“GLORY” AS APOSTOLIC CREDIBILITY IN
2 CORINTHIANS 2:14–4:18

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ABSTRACT
The motif of “glory” (δοξά/δοξάζειν) occurs in unparalleled concentration in a section of Paul’s defence (“apology”) of his apostolic ministry in 2 Corinthians 1–7. A close examination of the section in question, 2 Cor 2:14–4:18, suggests that, in a context where Paul’s credibility is under challenge, the motif functions as that which gives divine authority and hence credibility to his apostolic ministry. Paul appeals to the biblical tradition of the divine glory illuminating the face of Moses (Exod 34:29–35) in order to demonstrate, by sustained contrast and comparison, the existence of a far greater measure of glory attending his own ministry. There is a momentary turning aside at 3:18 to assert a more general transformation of believers as such. But from beginning to end Paul’s focus lies upon the apostolic ministry and the glory that, despite the fragility of his bodily existence, gives it credibility and hope.

In the New Testament letters attributed directly to Paul the motif of “glory” (δοξά/δοξάζειν) occurs frequently and in range of meanings. It runs like a golden thread through Romans, making at least one appearance in almost every chapter.1 It occurs, however, in disproportionate concentration in an early sequence in Paul’s Second Letter to Corinth, 3:1–4:18, in the course of the “apology” for his ministry appearing in 2 Corinthians 1–7 (more particularly 2:14–7:4).2 In this sequence “glory,” either as the noun δοξά or the cognate verb δοξάζειν, occurs 17 times. It occurs in great concentration in 3:7–11: in 3:7 [twice], 8, 9 [twice], 10 [three times], 11 [twice]. It then recedes

1 Rom 1:21, 23; 2:7, 10; 3:7, 23; 4:20; 5:2; 6:4; 8:18, 21, 30; 9:4, 23 (twice); 11:13, 36; 15:6, 7, 9, 27.
2 I am taking the apology for the ministry strictly so called as running through 2:14–7:4, within the “frames” constituted by the discussion of Paul’s more immediate interactions with the community (his travel plans, the “letter in tears” and the missions of Titus) in 1:1–2:13 and 7:5–16. In 5:11–7:4 the apology becomes in effect a plea for ongoing reconciliation.
until 3:18, where it appears three times; it reappears in 4:4, 6, 15 (in a doxology), 18.

The passage in question has received a great deal of attention, especially in respect to Paul’s intertextual appeal to the figure of Moses in 3:7–18. However, the singular prominence of the motif of “glory” in this particular context has not, to my understanding, received adequate explanation. My aim in this paper is to investigate the reason for this concentration of “glory” in a context where Paul is defending his apostolic ministry. My thesis will be that, in the context of disparagement at Corinth of his apostolic credentials and outward deportment, Paul insists that his ministry is attended by a divine glory that, albeit outwardly unseen, lends it complete divine accreditation and validity.


4 The main focus of Belleville’s monograph lies upon 2 Cor 3:12–18 within the wider context of 2 Corinthians 1–7, with particular interest in Paul’s exegetical technique seen against the background of post-biblical Jewish traditions; despite the title (Reflections of Glory), 2 Cor 3:7–11, where the motif of “glory” occurs ten times, receives scant discussion in this work. Hafemann’s massive study (Paul, Moses [see previous note]) does not single out the motif of “glory” for special discussion in itself. My approach will differ substantially from that taken by Hafemann, who finds in 2 Corinthians 3 no radical discontinuity between the old covenant and the new (Law and Gospel) but rather a strong continuity within the law itself, where the Letter/Spirit contrast refers to sequential epochs in the history of salvation, the key factor of difference being whether the law is or is not vivified by the presence of the Spirit. For a critique of Hafemann in this regard, see Murray J. Harris, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005) 274–75, n. 41; Mark A. Seifrid, The Second Letter to the Corinthians (Pillar NT Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2014) 135–42; see also Grindheim, “The Law Kills” (see previous note). Back’s published dissertation (Verwandlung [see previous note]) does devote considerable attention to the motif of “glory” (Glanz) but is more narrowly focussed upon 2 Cor 3:18 and the prophetic transformation through revelation imparted by the Spirit there described.
PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS: INTEGRITY; OPPOSITION

