τὸ καταργούμενον, therefore, πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου means, “so that the Israelites would not stare at Moses’ face forever—right up to the very end of the old covenant.” This is hyperbole, and Paul does not literally mean that, apart from the veil, the Israelites

⁶⁰ LSJ, “εἰς,” A.II.2, lists the meaning “at last” for εἰς τέλος, citing Herodotus 3.40, but this is misleading as it pertains to 1 Thess 2:16. The latter text, as it appears in English translations (NIV, NRSV, etc.), uses “at last” as an exclamation for “finally,” as in “the wrath of God has *finally* overtaken them!” The NJB translates it as “finally,” and the ESV includes the exclamation point. The Herodotus text reads, οὐδένα γὰρ κω λόγῳ οἶδα ἀκούσας ὅστις ἐς τέλος οὐ κακῶς ἐτελεύτησε πρόρριζος, εὐτυχῶν τὰ πάντα (“From all I have heard, I don’t yet know of any man successful in everything who did not *at the end* perish terribly, roots and all”). Here, ἐς τέλος refers to the final outcome of a man’s life and is not an exclamatory “finally!”

would have kept staring at Moses' face forever, until the old covenant itself had become obsolete. However, Paul also sees a deeper, theological significance to the event; this, too, explains the seemingly peculiar addition of τοῦ καταργουμένου.

It is probable, in fact, that Paul's language is deliberately ambiguous—something that is natural and easy with εἰς τὸ τέλος but unnatural and forced in English translation. Because the word τέλος also has a teleological meaning ("purpose, goal"), the phrase εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου could mean either "until the termination of" or "into the purpose of" the old covenant. In the latter sense, Paul would not be saying that Moses was trying to hide from Israel some ultimate purpose of the old covenant, as though, as some have suggested, Moses was concealing the "pre-existent Christ."⁶¹ But in a more immediate sense, the purpose (τέλος) of the old covenant was that people might know God. That was, after all, the whole point of the Israelite experience of coming out of Egypt, making their way to Sinai, and entering into covenant with YHWH: that they should become YHWH's people and that YHWH should be their God (Exod 6:7). This was surely Moses' desire, as expressed in the Torah that Paul read: "So circumcise your hearts, and do not stiffen your neck any longer!" (Deut 10:16). More to the point is Moses' exasperated wish in Num 11:29: "If only all YHWH's people were prophets! If only YHWH would put his Spirit upon them!" Paul possibly even had Num 11:29 in mind as he wrote 2 Corinthians 3, since he identifies the "Lord" (YHWH) as the "Spirit" at verse 17.

The idea of Paul using τέλος in a twofold sense of both "end" and "goal" may seem overly subtle, but Paul seems to do this very thing in two other places. In Rom 6:22, Paul states δουλωθέντες δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν ὑμῶν εἰς ἁγιασμόν ("having been brought into service to God you obtain the fruit that leads to your holiness") τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωὴν αἰώνιον. This last phrase can equally mean "and (at) the end, (you obtain) eternal life" or "and (as) the goal, (you obtain) eternal life." Similarly, Rom 10:4, τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, can equally mean that "Christ providing righteousness for everyone who believes" is the "termination of the law" or is the "purpose of the law." The translator needs to make a decision about how to render τέλος, but this does not mean the Greek reader felt such a tension, for it was all the same word to him or her.⁶²

In short, the veil was put in place so that the Israelites would not be forever (εἰς τὸ τέλος) staring at Moses' face, but it was also Moses' resignation to the fact that the Israelites would never see into the real purpose (εἰς τὸ τέλος) of having a covenant with God, even when it was quite literally shining like a beacon in front of them. Their focus on the physical phenomenon of a glowing face was blinding them to the whole reason for coming to Sinai, that they might become God's special possession (Exod 19:5). With this under-

⁶¹ A. T. Hanson, "The Midrash in II Corinthians 3: A Reconsideration," *JSNT* 9 (1980) 2–28. See Belleville, *Reflections of Glory* 1991, 201, for other proposed purposes.

⁶² The same intentional exploitation of the word's double meaning may apply to τὰ τέλη in 1 Cor 10:11.

standing, therefore, τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργουμένου almost certainly does have a secondary meaning: “the real intent of the old covenant.” The Israelites, because of their hardness of heart, could not see the glory of life in the Spirit, the very thing Moses’ face reflected, but were instead distracted by the glowing itself. And so Moses had no choice but to don the veil. This is the greater theological meaning that Paul perceives in the event.

As described above, the glow on Moses’ face was evidence of divine mercy in response to Moses’ appeals and reflected the goodness of God. Moses certainly did not wear the veil because he thought that the glow of his face endangered the Israelites or exposed them to the wrath of God (contrary to some expositors⁶³). That is, even within the soon-to-be-voided old covenant (τοῦ καταργουμένου) there was a revelation of the grace of God. But to the Israelites, it was just a freakish phenomenon, a man with a glowing face, and for Moses it was better to cover the face than have the people either upset by it or leering at it. Paul refers to this failure of the Israelites by alluding to Exod 33:5, “You are a stiff-necked people,” with the paraphrase, “But their minds were hardened” (v. 14a). Using the strong contrastive particle ἀλλά, he makes the point that the real reason the Israelites could not see the glory of God was not that Paul wore a veil; it was because of their own spiritual blindness.⁶⁴

Paul seizes upon the fact that the Israelites were uncomfortable looking at the physical manifestation of the goodness of God (ὁρᾶ; Exod 33:19), as this is the divine attribute that is at the center of the new covenant. Furthermore, this metaphor of grace and life as light is central to the NT’s understanding of Jesus: “In him was life, and the life was the light of humanity” (John 1:4); and “[He] is the radiance of [God’s] glory and the visible representation of his being” (Heb 1:3). Most importantly, Matt 17:2 describes Jesus’ transfiguration with the words, ἔλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος (“his face shone like the sun”). These texts are indicative of the grace resident within Jesus, something analogous to but surpassing the glowing of Moses’ face.⁶⁵

⁶³ The claim in Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995) 223, that Moses put on the veil to keep the people from being destroyed by the reflected presence of God misunderstands both Exodus and Paul. The Exodus narrative nowhere implies that Moses’ glowing face was dangerous, and to the contrary ties it to the revelation of the goodness of God (Exod 34:6–7) and the subsequent decision to forgive Israel and renew the covenant. When Moses called the Israelites to himself and explained the covenant renewal, he did so without the veil, only putting it on after he had finished giving his message (Exod 34:30–33). He apparently had no fear that they would suffer harm from the glow, and they in fact did not suffer harm. Furthermore, Hafemann’s analysis skews the link that Paul is drawing between Moses and himself. Both men experienced the transformative power of the Spirit, but Moses, under the old covenant and dealing with the hard-hearted Israelites, had to veil it. Paul, however, as a minister of the new covenant, openly shows this glory to the nations (that is, to the Gentile Corinthians), who are receiving it (v. 18). But if the “glory” that Moses reflected were actually some kind of death-dealing radiation, this parallel would make no sense. And one cannot say that what once was fatal is now good, because in fact it was good for Moses as well, even under the old covenant.

⁶⁴ See also the discussion of ἀλλά below.

