

## **Dr. J. Ayodeji Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 4, Chapter 3: A Ministry of the New Covenant Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 4, Chapter 3: A Ministry of the New Covenant, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This source is a transcribed session of Dr. Ayo Adewuya teaching on 2 Corinthians chapter 3, which he titles "A Ministry of the New Covenant." **Adewuya examines Paul's defense of his apostolic ministry against critics who questioned his credentials, particularly the lack of a letter of recommendation.** He explains that **Paul argues the transformed lives of the Corinthians serve as his letter, written by the Spirit of God.** The session **contrasts the ministries of the old and new covenants, highlighting the superior glory and life-giving power of the new covenant established through Christ and the Holy Spirit.** Adewuya emphasizes that **true ministerial authority comes from God's calling and the Spirit's empowerment, not merely human endorsements or academic achievements.** He concludes by discussing how believers, with unveiled hearts, reflect God's glory and are progressively transformed by the Spirit.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 4 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 2 Corinthians).**



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### 3. Briefing Document: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 4, Chapter 3: A Ministry of the New Covenant

#### Briefing Document: 2 Corinthians 3 - A Ministry of the New Covenant

**Overview:** This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Ayo Adewuya in his fourth session on 2 Corinthians, specifically focusing on chapter 3, titled "A Ministry of the New Covenant." Dr. Adewuya explores Paul's defense of his ministry against critics in Corinth, defining the characteristics of an authentic minister of the new covenant and highlighting its surpassing glory compared to the old covenant.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

##### 1. Responding to Criticism and Defining Authentic Ministry:

- **Criticism is Common:** Dr. Adewuya begins by acknowledging that criticism is prevalent and that ministers are not exempt. People often judge ministers based on their own standards and understanding.
- **Paul's Response:** Paul, facing criticism in Corinth, responded with a clear sense of his God-given call and purpose. He forcefully rebutted accusations by asserting his role as a minister of the new covenant.
- **Defining a Minister:** Dr. Adewuya raises crucial questions: "Who is a minister? What is a yardstick with which a minister is to be measured? What actually makes a minister?" He emphasizes that a minister must adhere to God's standards to remain faithful.
- **Rejection of Human Credentials as Primary:** Paul questions the need for "letters of recommendation" like others. Dr. Adewuya draws parallels to modern equivalents like "a certificate of ordination, a letter of recommendation, or an academic degree in theology." While acknowledging their place, he asserts that these are not the *primary* credentials for ministry. He quotes the analogy: "You may have as many degrees at the back of your name as a thermometer. It doesn't make a difference if you are not called by God."
- **God's Call and Enabling are Paramount:** The true qualification for ministry is a call from God and His enabling power. Dr. Adewuya quotes John Wesley's response: "God is also not interested in or proud of your ignorance," highlighting the importance of study while emphasizing the primacy of God's call.

- **Living Epistles:** The true credentials of ministry are the transformed lives of believers. Dr. Adewuya quotes Annie Johnson Flint: "We are the only Bible the careless world will read. We are the sinner's gospel. We are the scoffer's creed. We are the Lord's last message, given in deed and word." This emphasizes that believers themselves are living testimonies to the validity of Paul's ministry.

## 2. The Corinthians as Paul's Letter of Recommendation:

- **The Believers as Proof:** Paul argues that the Corinthian believers themselves are his "letter written on our hearts to be known and read by all." They are "a letter of Christ prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts."
- **Corporate Nature of the Letter:** Dr. Adewuya stresses the communal aspect: "Together, the entire congregation constituted just one letter... Although we are saved personally, together, collectively, as a community of faith, we reflect the life of Christ."
- **Ministry Verified by Transformation:** Paul's effective ministry and the changed lives of the Corinthians serve as undeniable proof of his apostolic calling.

## 3. The Superiority of the New Covenant:

- **Ministry of the Spirit vs. Ministry of the Letter:** Paul asserts that God has made them "competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." The old covenant, based on a written code, brought condemnation, while the new covenant, through the Spirit, brings life and transformation.
- **Boldness and Openness:** Ministers of the new covenant have "such hope" that they "act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face." Their message is one of permanence and surpassing splendor.
- **Glory of the New Covenant:** Dr. Adewuya explains the greater glory of the new covenant compared to the old. While the giving of the law had glory (Moses' shining face), the ministry of the Spirit, bringing righteousness and justification, is far more glorious. He uses the analogy of candlelight fading in the presence of electric light to illustrate this surpassing glory, clarifying that the old covenant wasn't useless but is overshadowed by the new.
- **Removal of the Veil:** Paul contrasts Moses veiling his face with the unveiled faces of believers in the new covenant. The veil on the minds of those who adhere to

the old covenant remains until they turn to the Lord. "Indeed, to this very day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed." This turning to the Lord, Dr. Adewuya explains, is turning to the life-giving Spirit.