Any study of 2 Corinthians confronts the long-discussed issue of the integrity of the letter. Within the scope of a study focused upon 2 Corinthians 1–7, it is not necessary to pursue this question at depth. Paul’s apology for his apostolic ministry in the first half of the letter has its own integrity from an interpretive point of view aside from the instructions regarding the collection (Chapters 8–9) and the impassioned defence of his apostleship that concludes the letter (Chapters 10–13). Nor is it necessary to reconstruct the nature of the opposition in Corinth that called forth the response Paul makes in 2 Cor 2:14–4:18. The evidence emerging from the sequence itself suggests that he was found wanting in the following ways: he had no letters of credence from senior apostolic figures (3:1–3); his presence lacked tangible manifestation of divine authority (3:4–4:6); his outward deportment was disreputable and constantly exposed to the risk of death (4:7–18). In short, lacking due authorization from appropriate sources, he had recourse to self-commendation (3:1; 4:2, 5; see also 5:12). It is to counter complaints of this kind that Paul invokes the divine glory.

“GLORY” (ΔΟΞΑ)

As widely recognised, biblical Greek diverges notably from secular Greek in connection with δοξα. In non-biblical Greek δοξα has the basic sense of what appears or seems to be case and hence “what one expects” or “reckons” to be the case on that basis: so, “expectation,” “opinion,” or “judgment”; then, on the basis of the opinion others have of a person, δοξα comes to have the objective sense of “reputation” or “honour” or even “glory.”6 The most frequent meaning of δοξα in secular literature—namely “notion” or “opinion”—is entirely lacking in biblical Greek, while the regular LXX rendering of the Hebrew kabod by δοξα has led to its carrying much of the meaning of that term, in particular “glory.” As such it can refer to the “weight” of esteem or honour in which a person is held, especially a ruler and notably the supreme ruler, God. In this connection glory attends the heavenly realm as the abode of God and manifests closeness or belonging to that realm. When

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5 In the light of recent studies of epistolary literature, the pendulum seems to have swung back towards regarding 2 Corinthians as a unitary letter: see Jan Lambrecht, Second Corinthians (SP 8; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999) 7–9; Harris, 2 Corinthians 8–51; Seifrid, 2 Corinthians xxix–xxxi. For a concise, balanced discussion adopting the view of the letter as composite, see John Barclay, “2 Corinthians,” in Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible (ed. James W. D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2003) 1353–73, here 1354–56.

apparent on earth, glory denotes the outward splendour of divine power seen in the works of creation and historical acts of salvation. In this sense δοξα recaptures the meaning of what “appears”—in this case the appearance of the divine—pertaining to the word group in its most basic sense.

According to Gen 1:26–28, as the culmination of the creative work of God human beings bear the divine image (LXX τικων) and likeness (LXX ὀμοιωσις), and in this respect function as God’s “viceroys,” exercising authority over the remainder of creation. There is a poetic reflection of this in Psalm 8:5–8, where the same “governance” role is expressed in terms of being “crowned with glory” (δοξα [LXX v. 6]; see also Wis 9:13; 1 Cor 11:7). For Paul all human beings have forfeited this “glory” through sin (Rom 3:23). A central aspect of the saving work of Christ will be the eschatological restoration of this “glory” in the new creation. For believers this process is already under way in a hidden sense as a consequence of justification. Its full, visible manifestation awaits the resurrection of the body, in line with the already visible glory of the risen Christ (Rom 8:18–23; 29–30). Thus “glory” acquires the eschatological sense of the heavenly destiny of the faithful (Rom 5:2; 2 Cor 4:17)—not necessarily in an “other-worldly” sense but in the transformation of the present creation into the original design of the Creator as set out in the creation accounts of Genesis 1–2. For the purposes of the present enquiry it is important to keep in mind the sense of authority pertaining to “glory,” in association with “image” (τικων), derived from the creation stories of Genesis, reflected in Psalm 8.