⁶⁵ Also relevant here is John 1:5, καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν, which I am now convinced must have the meaning, “And the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not comprehended it” (in contrast to taking κατέλαβεν as “overcome”).

c. *The veil on Paul's opponents: verses 14b–15.* In verse 14, Paul turns from the prior situation, the confusion of the ancient Israelites, to the current situation, the confusion of his opponents. He makes the transition from past to present with ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας (“This is evident in the fact that, right up to the present day”), where γὰρ is explanatory and provides evidence for Paul’s prior assertion. The end of this verse, however, presents another translation conundrum. The Greek has μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται, for which the NIV gives a fairly standard translation, “It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away” (see also NRSV, REB, NJB, ESV, TNIV).⁶⁶ Four issues here are the contextual meanings of ἀνακαλυπτόμενον, of ὅτι (Does it here mean “because”⁶⁷ or “that”?), again of καταργέω, and the question of whether it is justified to insert the English word “only” into the translation (as in the NIV, ESV, REB, and NRSV).

First, ἀνακαλύπτω means “to uncover” (active) or “to be uncovered” (passive). It does not mean “remove” as in “The veil has been removed.” A straightforward example of the active voice comes from the comic poet Menander, *Sententiae e codicibus Byzantinis* (TLG 0541.042) line 639: Πάντ’ ἀνακαλύπτων ὁ χρόνος πρὸς φῶς φέρει (“Time, which uncovers everything, brings [everything] to light”). An example of the passive that has some similarity to the present text is Aristotle *De sensu et sensibilibus* 444b (TLG 0086.041) 24–26: καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν τὰ μὲν ἔχει βλέφαρα τῶν ζῴων, ἧν μὴ ἀνακαλυφθέντων οὐ δύναται ὄρᾶν (“Just as some of the animals have eyelids on their eyes and cannot see when [the eyes] are not uncovered”). Another example is Hippolytus, *The Antichrist* 34.6: ἀνακαλυφθήσεται ἡ αἰσχρὴ σου (“Your shame will be uncovered”).

The middle voice, as always, is more complex. If the subject is, for example, a person who has been covered by something else, then the verb means to remove that cover from oneself. An example is in Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4.6: ἐκ δὲ τούτου εἰσήγαγε τὰς ἐταίρας δὴ, καὶ ἐκάθιζε παρ’ ἐκάστῳ. ἦν δὲ σύνθημα, ἐπεὶ καθίζοιτο, παίειν εὐθὺς ἀνακαλυψαμένους (“After this, he led in the [assassins disguised as] courtesans, and was seating them beside each man. The plan was that as soon as they could be seated, they would immediately uncover themselves and strike”). In that example, the subjects of ἀνακαλυψαμένους are men who are covered by women’s clothes; the middle voice means that they remove their coverings. But if the subject is the object

⁶⁶ The NIV translation “removed” is obviously wrong since it would require a perfect or perhaps aorist participle; it does not work with a present participle. Scholarly treatments of this text are aware of the difficulties of the standard translation and thus offer various alternatives. For example, Belleville, *2 Corinthians* 106, takes it to mean, “the same veil remains and does not reveal that the glory of the old covenant is dwindling.” Martin, *2 Corinthians* 57, has the similar translation, “it is not evident that [only] in Christ is the glory done away.” Both interpretations depend on an incorrect translation of καταργεῖται and so, without credible justification, insert the word “glory” into the text. Furnish, *II Corinthians* 202 and 210, has “unlifted, because it is in Christ that it [the old covenant] is being annulled,” giving καταργεῖται its proper meaning. His overall interpretation makes no sense, however, as it asserts that the fact that the old covenant is annulled in Christ somehow prevents the veil from being lifted. There is no reason that this should be the case.

⁶⁷ Most translations (e.g. ESV, NIV, NASB, NRSV) take it to mean “because.”

that does the covering (such as a veil), with the thing covered being something else, the middle voice would naturally mean that the subject (the veil) uncovers the object that it had previously covered. Again, the verb does not mean “remove” and cannot simply mean that the veil is “taken away.”

In 2 Cor 3:14, ἀνακαλυπτόμενον is middle or passive. If passive, its subject would normally be not the veil but in the thing that the veil covers. That is, it is some other object, not the veil, that is “being uncovered.” This is the usage in verse 18, where Paul speaks of being ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ, “with uncovered face.” But if μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον is indeed passive, it has to be understood impersonally (“it not being uncovered that”) and the thing that is uncovered is described in the following clause.⁶⁸ I could accept that interpretation, and it gets to what I think is the meaning of the verse. In my opinion, however, ἀνακαλυπτόμενον is middle and is bound to κάλυμμα, “veil,” as its implied subject.⁶⁹ But the idea of a covering veil by definition still needs an object, the thing that the veil is “not uncovering.”⁷⁰ But what is it? We could suggest that it is the mental faculties (τὰ νοήματα) of the Jewish opponents, but τὰ νοήματα in this sentence are not covered but “hardened” (ἐπωρώθη).⁷¹ And it is altogether unreasonable to suppose the Paul asserts that something remains covered during the reading of the law, but that he does not tell us what it is. Therefore, and to deal with our second problem, ὅτι in this context does not mean “because” but “that.” It points to the covered truth, the specific fact that the veil is “not uncovering,” namely, “that it (the old covenant) is annulled in Christ.”⁷²

To come to the third problem, once again καταργέω has its normal meaning of “nullify” and cannot mean to “remove” a veil. The proper word for “removing” a veil is περιαιρέω, the word that Paul uses in verse 16. But the

⁶⁸ See Sigurd Grindheim, “The Law Kills but the Gospel Gives Life: The Letter-Spirit Dualism in 2 Corinthians 3.5–18,” *JSN7* 84 (2001) 97–115, 109–10, who essentially takes this position but has a somewhat confused understanding of the grammar.

⁶⁹ The use of a participle negated with μὴ and following a finite verb to qualify or clarify the significance of the finite verb is not remarkable. Cf. Mark 12:21 καὶ ὁ δεύτερος ἔλαβεν αὐτήν καὶ ἀπέθανεν μὴ καταλιπὼν σπέρμα (“and the second took her and died, not leaving behind offspring”).

⁷⁰ Bultmann, *Second Corinthians* 87, makes too much of the fact that Paul uses ἀνακαλύπτω (“uncover”) rather than ἀποκαλύπτω (“reveal”). But Paul’s choice of word is driven by the metaphor of the covering veil. The image of something serving as a physical covering is still present in ἀνακαλύπτω, but it is a dead metaphor in ἀποκαλύπτω, which has come to mean “reveal” in a more abstract sense. But behind the metaphor, μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον is still implying that something has not been revealed.

⁷¹ The hardening of the hearts is true equally of Moses’ Israelites and of Paul’s opponents, so that verse 14a serves as a bridge from one group to the other.

⁷² David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians* (NAC 29; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999) 189–90, who follows Hafemann in supposing that Moses’ veil protected the Israelites from being slain by the glory of God, illustrates how this distorts the entire text. He argues that the meaning in verse 14 is that Christians can now encounter God’s glory without a veil, a thing that once was fatal, because the condemnation found in the old covenant has now been annulled. So now the veil is “removed” in Christ. But, apart from the fact that “removed” mistranslates ἀνακαλυπτόμενον, that is not the point here at all. The verse describes the veil over the Jews as a matter of *perception* (τὰ νοήματα and τὴν καρδίαν); they cannot comprehend the significance of Christ and the new covenant. It is not a matter of protection from wrath.

thing that is “nullified” is obvious in the context of verse 14 itself: it is the “old covenant” that they regularly read (ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης) and which Paul has already described as τὸ καταργούμενον. Their thought processes have calcified, and the veil remains in place, “not uncovering” the fact that the old covenant is nullified in Christ (again, ὅτι means “that” and not “because”). This means that the topic of καταργεῖται, as is always the case with καταργέω in this chapter, is the old covenant.