- **The Lord is the Spirit:** Dr. Adewuya addresses the often-quoted verse, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." He clarifies that in this context, "the Lord" refers to the life-giving Spirit who removes the veil. The freedom here is not primarily about freedom of worship style but freedom from "bondage to sin, bondage to death, and bondage to the law as a means of acquiring righteousness."
- **Transformation into Christ's Image:** With unveiled faces, believers "seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, the Spirit." This transformation is a progressive work of the Spirit, leading to a character that reflects God's glory. Dr. Adewuya notes that holiness is both "instantaneous and progressive."

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Adewuya concludes by reiterating that the primary credential for ministry is the credentialing of the Holy Spirit. While acknowledging the value of theological education, he emphasizes the necessity of a divine call and the transformative power of the Spirit evident in the lives of believers. Authentic ministers of the new covenant serve with boldness, recognizing the surpassing glory of the Spirit-led ministry that brings life and freedom from the condemnation of the law. They understand that believers themselves are living letters of recommendation, demonstrating the validity of their calling through their transformed lives.

## **4. Study Guide: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 4, Chapter 3: A Ministry of the New Covenant**

### **Study Guide: 2 Corinthians 3 - A Ministry of the New Covenant**

#### **Key Themes:**

- The nature and validity of authentic Christian ministry.
- The contrast and superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant.
- The role of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant ministry and the lives of believers.
- The response to criticism and the true credentials of a minister.
- The transformation of believers through beholding the glory of the Lord.

#### **Review Questions:**

Consider the following questions as you review the source material:

- What criticisms did Paul face from the Corinthians? How did he respond to them?
- According to Paul, what are the true qualifications or credentials of a minister of the new covenant?
- Why did Paul argue that he did not need letters of recommendation from Jerusalem? What did he present as his "letter of recommendation"?
- How does Paul contrast the old covenant (the "letter") with the new covenant (the "Spirit")? What are the key differences and outcomes of each?
- What does Paul mean when he says the Corinthian believers are a "letter of Christ"? What are the implications of this metaphor?
- How does Paul use the account of Moses veiling his face in Exodus 34 to illustrate the nature of the old and new covenants?
- What is the significance of the "veil" in Paul's argument? How is it removed?
- How does Paul connect the Lord with the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:17? What kind of freedom does the Spirit bring?
- What does it mean for believers to behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces? What is the result of this beholding?

- How does the glory of the new covenant compare to the glory of the old covenant, according to Paul?

### **Quiz: 2 Corinthians 3**

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What was the primary criticism leveled against Paul by some in Corinth, leading him to address the topic of commendation?
2. According to Paul, what is the ultimate source of a minister's competence and what is the defining characteristic of a minister of the new covenant?
3. Explain Paul's metaphor of the Corinthian believers being a "letter of Christ." Who wrote this letter and with what?
4. In contrast to the "letter" of the old covenant, what is the defining characteristic and outcome of the ministry of the "Spirit" in the new covenant?
5. Why did Moses veil his face after speaking with the Lord on Mount Sinai, according to Paul's interpretation in this chapter?
6. What does Paul mean when he states that the "veil" remains over the minds of those who hear the reading of the old covenant? How is this veil removed?
7. Explain Paul's statement, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom," within the context of the new covenant.
8. What is the significance of believers having "unveiled faces" and beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror? What is the resulting transformation?
9. In what ways does Paul argue that the glory of the new covenant surpasses the glory of the old covenant? Use an analogy from the text to illustrate this point.
10. What does Paul emphasize as the most crucial "commendation" or "credentialing" for a minister of the new covenant, even while acknowledging the value of theological education?

### **Answer Key**

1. The primary criticism against Paul was his lack of letters of recommendation, similar to those carried by other itinerant preachers, which led some in Corinth to question his authority and legitimacy as an apostle. Paul argues that he does not need such letters.