“GLORY” IN THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY: 2 COR 2:14–4:18

After the customary opening address, greeting and thanksgiving (2 Cor 1:1–7), Paul speaks of the sufferings and dangers he has undergone in Asia, being brought almost to the point of death (1:8–11). Then, in defensive mode, he enters upon an explanation for his failure to have visited Corinth despite an intention to do so (1:12–24) and raises the delicate issues of an earlier painful visit and a “letter in tears” (2:1–11). He pleads for mutual forgiveness, insisting upon his love for the community (2:12–13).

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8 A colleague, David Runia, former Master of Queen’s College, Melbourne, has communicated to me his view that fundamental to δοξα in Greek is the connection with the verb δοκεω in the sense of “what appears”: the way something imposes itself through outward appearance. I am grateful to Professor Runia, an internationally recognised authority on Philo Judaeus, for this observation.

9 See Brendan Byrne, Romans (SP 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 257–58, 268–70.
a) “Who is qualified (ἰκανός)?”: 2:14–17; 3:1–6

The apology for ministry proper is normally agreed to begin at 2:14. It starts as a further expression of thanksgiving and follows with two striking images: that of the apostles being led in Christ’s triumphal procession (v. 14a), revealing in every region “the fragrance that comes from knowing him” (v. 14b). Paul then (v. 16c) asks a question highly significant for much of what follows: “And for this, who is qualified?” Leaving that question hanging in the air, he goes on to insist on the sincerity of his ministry, which ultimately derives from God (v. 17). It is important to look carefully at these sentences, particularly in regard to the term ἰκανός that, with the NAB, I have provisionally translated as “qualified.”

Along with many commentators, the NRSV translates ἰκανός in v. 16c as “sufficient.” There is, however, a lot more to the usage here than “sufficient” suggests. BDAG provides for ἰκανός a range of meanings: 1. sufficient in degree: “adequate” in a quantitative sense; 2. meeting a standard: so “competent,” “appropriate,” “qualified,” “able”; 3. & 4: being “large” in comparative degree or number.10 BDAG, rightly to my mind, assigns the second of these meanings to the passage in question. This would suggest translating the question at the end of v. 16: “For this,” that is, for this ministry, “who is (sufficiently) qualified?”11 The disclaimer about not being peddlers of God’s word in the following sentence (v. 17) suggests, as elsewhere (1:12–14; 4:1–6; 7:1–4), some measure of comparison with rival missionaries who behave in a deceptive or compromised way. Hence the implication, at least, in the question, “Who is qualified for this?” that a comparison is being made with others who, in Paul’s view, are not qualified for the ministry, as he and his co-workers are.12 In any case, the question raises the whole issue of competence—not so much in the sense of personally having the appropriate talent for the work but of having the appropriate authority and accreditation to undertake it.13 The question and the issue it raises in these terms are crucial for the recourse to the “glory” motif shortly to follow.

That true accreditation from some authority and not simply personal talent or adequacy lies behind the question in v. 16c is confirmed by the reference to letters of accreditation that Paul now goes on to make (3:1b–2). The reference

10 BDAG 472 s.v.
11 As in NAB: “Who is qualified for this?”
13 “The issue is that of ἰκανότητα, ‘competence, capability, adequacy’ (but much more a matter of true authority and evidence for it), a term obviously ventilated at Corinth” (Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians [2nd ed.; WBC 40; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014] 189).
is introduced by a further rhetorical question, “Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?” (3:1a; see later 4:5; 5:12). The Corinthians might well be forgiven for thinking, “Well, yes, Paul, that’s certainly what it sounds like!” But Paul probably means the answer to be “No”—especially if the emphasis is meant to fall upon “ourselves,” the implication being that there is no need for such self-commendation because the accreditation is coming from elsewhere, namely, from God. In fact, Paul remarks in a somewhat fanciful but nonetheless theologically attractive aside, if letters be needed, then the Corinthian community itself is “our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; … a letter of Christ …, written … with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (3:3). I have dubbed this remark an “aside.” However, the mention of something written not on stone but by the Spirit on human hearts (see Ezek 11:19 and 36:26), prepares the way for the distinction between the old covenant and a new covenant (see Jer 31:31–33) central to the midrashic comparison with Moses to follow.14