We have now looked at every occurrence of καταργέω in the chapter, and it is instructive to note how Paul’s meaning is more lucid when one recognizes that in each case it refers to the old covenant. In verse 7, the Israelites could not look into the old covenant glory in Moses’ face. In verse 11, the old covenant is subject to cancellation, in contrast to the abiding nature of the new covenant. In verse 13, Moses put on the veil so that Israel would not stare at his face forever, to the very end and purpose of the old covenant. Verse 14 asserts that Paul’s opponents still cannot see the truth that Christ has cancelled the old covenant.

To come to our fourth problem, the insertion of the word “only” in most translations (e.g. “because only through Christ is it taken away” [ESV]): there is in fact no basis for inserting “only” here. It is added because translators have already misinterpreted almost every word in the Greek text and need to try to rescue some semblance of meaning from the verse. In sum, the latter part of verse 14 should be translated, “This is evident in the fact that, right up to the present day, the same veil remains over the reading of the old covenant, not uncovering the fact that in Christ it (the old covenant) is null and void.”

In verse 15, Paul asserts his previous point from a different angle. Here, he does place the veil ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν, “upon the heart,” meaning it prevents the heart from seeing this truth. But it is important to recognize that Paul does not abruptly or arbitrarily shift the veil from Moses’ face to the heart of the Jews. Verse 14 makes the transition, stating that their minds were hardened, with the “veil” concealing the truth that they should have perceived. Notice also that whereas verse 13 speaks strictly of the Israelites around Moses and verse 15 speaks strictly of Paul’s opponents, verse 14 moves from the first group (v. 14a) to the second (v. 14b).

This shift also helps us to comprehend Paul’s seemingly unnecessary double use of ἀλλά (“but”) in verses 14–15. The first ἀλλά, in verse 14a, concerns primarily the first group (Moses’ Israelites) and sets up a contrast between the apparent issue, the fact that Moses’ had a veil on his face, and the real issue, the fact that the Israelites were too obtuse to recognize the meaning of the glow. The second ἀλλά, beginning verse 15, concerns the second group (Paul’s opponents) and sets up a contrast between Moses’ day, when the veil was on Moses’ face, and Paul’s day, when the veil is on the opponents’ hearts. In neither case is the word superfluous, and the second usage is not redundant of the first. In verse 14, ἀλλά is critical to Paul’s argument, pointing to the fact that the real problem was not that Moses put a veil on his face but that the Israelites could not see the meaning of his glowing face. This ἀλλά tells us that, contrary to appearances, the veil was

the *result*, not the *cause*, of the Israelites' blindness. In verse 15, many interpreters simply drop ἀλλά from their translations, thinking it redundant and not seeing that it is essential to completing Paul's transition. In fact, this second ἀλλά asserts that there is a new reality. Instead of a veil on Moses' face, there is a veil on his opponents' hearts. We should also note that in verse 16, δὲ ("on the other hand") sets up a situation that is entirely different: instead of being excluded from God's transforming presence by a veil, Moses (and now those under the new covenant) openly experience the power of the Spirit.

By the time we get to verse 15, therefore, Paul's transfer of the veil from Moses' face to his opponents' hearts is understandable. The veil was on Moses' face only because the Israelites of that day could not make sense of the reflected glory of the grace of God. Paul's opponents likewise are blinded, unable to perceive what the new covenant really means. In both cases, therefore, there is a veil, only now it is not on Moses' face but on the hearts of Moses' readers.

d. *Reflected glory: verses 16–18.* Closing his interpretation, Paul develops a parallel between the experience of the new covenant believer and Moses, both of whom abide before the transforming glory with an unveiled face. He freely makes use of several OT passages. Verse 16, "whenever he turns toward the Lord, the veil is removed" (ἡνίκα δὲ ἂν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα) is a Targum-like paraphrase of Exod 34:34a, "But whenever Moses went in before YHWH to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out" (ἡνίκα δ' ἂν εἰσεπορεύετο Μωσῆς ἔναντι κυρίου λαλεῖν αὐτῷ, περιηρεῖτο τὸ κάλυμμα), where Paul substantially repeats the opening and closing words ἡνίκα δ' ἂν and περιηρεῖτο τὸ κάλυμμα. He only omits or alters what specifically relates to Moses in order to expand the scope of the verse, allowing it to be applied to new covenant believers as well.⁷³

Interpreters often muse over whether Paul is referring to YHWH or Jesus by the term κύριος.⁷⁴ Since Paul paraphrases a specific verse in Exodus, we must consider the meaning "YHWH" to be primary here. On the other hand, since he is universalizing the application of the text and setting it in a new covenant context, a reference to "Jesus" is also hinted at, though not yet developed. Paul is not unaware of but deliberately exploits the ambiguity of κύριος. He obviously knows that it is the standard translation for YHWH in the LXX but that it is also a standard title for Christ in the churches.

⁷³ It may be that Paul's Damascus Road experience was formative in this element of his theology, so that he can very readily speak of looking into the glory in the face of Christ. For an autobiographical interpretation, see Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 184. But I do not believe that Paul is exclusively referring to his own experience (and Barnett does not claim that he is), and reference to the Damascus Road experience is not necessary for a valid interpretation of this text.

⁷⁴ Kistemaker, *II Corinthians* 124, for example, seeks to restrict the meaning to "Jesus" on the grounds that verse 16 is governed by the temporal references to "this day" in verses 14–15, but this is not persuasive.

The words ἡνίκα ἄν (used in both v. 15 and v. 16) are structurally important in this text. They have two principal uses in Greek. First, they may point to some event to take place in the unspecified future, as in Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannos* 1492–1495:

ἀλλ' ἡνίκα ἄν δὴ πρὸς γάμων ἦκητ' ἀκμάς,
 τίς οὗτος ἔσται, τίς παραρρίψει, τέκνα,
 τοιαῦτ' ὄνειδη λαμβάνων

But when you reach the time of marriage,
 who will this man be? Who will hazard, children,
 taking upon himself such reproaches?

But the words can also refer to an action that occurs repeatedly in the present, as in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.2.4: οἱ δὲ γεραίτεροι ἡνίκα ἄν ἐκάστω προχωρή (‘‘But the older men [report for duty] whenever it is convenient for each one’’). The latter sense (‘‘whenever,’’ as opposed to some future event) obviously applies in the two occurrences of the words in 2 Cor 3:15–16. Structurally, however, the language of verse 16 (ἡνίκα δὲ ἑάν [‘‘on the other hand, whenever’’]) marks an important contrast with ἡνίκα ἄν in verse 15. Two experiences of people before God’s glory are set against one another. On the one hand (ἡνίκα ἄν), there is that of the ancient Israelites and of Paul’s Jewish opponents, who have a veil between themselves and the glory (vv. 13–15). On the other hand (ἡνίκα δὲ ἑάν), there is the experience of Moses himself and of the new covenant believers, who appear before God without any such veil (vv. 16–18).

Verse 16, therefore, is not a call for Jews to come to Christ so that the veil that had blinded them could be removed.⁷⁵ Nor does the verse talk generally about conversion or about coming into some new insight about God or the Bible. Verses 13–15, over against verses 16–18, describe two separate groups and their respective experiences before God. The negative truth about the first group is their inability to comprehend the glory of God and (in the case of Paul’s opponents) that the old covenant has ended in Christ. The positive inverse to this is not merely that the new covenant believers know something that Paul’s opponents do not; it is that they, like Moses himself, experience God.

