

2 Corinthians 3:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

Analysis

For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. Paul employs comparative negation: the old covenant's glory was real, but when compared to the new covenant's **glory that excelleth** (Greek *tēs hyperbalousēs doxēs*, *τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης*, literally "the surpassing glory"), it **had no glory in this respect** (Greek *ou dedoxastai en toutō tō merei, οὐ δεδόξασται ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει*). This is hyperbolic comparison: the lesser glory pales to insignificance beside the greater.

The Greek verb *hyperballō* (*ὑπερβάλλω*) means "to surpass," "exceed," or "transcend"—the same root Paul uses of God's "exceeding" grace (2 Corinthians 9:14) and "exceeding" greatness of power (Ephesians 1:19). The new covenant glory doesn't merely surpass the old by degree but by kind—it is glory of another order entirely. Like the stars that appear to have no light when the sun rises, the Sinaitic glory dims to nothing beside Christ's glory revealed in the gospel.

Historical Context

Paul's rhetoric here would shock Jewish readers who revered the Sinai event as the defining moment of Israel's identity. The giving of the law, accompanied by thunder, lightning, fire, and God's audible voice (Exodus 19-20), represented the pinnacle of divine revelation—until Christ. Paul does not deny the old covenant's glory but relativizes it in light of Christ's coming. Hebrews 1:1-3 makes the same

point: God's past speaking through prophets (including Moses) is superseded by His speaking through His Son.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What "glories" in your life—accomplishments, experiences, or blessings—pale into insignificance beside knowing Christ?
2. How does Paul's emphasis on the "surpassing glory" of the new covenant shape your understanding of the Old Testament's purpose?
3. In what ways can you more fully appreciate and experience the "glory that excelleth" available through the Spirit?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	γὰρ	οὐδὲ	δεδοξασμένον	τὸ	δεδοξασμένον	ἐν
even	For	had no	glory	G3588	glory	in
G2532	G1063	G3761	G1392		G1392	G1722

τούτῳ	τῷ	μέρει	ἐνεκεν	τῇ	ὑπερβαλλούσῃ	δόξῃ
this	G3588	respect	by reason	G3588	that excelleth	of the glory
G5129		G3313			G5235	G1391

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