The motif of “competence” or, as I would argue, authoritative accreditation, continues in the following pericope, 3:4–6. Paul (“we”) has confidence (πεποίθησις) through Christ Jesus before God (v. 4)—that is, confidence in the exercise of his ministry. Where does this confidence come from? It stems from “an accreditation” (ισχύς) that comes not from “ourselves” (v. 5a) but from God, “who has accredited (ικανος) us to be ministers (διακονοι) of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (v. 6). We may note here the threefold cognate appearances of the ικανο- motif. This confirms the sense of authoritative accreditation rather than simple sufficiency or capacity to do something. The issue is not whether the ministers (διακονοι) of this new covenant have the capacity to carry out their ministration of it but whether they have the competence to do so in the sense of being authoritatively accredited by God.

My contention is that the motif of “glory” (δοξα) that begins to appear with unparalleled frequency from this point on (v. 7) stands at the service of this accreditation. The ministry of Paul and his co-workers has competence and accreditation because it is accompanied by divine glory in “surpassing degree” (see v. 10).15

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14 I employ the term “midrashic” here conscious that the appropriateness of the description is a matter of continuing controversy. See further Hays, Echoes 132; Harris, 2 Corinthians 277; Thomas Witulski, “Der so genannte ‘Midrasch’ 2 Kor 3,7–18 und seine Funktion im Kontext der Argumentation des Paulus in 2 Kor 2,1–4,6,” Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt 37 (2012) 197–234, here 198, 223–24.

15 Back, Verwandlung 98–99, acknowledges that the glory provides accreditation to Paul—as glory did to Moses. However, rather than seeing the pericope designed to
b) The Surpassing “Glory” of the New Covenant: 3:7–11

Paul introduces the motif of “glory” through the sustained contrast that he sets up with the midrashic tradition about Moses derived from Exod 34:29–35. To appreciate Paul’s argument across 2 Cor 3:7–18, it is important to recognize two distinct moments of Moses’ interaction with the Israelites according to Exod 34:29–35. The first moment, Exod 34:29–32, describes how Moses, carrying the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, came down from the mountain, unaware that the skin of his face shone because he had been communicating with God. His appearance struck fear into Aaron and the Israelites, causing them to withdraw from him. But Moses called them back and, speaking to them, “gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken to him on Mount Sinai” (v. 32). That is, clad with the divine glory, he promulgated the commandments written on the tablets of stone that he had brought down from the mountain.

It is this first moment of Moses’ interaction with the Israelites that lies behind Paul’s comparison with Moses as set out in 2 Cor 3:7–11:

7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not direct their gaze at Moses’ face because of the glory of his face, a glory being set aside (τὴν καταργομένην), 8 how much more (οὐχὶ μᾶλλον) will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more (πολὺ μᾶλλον) does the ministry of justification abound in glory! 10 Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; 11 for if what was being set aside (τὸ καταργομένον) came through glory, much more (πολὺ μᾶλλον) has the permanent (τὸ μένον) come in glory! 16

Here, as in similar contrasts/comparisons, for example the Adam/Christ schema in Rom 5:12–21, the force of the argument rests upon a reiterated a minore ad maius logic: if something is true or prevails in the lesser case, it must be even more true or prevalent in the stronger. 17 Paul formulates this logic three times across vv. 7–12, indicated in each case by a version of the “much more” (πολὺ μᾶλλον) phrase.

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16 Translation NRSV, save at the end of v. 7, where that translation reads “now set aside.”
17 See also Rom 5:9, 10, 15, 17; 11:12, 24; Phil 2:12. The argument reflects in Greek form the rabbinic qal whomer exegetical technique; see Harris, 2 Corinthians 279–80; Victor P. Furnish, II Corinthians (AB 32A; New York: Doubleday, 1984) 203; Belleville, Reflections 175.
A long initial formulation introduces the argument in vv. 7–8. If Moses’ promulgated a ministry of death (that is, the old covenant [see v. 14])18 with such glory that the Israelites could not bear to direct their gaze at his face,19 even though that was a glory destined to be set aside (τὴν καταργούμενην),20 how much more will the ministry of the (life-giving) Spirit come in glory? The second formulation in v. 9 goes to what lies behind “death” and “life” in each case: namely, condemnation (κατάκρισις) and justification (δικαιοσύνη), respectively.21 V. 10 is an almost untranslatable aside, suggesting that the glory of the new covenant is so surpassing as to eclipse that of the old.22 The final formulation, v. 11, picks up the reference to transience (τὴν καταργούμενην)