In verse 17, Paul states, ‘‘Now ‘Lord’ [here refers to] the Spirit, and ‘where the Spirit of the Lord is, [there is] freedom.’’’ In contrast to verse 16, where κύριος does not have the article, here it does, because ὁ δὲ κύριος in verse 17 is anaphoric, referring back to the prior usage of the word in verse 16.⁷⁶ Once again, scholars debate the identity of κύριος,⁷⁷ but the same signifi-

⁷⁵ Against Kistemaker, *II Corinthians* 125.

⁷⁶ Cf. Prosper Grech, ‘‘2 Corinthians 3:17 and the Pauline doctrine of conversion to the Holy Spirit,’’ *CBQ* 17 (1955) 420–37. See especially p. 422.

⁷⁷ On the interpretation of κύριος here as YHWH, see also Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* 398, and Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 312. For a survey of various opinions, see David Greenwood, ‘‘The Lord is the Spirit: Some Considerations of 2 Cor 3:17,’’ *CBQ* 34 (1972) 467–72. Greenwood’s opinion that the ‘‘Spirit’’ refers

cance should be attached to it here as in verse 16. The term primarily refers to Moses' experience of YHWH⁷⁸ but secondarily points toward the Christian experience of Jesus. It is striking that Paul would identify the revelation of YHWH to Moses as "the Spirit," but it is not surprising, since he views the Spirit as the agent of both revelation and life, and since he sees the work of the Spirit as the great benefit (the "glory") of the new covenant. The identification of YHWH (or Jesus) with the Spirit is functional rather than ontological (in other words, Paul does not imply that every mention of YHWH in the OT refers to the Spirit, nor is he suggesting that Jesus and the Spirit are one and the same). This functional identification shows that for Paul, universal access to the Spirit of God is the fundamental mark of the new covenant,⁷⁹ and Christians receive the Spirit by turning toward Jesus, just as Moses did through his encounters with YHWH. Indeed, if there is an ontological equivalence set up in this text, it is between the revelation of God as YHWH in the OT and as Jesus in the NT.⁸⁰

The OT focus continues in what follows. When Paul asserts, "where the Spirit of YHWH is, there is freedom," he is not voicing a spiritual aphorism invented out of thin air. He is again making a Targum-like paraphrase. In the OT, the "Spirit of YHWH" (LXX: πνεῦμα κυρίου) is associated with a charismatic gift of YHWH's power, sometimes to lead (Judg 3:10; 11:29), but more often to prophesy (1 Sam 10:6; 2 Sam 23:2; 2 Chr 15:1; Ezek 11:5). From the NT perspective, the most important occurrence of the term is in a text that was programmatic for Jesus, Isa 61:1–2, "The Spirit of the Lord YHWH (MT אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הוֹרֶה; LXX πνεῦμα κυρίου) is upon me, because YHWH has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty for the captives and emancipation for the prisoners" (see Matt 11:5; Luke 4:16–21). Paul summarizes the whole text by simply saying that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom," and he regards this as the realization of the "glory" experienced by Moses on Sinai and now universally available under the new covenant. This transformative work of the Spirit is "freedom" in that it releases captives—those held by guilt (Rom 8:2; Gal 5:1), by false gods (1 Cor 12:2), and by "elemental" principles (Col 2:20). And as the new covenant frees individuals and the nations from bondage, so also it frees Paul to preach openly, without the restricting veil.

Paul now completes his analogy using a simple, parallel structure.

A (v. 13): The Israelites cut off from glory by a veil

B (v. 14): Transition

C (v. 15): Paul's opponents cut off from glory by a veil

to God the Spirit is not persuasive. He argues that Paul uses the expression πνεῦμα κυρίου to clarify that he means God the Spirit and not just any kind of spirit (p. 472), but the NT regularly uses τὸ πνεῦμα alone to refer to the Holy Spirit, and in this context further clarification is hardly needed.

⁷⁸ Cf. James D. G. Dunn, "2 Corinthians III. 17—'The Lord is the Spirit,'" *JTS* 21 (1970) 309–20.

⁷⁹ See Scott J. Hafemann, "The 'Temple of the Spirit' as the Inaugural Fulfillment of the New Covenant Within the Corinthian Correspondence," *ExAud* 12 (1996) 29–42.

⁸⁰ See Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 113–14.

A' (v. 16): Moses unveiled before the Lord (YHWH)

B' (v. 17): Transition

C' (v. 18): New covenant believers unveiled before the Lord (Jesus)

As Paul moves into verse 18, therefore, his focus is on the new covenant believer, whose experience parallels Moses'. But there are no less than four translation problems in verse 18. The first is the meaning of κατοπτρίζομενοι, the second is the function of the accusative phrase τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα, the third is the peculiar ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, and the fourth is the even more obscure last phrase, καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.

The verb κατοπτρίζω is derived from κάτοπτρον, a "mirror," and is like the English denominative verb "to mirror" (that is, in the active voice, to "reflect"). The meaning naturally implied by the middle voice is "to mirror from or for oneself." Thus, the middle can describe using a mirror to look at oneself. For example, in a second-century lexical work Diogenianus *Paroemiae* 1.24, we read Ἀκκίζεται: ἤγουν παραφρονεῖ, μωραίνει. Εἴρηται δὲ ἀπὸ ἱστορίας τοιαύτης. Ἀκκὸ γυνὴ Ἀθηναία ἐπὶ μωρία διαβαλλομένη, ἣν φασὶ τῆ ἑαυτῆς εἰκόνι κατοπτριζομένην διαλέγεσθαι ("Ἀκκίζεται: 'One behaves like Akko.' That is, one is deranged; one is insane. It is said to be from this story: Akko was an Athenian woman slandered with madness, whom they say carried on conversation with her own image while using a mirror"). But, in contrast with this quaint definition, Paul clearly does not mean that we look at ourselves in a mirror. Several scholars argue, therefore, that the middle voice κατοπτρίζομενοι in 2 Cor 3:18 means to "observe God's glory by means of a mirror."⁸¹

But why would Paul say such a thing? Such language would suggest that the glory of God were like Medusa's face, which Perseus had to look at via his reflective shield to avoid turning to stone. But this is the exact opposite of what Paul has in mind. Paul is not saying that we have an indirect experience of divine glory, with some intermediate device protecting us from its effect and to some degree obscuring it. His point is that we directly experience God's transformative power, with unveiled face, as Moses' did whenever he entered the tent. Note that Paul is not here alluding to Moses' experience of being in the cleft of the rock, when he saw YHWH's back (Exod 33:22); he is alluding to Moses' routine of removing the veil whenever he went in before YHWH in the tent (2 Cor 3:16; Exod 34:34).⁸²

Indeed, having gone to great lengths to make the contrast between us who behold glory unveiled and those who see it obscured by a veil, why would

⁸¹ Major translations that explicitly take the text in this manner include the NRSV and REB. See Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* 316–17. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* 409, says that we can behold through a mirror the glory of the Lord "without being destroyed by it."

⁸² Against Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* 409 n. 231, who wrongly thinks that Paul is alluding to Exod 33:22. Even in the context of Exod 33:22, however, the point is not that Moses saw God indirectly or through some mediating instrument; he saw God's glory directly, and with an unveiled face, but he did not see the full majesty of the divine being (he saw God's "back"). Beholding glory through a mirror is not the same as seeing YHWH's back. The former speaks of indirect, mediated revelation of the full manifestation of the divine presence, whereas the latter speaks of direct, unmediated revelation of a lesser manifestation of the divine presence.