2. According to Paul, a minister's competence comes from God, who equips them for service in the new covenant. A defining characteristic of this ministry is that it is "not of the letter but of the Spirit," emphasizing the life-giving power of God.
3. Paul uses the metaphor of the Corinthian believers being a "letter of Christ" to illustrate that their transformed lives and faith, resulting from his ministry, serve as his credentials. This letter was prepared by the apostles' ministry and written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God on human hearts.
4. The "letter" of the old covenant, representing the written code of the law, brought condemnation and death by revealing sin without providing a means of forgiveness. In contrast, the ministry of the "Spirit" in the new covenant brings transformation, life, and enables believers to meet the righteous requirements of the law through God's power.
5. According to Paul, Moses veiled his face not primarily to prevent the Israelites from being initially dazzled, but because the glory on his face was fading, symbolizing the transient nature of the old covenant's glory. This veiled face prevented them from seeing the end of what was being set aside.
6. Paul states that the "veil" over the minds of those who hear the old covenant signifies their spiritual hardness and inability to recognize its temporary nature and its fulfillment in Christ. This veil is only set aside when one turns to the Lord, acknowledging Christ as the fulfillment of the law.
7. Within the context of the new covenant, Paul's statement signifies that the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, who is identified with the Lord, bring liberation from the bondage of sin, death, and the law as a means of achieving righteousness. This freedom is a key characteristic of the new covenant experience.
8. Believers with "unveiled faces" are those whose spiritual understanding is no longer obscured, allowing them to clearly see and reflect the glory of the Lord in the gospel. This constant beholding and reflecting results in a progressive transformation into Christ's image, moving from one degree of glory to another through the work of the Spirit.
9. Paul argues that the glory of the new covenant surpasses the old because the old covenant was a "ministry of death" and "condemnation" with a fading glory, symbolized by the diminishing radiance on Moses' face. In contrast, the new

covenant is a "ministry of the Spirit" and "justification" with a permanent and increasing glory, much like a brighter light overshadowing a dim candle.

10. While acknowledging the importance of theological study for sound doctrine, Paul emphasizes that the primary and essential "commendation" for a minister of the new covenant is the credentialing of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by transformed lives and the effectiveness of their ministry in bearing spiritual fruit.

## Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze Paul's arguments in 2 Corinthians 3 regarding the true nature of Christian ministry. How does he contrast his understanding of ministry with that of his critics, and what are the lasting implications of his perspective for understanding ministerial qualifications today?
2. Discuss the significance of the metaphor of the two covenants in 2 Corinthians 3. How does Paul use the account of Moses and the giving of the law to highlight the superiority and transformative power of the new covenant brought about by the Spirit?
3. Explore the concept of the "veil" in 2 Corinthians 3. What does it represent, according to Paul, and how is it removed? What are the implications of this imagery for understanding spiritual perception and the reception of God's truth?
4. Examine Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 3:17, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom," within its broader context. How does this verse connect to the themes of the old and new covenants, and what kind of freedom is Paul emphasizing?
5. Discuss the transformative process described in 2 Corinthians 3:18, where believers with unveiled faces behold and reflect the glory of the Lord. What does this process entail, and how does it relate to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **New Covenant:** The agreement established by God through Jesus Christ, based on grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, contrasting with the Old Covenant based on the law of Moses.
- **Old Covenant:** The agreement between God and the nation of Israel mediated by Moses, based on obedience to the written law.
- **Letter (of the law):** Refers to the written code of the Old Covenant law, which Paul argues reveals sin and brings condemnation but lacks the power to transform.
- **Spirit (Holy Spirit):** In the context of the New Covenant, refers to the divine presence and power of God dwelling in believers, bringing life, transformation, and enabling obedience.
- **Ministry of the Spirit:** The service and work carried out by those empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant, characterized by life-giving power and transformation.
- **Ministry of Death/Condemnation:** Paul's description of the Old Covenant ministry, which, through the law, reveals sin and pronounces judgment.
- **Ministry of Justification:** Paul's description of the New Covenant ministry, which, through faith in Christ, brings forgiveness and righteousness.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Formal letters used in the ancient world to introduce and vouch for individuals, particularly itinerant preachers. Paul argues his ministry does not depend on these.
- **Living Epistles (Letters):** Paul's metaphor for the Corinthian believers, whose transformed lives serve as evidence and commendation of his apostolic ministry.
- **Veil:** An allusion to Moses veiling his face after being in God's presence. Paul uses it metaphorically to represent the spiritual blindness and hardness of heart that prevents people from seeing the glory of the Lord in the Old Covenant and understanding its fulfillment in Christ.
- **Unveiled Faces:** Refers to the spiritual clarity and openness that believers in the New Covenant possess through the Holy Spirit, enabling them to behold and reflect God's glory.