18 Because of its impotence in the face of human sin, the torah, while in itself “holy and just and good” (Rom 7:12), has become an instrument of condemnation and death instead of justification and life; see Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:5, 7–25; Gal 2:19; 3:21–22; 1 Cor 15:56.
19 “Direct their gaze” captures the more intentional sense of “see” present in the verb ἄνειζω, as in the English “stare” (BDAG 148); see Seifrid, 2 Corinthians 154–55.
20 Many commentators and versions (RSV; NIV; NAB) translate τὴν καταργούμενη here as “fading”; see Belleville, Reflections 202–6; Harris, 2 Corinthians 284–85. This meaning is strongly contested; see especially Hafemann, Paul, Moses 301–9; Hays, Echoes 133–34; Seifrid 2 Corinthians 155–56. The rare (aside from Paul) verb καταργέω means to render ineffective and in the passive can mean “to be abolished” or simply “to cease” (LSJ 908; BDAG 525–26). A sense of “fading” has to be imported from the context. This is by no means impossible in view of the present tense, which implies some sense of a process under way, and also the particular subject in view here: namely, the glory. When “glory,” that is, brightness or light, is in a process of “ceasing,” the process can be described as “fading” (so, rightly, Harris). Hafemann does not appear to take this point into consideration in his otherwise thorough discussion of the meaning of καταργέω. In any case some note of “fading” or at least of “transience” (see Martin, 2 Corinthians 204) seems to be required, not only by the contrast with τὸ μένοι in v. 11 (see Back, Verwandlung 103–5) but also because, without the veil, the impermanence of the glory would become evident to the Israelites (3:13). Hafemann maintains that what is rendering the glory “ineffective” in v. 7 is the veil that Moses placed upon his face (311). But the veil is not mentioned until v. 13 and then in a statement where the description of Moses’ recourse to the veil is introduced as a fresh element in the argument, not as something presumed all along. Moreover, if the glory on Moses’ face referred to in v. 7 had already been covered by the veil, then the consequence clause in that sentence (ὡστε μὴ …) makes no sense since the Israelites would then have been able to look intently upon Moses’ face, which is precisely what the clause denies. The point of the clause is to suggest that there was a glory on Moses’ face, a glory so splendid that the Israelites could not bear to look upon it, even though it was a glory in the process of being set aside. If so great a glory, then, attended this administration of death, how much more (v. 8) glory must attend the administration of the Spirit?
21 This is simply one instance of Paul’s acceptance of the axiom within the perspective of apocalyptic Judaism that righteousness leads to (eschatological) life (see esp. Rom 8:10) and the contrary truth that being found unrighteous and hence liable to condemnation at the judgment will lead to death; see further, my Romans 52–53, 240–41.
22 For a concise exposition of the various possibilities of translation, see Lambrecht, 2 Corinthians 51.
at the end of v. 8. The superiority of the new is guaranteed by virtue of its being permanent (τὸ μὲν) in contrast to the temporary character (literally, “the being set aside” [τὸ καταργοῦμενον]) of the old.23 On all the grounds stated in the threefold a minore ad maius argument, Paul can confidently conclude that the ministry of the apostles must be attended by the requisite accrediting glory.24 It is not, of course, something that the recipients of his ministry in Corinth could see. It is something that must be assumed to be the case on the basis of the contrast with the experience of Moses and the Israelites that he has presented.