Paul interject the metaphor of a mirror and indicate that we, too, have something between us and God's glory? And what, precisely, is this mirror that he has in mind? This is not an insignificant problem; one cannot leave undefined the critical element in the metaphor of beholding God's glory through a mirror. It is in fact astonishing that, after carefully developing the concept of beholding God's glory with unveiled faces, Paul would at the last moment interject the idea of the intervening mirror with no explanation or identification. One cannot resolve the problem of the undefined mirror by identifying it with Christ.⁸³ This reduces Christ to the status of a mirror that reflects glory originating from some other source. But for Paul, this is not possible; Christ is the glory of God and we look toward the radiance shines directly from his face⁸⁴ (2 Cor 4:6; πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ).⁸⁵

There is no justification for using 1 Cor 13:12, "For right now we see (βλέπομεν) through a mirror (δι' ἐσόπτρου) with obscurity, but then face-to-face," as grounds for taking κατοπτριζόμενοι in 2 Cor 3:18 to mean "behold God's glory by means of a mirror."⁸⁶ Apart from the fact that neither the vocabulary nor grammar is the same, the topics are altogether different. In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul is speaking of personal transformation by the power of the Spirit and is contrasting this with the deadly results of clinging to the old covenant. In 1 Corinthians 13, he is speaking of the relative insignificance of experiences such as prophesying or speaking in tongues and is contrasting this with the perfect knowledge of God in the resurrection. And the identity of the "mirror" in 1 Corinthians 13 is very clear: it is ecstatic utterances of Corinth's self-styled spiritual elite. But in 2 Corinthians 3, there is no contrast between the present age and the resurrection.⁸⁷ What 1 Cor 13:12 does tell us is this: if Paul wants to say that we look at something indirectly, as through a mirror, he is very clear about it, using language such as is found there (βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου).

The primary evidence for taking κατοπτριζόμενοι to mean "behold God's glory by means of a mirror" is found in Philo's commentary on Exod 33:18, found in *Allegorical Interpretation*, III. 101. Philo expands Moses' words as follows: Ἐμφάνισόν μοι σαυτόν, γνωστῶς ἴδω σε· μὴ γὰρ ἐμφανισθεῖς μοι δι'

⁸³ Barnett, *Second Corinthians* 206.

⁸⁴ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* 317, tries to use 2 Cor 4:4–6 to establish his interpretation of κατοπτριζόμενοι as "seeing God's glory through a mirror." He avoids saying that Christ is a mirror, but such a conclusion inescapably follows from Fee's argument, and it is wrong.

⁸⁵ This is usually translated as something like, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (NRSV), and this makes my case well enough. But I think that it is more accurately rendered, "for the sake of the experiential illumination, the glory of God in the face of Christ." The phrase φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως functions essentially like a Hebrew construct chain in which τῆς γνώσεως is adjectival. Also, τῆς γνώσεως, analogous to the Hebrew root שׂר, refers to a direct, experiential knowledge. The words τῆς δόξης are probably appositional to φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως and genitive by attraction, but they could be an objective genitive.

⁸⁶ Against Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* 316–17, and Meyer, *End of the Law*, 101, n. 138.

⁸⁷ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* 317, wrongly interprets 2 Cor 3:18 with the words of 1 Cor 13:12: "The imagery . . . allowed [Paul] to postulate a real 'seeing,' yet one that in the present age falls short of actually seeing the Lord 'face to face' as it were." This obscures both the radically different contexts and the different purposes of the two texts.

οὐρανοῦ ἢ γῆς ἢ ὕδατος ἢ ἀέρος ἢ τινος ἀπλῶς τῶν ἐν γενέσει, μηδὲ κατοπτρισαίμην ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τὴν σὴν ἰδεναν ἢ ἐν σοὶ τῷ θεῷ (“Show me yourself; I want to see you comprehensively. Do not be manifested to me through heaven or earth or water or air or some other elemental thing from the created order; nor do I want your very self mirrored for me in some other thing—just in yourself as God”).⁸⁸ Here, the middle voice is “to mirror (something) for oneself,” that is, to look at something by means of a mirror. In context, it describes seeing God’s glory through a mirror, and the identity of the mirror is clear: it is God’s creation. Philo’s Moses does not want to see God in this way, as mirrored in sky and earth and water, but directly. In both Philo and Paul, therefore, the context is a discussion of Exodus 33–34, the verb is in the middle voice, and the issue is the desire to experience God directly.

But in reality, Paul’s usage of the verb is precisely the opposite of Philo’s. Philo uses the verb for an indirect and thus inadequate mirroring of God in creation. He plainly identifies the “mirror,” and Philo’s Moses is clear that experiencing God by a mirror is something he considers inferior and does not desire. Paul uses the verb to describe a direct encounter with God, the actual fulfillment of Moses’ request and also of the new covenant promises for the renewal of the hearts of all believers.

In point of fact, moreover, Paul does identify the mirror that reflects God’s glory: it is the face of the new covenant believer (ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι). In this construction, the dative ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ is not just an accompanying fact; it is instrumental, describing what mirrors God’s glory. It is in this respect parallel to Philo’s clause μηδὲ κατοπτρισαίμην ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τὴν σὴν ἰδεναν, where the dative describes what does the reflecting (ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ parallel to ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ) and the accusative describes what is reflected (τὴν σὴν ἰδεναν parallel to τὴν δόξαν κυρίου).⁸⁹ In Paul, the mirror is the uncovered face; in Philo, it is “some other” created thing. Thus, Paul is not referring to an indirect experience of God, using the metaphor of some undefined mirror that stands between us and the divine glory; he is saying that our faces reflect the glory.⁹⁰

John Chrysostom understands the word in this way. Interpreting this text in his homilies on 2 Corinthians (TLG 2062.157 lines 54–59), he says, οὕτω καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καθαυρομένη, καὶ ἀργύρου λαμπρότερα γινομένη, δέχεται ἀκτίνα ἀπὸ

⁸⁸ BAGD, “κατοπτρίζω,” incorrectly translates this as “contemplate something” and so leads astray many interpreters.

⁸⁹ Whether or not Paul knew the Philo text and consciously or unconsciously transformed it is impossible to say and irrelevant to this argument.

⁹⁰ But could the verb mean simply to “observe,” with the root meaning of “mirror” having been lost (as apparently implied in the Vulgate’s translation *speculantes*)? This is the view of C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973) 124–15, who prefers the translation “behold” on the basis of the “versions” (he does not specify what versions he has in mind). This interpretation is not likely, as Diogenianus is writing in the second century AD, and Chrysostom later yet, but the meaning “reflect” is still essential to the word’s usage. Had Paul meant simply “observe,” a verb such as θεωρέω or ἐμβλέπω would have been a more obvious choice.

τῆς δόξης τοῦ Πνεύματος, καὶ ταύτην ἀντιπέμπει. Διὸ καὶ φησι, κατοπτρίζομενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης, τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος, εἰς δόξαν (“So also the soul being cleansed, becoming brighter than silver, receives a ray from the glory of the Spirit and sends it back. That is why he also says, ‘reflecting the same image we are transformed from glory’—that of the Spirit—‘into glory’”).⁹¹ One might object that this is later Greek and thus of little value for NT usage,⁹² but such an objection is ill-informed. Chrysostom was trained by Libanius, a leader of the “second sophistic” movement that sought to revive a high classical style. Chrysostom himself was thoroughly neo-classical in his rhetoric, preferring an older, “purer” Greek to any neologism, barbarism, or modernism.⁹³ At any rate, Chrysostom knew his Greek far better than any contemporary NT scholar, and on a purely linguistic matter this is significant. He plainly understands the word to mean “reflect.”