- **Glory (of the Lord):** The radiant presence and divine attributes of God. In 2 Corinthians 3, it is contrasted between the fading glory of the Old Covenant and the surpassing and increasing glory experienced under the New Covenant.
- **Transformation:** The process by which believers are being changed into the likeness of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, as they behold the glory of the Lord.
- **Authentic Minister:** A genuine servant of God whose calling and ministry are validated by God's empowerment, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the transformative impact on the lives of others.

## **5. FAQs on Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 4, Chapter 3: A Ministry of the New Covenant, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on 2 Corinthians 3: A Ministry of the New Covenant**

#### **1. What criticisms did the Apostle Paul face in Corinth, and how did he respond to them according to 2 Corinthians 3?**

Paul faced criticisms regarding his authority and the legitimacy of his ministry, particularly concerning the lack of formal "letters of recommendation" that some other itinerant preachers carried. He responded by asserting that the Corinthian believers themselves were his letters of recommendation, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God on their hearts, demonstrating the transformative power of his ministry.

#### **2. What does Dr. Adewuya explain are the true credentials of a minister of the new covenant, contrasting them with conventional measures?**

Dr. Adewuya clarifies that the true credentials of a minister of the new covenant are not primarily letters of recommendation, certificates of ordination, or academic degrees in theology, although these can have their place. Instead, the primary credential is the call and empowerment from God, evidenced by the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those the minister serves. Changed lives are the living epistles that validate a minister's calling.

#### **3. In what way are believers in Christ considered "letters"? What characteristics should these "letters" possess?**

Believers in Christ are considered "letters of Christ" prepared by the apostles' ministry and written by the Holy Spirit on human hearts. As such, these "letters" should be legible (their lives should clearly display the work of Christ), logical and consistent (their actions should align with the teachings of Christ), and expressive of the "writer's" thoughts and personality (reflecting the character and love of Christ).

#### **4. How does the concept of a "corporate letter" apply to the local congregation, and what is its significance?**

The entire local congregation is considered a single, corporate "letter of Christ." This highlights the communal aspect of reflecting Christ's life. While salvation is personal, the collective witness and life together as a community of faith demonstrate the reality of

Christ to the world. This emphasizes the importance of unity and shared purpose within the church.

**5. What is the basis of Paul's confidence as a minister of the new covenant, and how does it contrast with self-sufficiency?**

Paul's confidence as a minister of the new covenant is rooted in God's empowerment and enabling, received through Christ. He understood that his competence came from God, who made him adequate for this ministry. This contrasts sharply with self-sufficiency, where one relies on their own resources, strength, or qualifications. Authentic ministry is divinely equipped and guided by the Spirit.

**6. How does Dr. Adewuya explain the superiority of the new covenant's ministry compared to the old covenant's ministry as described in 2 Corinthians 3?**

Dr. Adewuya explains that the new covenant's ministry, a ministry of the Spirit, is superior to the old covenant's ministry, which was based on a written code that brought condemnation and death ("the letter kills"). The new covenant, ratified by Christ's blood and operative through the indwelling Spirit, brings transformation of life, righteousness, and freedom from the bondage of sin and the law as a means of justification. Its glory surpasses and is permanent compared to the fading glory of the old covenant.

**7. What is the significance of the veil over Moses' face in the context of the old and new covenants, according to Paul's interpretation?**

Paul interprets the veil over Moses' face not merely as a way to shield the Israelites from the dazzling glory, but as a symbol of the fading nature of that glory and the transient nature of the old covenant. Furthermore, the veil represents the hardened minds of the Israelites who, even when the Old Testament is read, fail to recognize its impermanence and the coming of the new covenant in Christ. This veil is removed only when one turns to the Lord.

**8. How does the Holy Spirit bring freedom and transformation under the new covenant, as discussed in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18?**

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom – freedom from the bondage of sin, death, and the law as a means of acquiring righteousness. Through the Spirit, believers, with unveiled faces, behold the glory of the Lord in the gospel and are progressively transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another. This ongoing transformation of Christian character is the work of the Lord who is the Spirit.