c) Ministries veiled and unveiled: 2 Cor 3:12–15

A second moment of Moses’ behaviour lies behind Paul’s further appeal to the Exodus passage in 2 Cor 3:12–15. Exod 34:33–35 describes what might be called Moses’ “policy” from this point on in regard to the glory on his face that gave authority to his promulgation of messages from the Lord. Having communicated the first message, Moses put a veil over his face (v. 33) —presumably to spare the Israelites the sight of the divine glory that they found so terrifying. Thus a pattern developed. When not communing with the Lord, Moses veiled his face. But on returning to the Lord, he removed the veil, remaining unveiled while with the Lord and also on returning from the Lord to promulgate fresh commandments to the Israelites. Having made such promulgation, he would re-cover his face with the veil to spare the Israelites until, once again, it was time to return to the Lord (vv. 34–35).25 The pattern that emerges is clear: the divine glory was an essential concomitant of the promulgation of the commandments. Having his face shining with divine glory lent authority and credibility to the message. When he was not promulgating any commandment from the Lord, out of consideration for the Israelites, Moses wore the veil over his face.

23 The participle here, τὸ καταργοῦμενον is neuter and so cannot refer immediately, as in v. 7 to the glory (δόξα), which is feminine. Paul is formulating a general principle—the superiority of the lasting over the impermanent—and understanding that principle to indicate the specific superiority of the ministry of a dispensation destined to last over a ministry of one destined to end. Hafemann’s lengthy discussion of v. 11 (Paul, Moses 328–33) ignores the simple contrast in terms of impermanence/permanence that the short sentence sets up: the contrast with τὸ μὲν points to a sense of impermanence (temporary) in τὸ καταργοῦμενον.

24 That is, Paul’s main concern is not so much to assert the superiority of the glory attending the ministry of the new, life-giving covenant (so most commentators: for example, Harris, 2 Corinthians 291); he simply takes that for granted. His point is rather that, if, as Scripture attests, there was a glory attending a ministry of death, the ministry of life must in all respects be attended by glory. His concern is more for the existence of an accrediting glory, rather than for its superiority; see Thrall, II Corinthians 1.239.

25 See Harris, 2 Corinthians 296–97.
This presumably is how the Exodus text means the reader to understand Moses’ resorting to the veil. Paul, however, in the development of his argument in 2 Cor 3:12–15, interprets it as a stratagem on Moses’ part that highlights in stark contrast the comportment of himself and his fellow ministers (v. 12). Whereas, having “such a hope” (stemming from the ministry of justification [v. 9]), they “act with great boldness” (πολλὴν παρρησίαν χρώμεθα [v. 12]), Moses had recourse to the veil to prevent the Israelites from seeing something that it concealed.

What the veil concealed in Paul’s argument was the temporary nature of the dispensation being promulgated. Moses put the veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the “end” (τέλος) of what was being set aside (τοῦ καταργούμενου) (v. 13b). Had the Israelites been able to see that it was a temporary dispensation that Moses was promulgating, they would—or could—have remained open to accepting the new and permanent one in due course. Instead (v. 15), because of Moses’ veiling his face and concealing the transience of the glory upon it, their hearts (lit. “thoughts” [νοήματα]) were

26 For an extensive discussion of the political and religious background to Paul’s use of παρρησία, see Hafemann, Paul, Moses 338–47. The basic sense appears to be that of the openness and confidence with which in a democratic polity a free citizen can speak in civic assemblies, entirely without fear of restraint or retribution. Hence the connection with freedom (see 2 Cor 3:17).

27 The context seems to require that τέλος here have the sense “end” (so C. K. Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (BNTC; London: Black, 1974); Belleville, Reflections 200–2; Harris, 2 Corinthians 1.299), rather than the more commonly attested meaning “goal”: so Thrall, II Corinthians 1.296–58; Hays, Echoes 136–40; Seifrid, 2 Corinthians 164. Hays argues (138) that in Paul’s exposition Moses put on the veil to conceal the glory. This would put Paul in direct conflict with the Exodus text where the glory gives authority to the promulgation of the commandments. Paul in v. 13 states clearly that Moses put on the veil to conceal, not the glory, but its τέλος. (The problem remains even if the latter be understood, with Hays, as “goal.”) The interpretation goes along with Hays’ overall view that Paul’s use of the Exodus text is controlled by “a retrospective theological judgment” (134–35), something gainsaid by the past tense of the verb ἐγένηθη in v. 7; the “actualization” of the text begins at v. 14b.