Why, then, is the middle used in 2 Cor 3:18? It is, first of all, important to understand that even where the middle means to “reflect,” this does not indicate that the middle and active are interchangeable.⁹⁴ The active means simply to “mirror” oncoming light. It is used of things, such as water or a mirror, that reflect but that do not, as it were, participate in the reflection. A mirror is unaffected by what it reflects. The middle, following normal practice, means to mirror for, or from, of oneself. That is, one may use a mirror “for oneself” to look at something else (as in the above Philo text), to look at a reflection “of oneself” (as in the Diogenianus text), or to reflect “from oneself,” that is, with one’s person or face serving as the mirror. The latter usage would of course be rare and may be confined to Paul and those who cite him, but that does not mean that persons who understand Greek would find it enigmatic. It is precisely at this point that it is misguided (and linguistically unsophisticated) to complain of the lack of occurrences in non-Christian Greek texts of the middle voice of κατοπτρίζω with the meaning “reflect (by means of oneself).” Obviously pagan and secular Greek would not speak of people reflecting some radiance “from themselves”; it is not a usage that falls within nature and normal experience. Paul spoke of a kind of divine-human encounter previously unknown in Greek literature and his usage is an innovation, but it is an innovation well within the bounds of normal Greek linguistic structure.

The middle voice in 2 Cor 3:18 means that we “mirror from ourselves,” implying that we are not lifeless mirrors but living persons whose faces are in the process of being transformed into what they reflect. The middle thus

⁹¹ This text is also cited in Belleville, *Reflections of Glory* (1991) 280.

⁹² Thus Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* 409, n. 231.

⁹³ I have some experience with this, having translated a significant amount of Chrysostom for my own dissertation (Duane Garrett, *An Analysis of the Hermeneutics of John Chrysostom’s Commentary on Isaiah 1–8 with an English Translation* [Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1992]).

⁹⁴ Belleville, *Reflections of Glory* (1991) 279–80, and Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* 409 n. 231, although they are on opposite sides of the fence regarding the meaning of the word, are equally mistaken in assuming that the distinction between the active and the middle at some point “broke down” (for Belleville, before the NT period; for Hafemann, after it). The distinction did not “break down” at all, and Paul uses the middle purposefully and appropriately.

contains an element of the passive. It is a true middle, with the subject participating in the process and results of the action. In short, the active voice would simply mean that we bounce God's glory back at him, as a mirror does, with no real change in the mirror itself. The middle implies both that we reflect and that we become what we reflect. Paul proclaims a law written in living hearts and a glory reflected in living faces.

In verse 18, in the phrase τὴν δόξαν κυρίου, the "Lord" refers not to YHWH but to Jesus. This agrees with 2 Cor 4:6, where the glory of God resides in the face of Jesus, and it has already been hinted at in verses 16–17. One might argue that Paul is being equivocal and obscure here, using κυρίως to refer at one point primarily to YHWH and at another to Jesus, but in fact he is not really ambiguous at all. In verse 16 and in its commentary in verse 17, he alludes to two OT texts, showing that he is primarily describing Moses before YHWH and the experience of the OT prophets. But in verse 18a, he is speaking of the new covenant, where it is axiomatic that believers receive the Spirit and experience God in Jesus Christ (and Paul at any rate clarifies things at 4:6).

The accusative phrase τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα is often taken with μεταμορφούμεθα to mean "are being transformed into the same image" (ESV). But this is wrong. The normal Greek construction for "being transformed into (something)" is to use the passive of μεταμορφόω with εἰς, as in Pseudo-Plutarch's *Parallel Stories* (TLG 0007.085): ἡ δὲ κατὰ πρόνοιαν Ἀφροδίτης εἰς ὁμόνυμον δένδρον μετεμορφώθη ("But she [Smyrna] was by the plan of Aphrodite transformed into the tree of the same name" [i.e. the myrrh tree]). It is unlikely that the accusative alone would be used to describe that into which one is transformed.

But more than that, the term εἰκόν is closely associated with the use of mirrors; a standard definition for the word is "an image in a mirror." In the above text from Diogenianus, the woman Akko had a conversation with her own εἰκόν in a mirror. Similar usage appears in Plato, Republic 402b: οὐκοῦν καὶ εἰκόνας γραμμάτων, εἴ που ἢ ἐν ὕδασι ἢ ἐν κατοπτροῖς ἐμφαίνονται, οὐ πρότερον γνωσόμεθα, πρὶν ἂν αὐτὰ γνῶμεν ("And isn't it true also that we will never recognize the reflected images of letters, if they appear somewhere in water or in some kind of mirror, until we can recognize the originals themselves"). When speaking of a κάτοπτρον, "mirror," Plato describes the reflections as εἰκόνας and the originals as the αὐτά. Interestingly, Paul speaks of τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα. This combination of αὐτὴν with εἰκόνα implies an accurate or faithful reflection of the original. Therefore, in 2 Corinthians 3 it is misguided to connect εἰκόνα with μεταμορφούμεθα instead of with κατοπτριζόμενοι, and it demonstrates ignorance of Greek terminology regarding mirrors and reflections.

In reality, τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα is a double accusative construction. That is, τὴν δόξαν κυρίου is the source that we reflect, and τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα is the result, "an accurate reflection" that we send back. We receive the glory of God into our faces and accurately reflect the original image, that is, the image of God. Persons who face the transforming glory fulfill the creation ideal of becoming the image of God, bearing his likeness as living reflections of his being (Gen 1:26, "Let us make man in our image").

The divine glory becomes resident within people, first in Moses' glowing face under the old covenant and now in believers who reflect the likeness of God in their countenance under the new covenant.

All of this evidence is cumulative. The middle κατοπτριζόμενοι can mean "to mirror from oneself," and this is further implied by the fact that its secondary object is εικόν, an image that replicates the original. Also, the double accusative construction is appropriate to a verb meaning to reflect since its direct objects are both the light that comes to it and the light that it sends back, as Chrysostom already observed. But it is very difficult to capture all of this in translation. One must resort to a fairly expansive paraphrase such as "mirroring in an uncovered face the glory of the Lord [Jesus, becoming a reflection that bears] the authentic image [of God]."

The expression ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν is not a standard idiom; it is in fact as peculiar in Greek as "from glory into glory" is peculiar in English. In Greek texts there are countless examples of ἀπὸ 'X' εἰς 'Y', where X and Y are both places (for example, LXX 2 Chr 25:27: ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλημ εἰς Λαχίς ["from Jerusalem to Lachish"]). There are a few examples of using the same noun with both prepositions, just as we see in 2 Cor 3:18. But these, too, are spatial or geographic in meaning. Aesop, *Fables* 256 (TLG 0096.002), states that the poor can find deliverance when a faction seizes local power by fleeing "from city to city" (ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν). In Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.3.4, Alcibiades lays siege to Chalcedon by constructing a wall that extended "from sea to sea" (ἀπὸ θαλάττης εἰς θάλατταν). Describing metempsychosis, Chrysippus, *Fragmenta logica et physica* 1026 line 6 (TLG 1264.001), has τὴν δὲ σάρκα ἀπόλλυσθαι καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν πάντων μεταγίγνεσθαι ἀπὸ σωμάτων εἰς σώματα ("but when the flesh has died the souls of all are poured from bodies into bodies"); but even this is actually spatial in meaning.