28 The participial expression τοῦ καταργούμενου at the end of v. 13 is masculine or neuter and cannot therefore strictly refer to “glory” (δόξα), which is feminine. It could refer either to the veil, κάλυμμα or, as in the case of το καταργούμενον at the beginning of v. 11, to the old dispensation as a whole. The latter is preferable; see Barrett, 2 Corinthians 119–20; Thrall, II Corinthians 1.257.

29 “Instead” renders the force of the strong adversative conjunction ἀλλὰ at the beginning of v. 15. The conjunction here does not introduce a thought adversative to what has just been stated: namely, that the Israelite were unable (because of Moses’ action) to see the temporary nature of the old dispensation but to the possibility that would have come about if they had been able to see its end: namely, been able to accept the new. Paul has not, however, formulated this unfulfilled possibility but, in elliptical fashion, simply presumed its presence in the mind of his audience and pressed on to formulate the contrasting state of affairs that did actually come about: the hardening of hearts. For a similar interpretation of ἀλλὰ see Thrall, II Corinthians 1.262–63.
hardened (ἵππωρόθην). The hardening should be understood quite literally in the sense of a fixed attitude or disposition that was unable to see or adapt to a new circumstance (the ministry of the gospel when it was promulgated).  

Much ink has been spilt in discussion of Paul’s understanding of Moses’ motivation in having recourse to the veil to conceal the glory on his face—notably as to whether it involved an element of deception. Since Moses is playing a role here, albeit a negative one, in the divine scheme of salvation, and since the glory on his face is a divine glory, it is unlikely that Paul is attributing deception to Moses. For Paul it was the law-giver’s unhappy lot to promulgate a dispensation that, in view of Israel’s sin, was designed not to give life but in fact to make sin explicit and mark it out for condemnation (vv. 6–7; see Rom 4:15), and, beyond this, to conceal any hope of remedy (the τέλος [v. 13b]) but rather to bring about a state of hardening.

The continuation of the thought in vv. 14b–15 brings the hardening of Israel up to the present. The hardening “remains” (μενεῖ) because “the same veil” (τὸ σῶτο κάλυμμα) remains. In Paul’s ongoing adaptation of the biblical tradition the veil has slipped from Moses’ face to “their minds” (τὸ νοήματα σῶτῶν [v. 14b]). Who “they” are is not immediately apparent. However, in Paul’s view the Israelites who heard Moses’ promulgation have successors up to “this very day” (ἀχρί … τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας [v. 14b]). In the reading of the “old covenant” (ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς πολιτείας διαθήκης), that is, in the worship of the contemporary synagogue, Jews who have not come to faith in Christ are in the same situation as those whom Moses addressed. The same “veiled” situation prevails, it not having been “uncovered” (μὴ ἀνακαλυτόμενον) that in Christ that old covenant is being rendered obsolete (καταρρεῖται).” V. 15 repeats much the same idea with “Moses” replacing

30 Paul develops this motif of the “hardening” (πάρομος) of Israel at far greater length in Romans (Rom 9:14–23; 11:7–10, 25), presenting it as a temporary divine affliction visited upon Israel so that the gospel of God’s gracious salvation may go first to the Gentiles, prior to Israel’s finding salvation on the same principle, not of “works” but of divine grace responded to in faith; see my Romans 349–51. Divine agency is not so clear in the hardening indicated here in 2 Cor 3:14–15; a little later (4:4) the fact that the gospel is “veiled” is attributed to “the god of this world,” that is, Satan. This cautions against importing the “hardening” motif in Romans into the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 3–4 without nuance.

31 For a critical survey of various views on this, see Thrall, II Corinthians 1.259–61.

32 See Belleville, Reflections 206–8.


34 This translation rests upon particular interpretations of several items in an obscure verse: namely, that μὴ ἀνακαλυτόμενον is an accusative absolute, the choice of the verb (over the more common ἀποκαλυπτόμενον) being determined by a play on the running “veil” (κάλυμμα) motif, though grammatically the passive participle does not qualify κάλυμμα; that the following conjunction ὅτι is declarative rather than causal; and that what is being rendered obsolete (καταρρεύεται) is not the veil but the old covenant. This interpretation, the second of four interpretations reviewed by Thrall, II Corinthians 1.264–66, has been convincingly revived by Seifrid, 2 Corin-
“the old covenant” as that which is read out and with the the veil now being said to “lie upon their hearts.” In other words, Paul is seeing contemporary Jews as encountering Moses in the same veiled situation as their ancestors of old and being stuck in that situation because, unlike believers, they cannot see that with the coming of Christ it has come to an end (τῆλος [see v. 13]), an outcome that “Moses” is preventing in obedience to the current divine hardening that God has brought upon Israel.