Except for 2 Cor 3:18, all NT examples of ἀπὸ . . . εἰς (Matt 23:34; Luke 2:15; 10:30; Acts 1:11; Acts 8:26; 26:18) are spatial, although one of these, Acts 26:18, is also metaphorical ("from darkness into light"). None is comparable to ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν. Romans 1:17 does have ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν but it is not clear that this is truly analogous to ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, and at any rate the meaning of ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν is not certain. A similar example is at 2 Cor 2:16: οἷς μὲν ὄσμη ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὄσμη ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν ("to some a fragrance from death into death, but for others a fragrance from life into life").⁹⁵ In this verse, however, ἐκ . . . εἰς is used in a quasi-spatial sense: the fragrance from death (or life) is carried by Paul and it in turn drives people into death (or life). Second Corinthians 3:18 is not really comparable to 2 Cor 2:16.

One might argue that the expression is a Hebraism based on analogies such as Exod 17:16, where Israel is to be at war with Amalek ἀπὸ γενεῶν εἰς γενεάς ("from generations to generations," that is, "perpetually"). Similarly, Judg 11:40 tells us that the Israelite girls would go into the hills and mourn Jephthah's daughter ἐξ ἡμερῶν εἰς ἡμέρας ("from days into days" or "annually"). But, in fact, these examples are quite different from 2 Cor 3:18

⁹⁵ Furnish, *II Corinthians* 215, maintains that 2:16 illuminates 3:18.

and shed no real light on it. More promising is LXX Ps 83:8 (MT 84:8; English 84:7): πορεύονται ἐκ δυνάμεως εἰς δύναμιν (“they journey from strength to strength”). This could be taken to mean “they get stronger and stronger” and so provide an analogy for translating ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν as “from one degree of glory to another” (NRSV and ESV; other English translations are similar⁹⁶). In reality, however, the meaning of the phrase in the psalm is not so clear cut. The psalm is a kind of allegorical *Pilgrim’s Progress*, describing the pilgrim’s journey to Zion through the “Valley of Baca” (weeping), and to a spring upon which the showers of blessing rain down (LXX Ps 83:7; MT 84:7; English 84:6). This suggests that “strength” and “strength” are allegorical places along the pilgrim’s way and that a spatial meaning is still present. At any rate, the psalm verse is highly unusual and does not establish the existence of a Hebrew idiom. Another example is Jer 9:2 (English 9:3), where the people move on from evil to evil (MT: יָצָא מִן הָעוֹלָם לָעוֹלָם; LXX: ἐκ κακῶν εἰς κακὰ ἐξήλθοσαν). But this is obviously a spatial metaphor of movement deeper into evil, as if it were a geographic region. It, too, does not establish the existence of a “Hebrew superlative,”⁹⁷ and it is unlike 2 Cor 3:18, which lacks a metaphor of movement. The unavoidable conclusion is that there are no grounds for taking ἀπὸ . . . εἰς to be a standard idiom describing a process of becoming progressively more evil, strong, or glorious. There are only two specific cases one can point to, but these function contextually within an allegory or metaphor involving travel.

We have already seen that μεταμορφώω is used with εἰς to indicate what one is transformed into.⁹⁸ Another example of this is Aesop, *Fables* 175.3 (TLG 0096.002): ὁ δὲ Ζεὺς ἀγανακτήσας ἐπὶ τῇ τούτου πλεονεξίᾳ μετεμόρφωσεν αὐτὸν εἰς τοῦτο τὸ ζῷον, ὃ μύρμηξ καλεῖται (“But Zeus, being irritated at the greed of this man, transformed him into this beast, which is called a myrmex”). This implies that μεταμορφούμεθα . . . εἰς δόξαν means “we are transformed . . . into glory.”

But ἀπὸ δόξης remains a problem. It can best be explained as the source and effectively the agent of transformation. There are numerous examples where ἀπὸ is used for agency, particularly if the idea of an originating source is present. Examples are Acts 4:36 (Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρναβᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων [“Joseph, called Barnabas by the apostles”]); 1 Thess 2:6; 1 Tim 3:7; and 1 John 2:20. In this interpretation, ἀπὸ δόξης means that transformation comes from the glory of God (analogous to Moses looking at God’s glory with an unveiled face), and εἰς δόξαν means that believers are changed into the glory of God (analogous to how Moses had the glory of God reflected in the glow on his own face). In my view, this is a more natural reading of the Greek.

The phrase καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος is usually translated as something like, “For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (ESV). But there are several problems lurking in this simple construction. Interpreters gen-

⁹⁶ So also Martin, *2 Corinthians* 40.

⁹⁷ Furnish, *II Corinthians* 177.

⁹⁸ Although Johannes Behm provides an excellent study of the semantics of μεταμορφώω (*TDNT* 4:755–9), it is of very little help with its syntax and usage.

erally assume that πνεύματος is appositional with κυρίου along the lines of Phil 1:2, ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”), or 2 Tim. 1:1, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς (“Grace, mercy [and] peace from God the Father”). But in fact, in each of these and the many other similar examples from the NT, phrases such as ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς are titular, “from God (the) Father.” By contrast, the translation “from the Lord who is the Spirit” takes πνεύματος as a relative clause that describes or identifies κυρίου. There is a difference between a set title, such as “(the) Lord Jesus” or “God (the) Father,” and a descriptive relative clause, such as “Jesus, who is the Lord” or “God, who is Father.” The former are formulas or standard designations, but the latter contain identifying or descriptive clauses that either impart new information or for some reason focus on Jesus’ authority as Lord or on the role of God as Father. In other words, the content of “God the Father” and “God, who is the Father” may be the same, but the grammar and rhetorical purposes are different. By all appearances, κυρίου πνεύματος is a title. Paul has already, in the normal way of doing it, defined “the Lord” as “the Spirit” in verse 17 (ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν). He hardly needs to make the same definition again after so few words. The phrase “Lord Spirit” is titular, referring to what for Paul is already an established fact.

The question of the identity of the “Lord” (κυρίου) in this last phrase of verse 18 has also vexed interpreters. Some take the “Lord” here to be Jesus.⁹⁹ Some take the “Lord” here to be God (that is, the Holy Spirit), although generally not giving a coherent explanation of why Paul refers to the Spirit as “Lord.”¹⁰⁰ But if Paul had wanted to say that this was from the Holy Spirit, why not simply say τοῦ πνεύματος, a standard NT designation for the Holy Spirit, instead of κυρίου πνεύματος? A number of scholars fairly avoid the problem altogether, taking the path of least resistance by following the standard translation and not explaining the peculiar use of “Lord” here.¹⁰¹

We have already noted that Paul in verses 16–17 uses κύριος primarily as a reference to YHWH, and some argue (albeit sometimes with hesitation¹⁰²) that κυρίου at the end of verse 18 is also YHWH.¹⁰³ Indeed, in light of Paul’s citation of Exod 34:34a in verse 16 (a reference to Moses’ encounter with YHWH), his use of the familiar OT term “the Spirit of the Lord” (מְרִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה; LXX πνεῦμα κυρίου), and his identification of the “Lord” (YHWH) as the Spirit in verse 17 (drawing on Isa 61:1–2), and in light of the titular nature of the construction κυρίου πνεύματος, the fairly obvious translation is “YHWH (the) Spirit.” The real problem, in fact, is not that the Greek construction is

⁹⁹ E.g. Hanson, “Midrash” 18–21.

¹⁰⁰ See also Furnish, *II Corinthians* 216 (where he lists six possible interpretations) and 242. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 319 calls the phrase a “literary moment” and avoids the question of why Paul calls the Spirit “Lord.”

¹⁰¹ E.g. Martin, *2 Corinthians* 71–72, who calls this phrase an “exegetical knot.”

¹⁰² E.g. Belleville, *2 Corinthians* 302–3, although she seems quite uncertain, and Meyer, *End of the Law* 102–3, who similarly says that the interpreter “cannot attain certainty” (p. 103, n. 142).

¹⁰³ See especially C. F. D. Moule, “2 Cor 3:18b, καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος,” in *Neues Testament und Geschichte* (ed. H. Baltensweiler and Bo Reicke; Zurich: Theologischer, 1972) 231–37.

profoundly enigmatic or that Paul has not in context identified his terms, but that the designation “YHWH the Spirit” is unprecedented.

The solution lies in another word of the text that interpreters routinely either leave untranslated or mistranslate as “since” or “for”: *καθάπερ*.¹⁰⁴ The particle is precisely defined and is consistently used in the literature. It refers to a correspondence between two realities, and as such is properly translated with something like “just as.” A nice classical example is Aristophanes, *Knights* 8:

Δημοσθένης: ὦ κακόδαιμον πῶς ἔχεις;
Νικίας: κακῶς καθάπερ σύ.

Demosthenes: Hey, you luckless wretch, how are you doing?

Nikias: Badly, just like yourself.

In the NT, the term *καθάπερ* may introduce an explicit comparison in coordination with *οὕτως*, as in Rom 12:4–5, *καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν . . . οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σώμα ἔσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ* (“For just as we have many parts in one body . . . so also we, the many, are one body in Christ”). It may establish equivalence, as in 2 Cor 1:14, *καύχημα ὑμῶν ἔσμεν καθάπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡμῶν* (“we are your boast just as you are ours”). Sometimes *καθάπερ* points to a correspondence with an implied reality, as in Rom 4:6, *καθάπερ καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει τὸν μακαρισμὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (“Just as David also speaks of the happiness of the person”).¹⁰⁵ A similar text is 1 Thess 2:11, *καθάπερ οἴδατε* (“Just as you know”). An elliptical construction with *καθάπερ* appears in 2 Cor 3:13, *καὶ οὐ καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ἐτίθει κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ* (“And [we do] not [do] as Moses [did, who] used to put a veil upon his face”). The evidence of *καθάπερ* indicates that 2 Cor 3:18 must be describing a correspondence between two realities. The terse nature of the construction (*καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος*) suggests that there is an ellipsis here as well. That is, Paul considers the identity of the thing that proceeds “from YHWH the Spirit” to be self-evident, and he does not explicitly mention it. And indeed it is self-evident: it is the glory of God.

We therefore have the glory of God being declared to be the counterpart to . . . what? The preceding words in verse 18 already speak of glory shining from God, but the same idea, glory from God, cannot be the counterpart to itself. But it is not that the glory of God is compared to some other thing. Rather, the comparison is historical in nature: the glory that Moses received from the Lord (YHWH) the Spirit corresponds to the glory that we receive from the face of the Lord (Jesus) under the new covenant. That is, the designation “YHWH the Spirit” indicates that Paul is glancing back one final time at Moses’ experience to compare it to our own. Paul is saying that we replicate Moses’ experience, receiving the glory of God and reflecting it back from ourselves, just as Moses reflected the glory from YHWH the Spirit.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. the REB leaves it untranslated and the NRSV translates it as “for.”

¹⁰⁵ Notwithstanding Furnish, *II Corinthians* 216, and translations such as the ESV, *καθάπερ* does not mean “since” or “for.”

III. CONCLUSION

Paul does not claim that Moses tried to conceal the fading of the glow from his face, and he does not speak of some new capacity to read the OT, as though the main point were a gift of interpretation. He certainly is not claiming that Christians have a general and universal ability to interpret the Bible correctly, a notion that is demonstrably untrue. But he does claim that his opponents, when they read Torah, do not understand one specific fact: that in Christ the old covenant has been nullified. He equates the inability of the Israelites to come to terms with Moses' glowing face with his opponents' inability to comprehend the significance of the new covenant, which is the forgiveness of sin and the transformation of the heart under the ministry of the Spirit, as well as the fact that it renders obsolete the old covenant. His transfer of the "veil" from Moses' face to his opponents' hearts is not abrupt or arbitrary but demonstrated in persuasive steps. Paul's thesis is that Moses, even within the context of a covenant of condemnation, a covenant that was becoming null and void, experienced the life-giving glory of the Spirit. That glory is now far greater in the new covenant, but Paul's Jewish opponents misapprehend this just as thoroughly as their ancestors misapprehended Moses' glowing face. Instead of turning to the Spirit that gives freedom and life, they cling to the nullified "letter" that kills, and they try to convince Paul's churches to follow them in their error. They are misguided and inept teachers.

If I may give my own slightly Targum-like expansion of 2 Corinthians 3, the following will convey what I perceive to be Paul's meaning. To avoid the distraction of an excessive number of bracketed words, I have here followed a practice of the older translations and have marked supplied words by putting them in italics.

¹ Do we begin again to commend ourselves, or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ² Our letter of recommendation is none other than you, written on our hearts, known and read by all people. ³ It is evident that you are a letter from Christ written under our ministry not in ink but in the Spirit of the living God, *and* not on tablets of stone but on tablets of heart and *living* flesh. ⁴ This is the kind of confidence we have through Christ toward God! ⁵ *It is* not that we of ourselves are sufficient to claim something, as though *it were* of our own *making*, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, *one that is* not of letter but of Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷ Now if the ministry of death, engraved in letters on stone, came about with glory, so that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of the old covenant glory¹⁰⁶ of his face, ⁸ how could the ministry of the Spirit not have even more glory? ⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, by how much more does the ministry of righteousness exceed it in glory? ¹⁰ For in fact, when the *new covenant had its* turn, the thing that had been glorified (*the old covenant*) turned out to have no glory on account of the *new covenant's* surpassing glory. ¹¹ For if that which was in process of becoming null and void

¹⁰⁶ Lit., "the becoming-null-and-void glory."

went through a period of glory, much more will that which remains in force abide in glory?

¹² So then, having such a hope, we employ much boldness: ¹³ *we do not do as Moses did*, who would place a veil over his face so that the Israelites would not stare at his face forever, until the very end of—and into the purpose of—that which was in process of becoming null and void, *the old covenant*. ¹⁴ But the real problem was not the veil, it was that “their minds were hardened.”

This is evident in the fact that, right up to the present day, the same veil remains over the reading of the old covenant, not uncovering the fact that in Christ the old covenant is null and void. ¹⁵ But in contrast to the prior veil over Moses’ face, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts.

¹⁶ On the other hand, “whenever he turns toward the Lord YHWH, the veil is removed.” ¹⁷ Now “the Lord YHWH” here refers to the Spirit, and “where the Spirit of the Lord YHWH is, there is freedom.” ¹⁸ And all of us, mirroring in an uncovered face the glory of the Lord Jesus, becoming a reflection that bears the authentic image of God, are transformed by God’s glory into God’s glory, as the counterpart to the glory that shone from the Lord YHWH the Spirit.