For Paul, then, the two covenants do not simply follow each other in a temporal sequence. They overlap in the sense that the “old” one (“old” in the sense of contrast with the new [3:6a; 1 Cor 11:25]) is still around as a dispensation of condemnation and death (3:6b–7a). For those, however, who through faith in the gospel, socially enacted in baptism, have entered “into Christ” (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27) the old dispensation has been rendered obsolete. In him they have entered into the new covenant foreseen by Jeremiah, acquiring the righteousness and promise of (eternal) life that pertains to the “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). In this new covenant both they and those such as Paul and his co-workers who are its ministers (διήκονοι) are in a totally new situation, an “unveiled” situation as regards the divine glory. It is this that Paul outlines, with a final appeal to the example of Moses, in the concluding verses of 2 Corinthians 3.

d) The Glorification that Results from “Turning” to the Lord: 3:16–18

According the pattern mentioned above, whenever Moses turned back to commune with the Lord he removed the veil. In v. 16 Paul explicitly cites the text, Exod 34:34, describing Moses’ practice in this regard. He does so not to take his audience back to the Exodus situation but, in accordance with his general understanding that Scripture provides the script for the present messianic age. “Turning” here has the Semitic overtones of conversion (see also 1 Thess 1:9). In turning back, unveiled, to the Lord Moses at this point was “modelling” conversion to faith in Christ.
In a very concise explanation of the text Paul interprets “the Lord” (τὸῦρίος) in the Exodus text as “the Spirit” (v. 17a) and goes on to remark (v. 17b) that “where the Spirit is there is freedom (ἐλευθερία).” The clue to this latter assertion is given in Rom 8:1–4. To encounter the Spirit, the vivifying power of the New Creation, is to receive the capacity to live with the righteousness that the torah demanded but, through the weakness of human “flesh,” could not achieve. For those “in Christ” the “law” (τὸῦμος) of the Spirit of life has brought freedom from the “law of sin leading to death” (Rom 8:2). Hence the “freedom” that Paul speaks of in 2 Cor 3:17 is freedom from the prospect of condemnation at the judgment (Rom 8:1, 31–39; 2 Cor 3:7), a freedom that Paul and his apostolic co-workers proclaim in their administration of the new covenant of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:6, 8).

The motif of “glory” returns explicitly in the long and complex sentence making up v. 18. In the apology for the ministry up to this point (3:17) the first person plural (“we,” “us”) has referred to Paul and his apostolic co-workers—a reference that remains the case in 4:1–18 and beyond. Exceptionally, however, the “all” after “we” (ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες) at the head of 3:18 seems to point to an encounter with the divine and a transformation (“from one degree of glory to another”) that applies to believers as such. The wider reference, while anomalous in the context, is best explained by the fact that a contrast is being made with the community of Israel, both in Moses’ time (vv. 13b–14a) and the present (vv. 14b–15). At the same time, as mentioned above, in “(re)turning” for unveiled communion with the Lord (Exod 34:34; 2 Cor 3:16) Moses is modelling the behaviour not just of ministers but of all who have come to faith in Jesus as the Christ, that is, all believers. In contrast to the Israelites of old and to Jews who have not come to faith, but in parallel to Moses at this point of his behaviour, they enjoy an “unveiled” vision (ἀνακαλυμμένως

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39 See my Romans 234–38.
41 The word πάντες is missing in a significant early witness of the textual tradition (p6) and also in some Vulgate manuscripts. However, this is hardly sufficient to outweigh the bulk of the tradition. Virtually all recent interpreters support the wider reference; see Thrall, II Corinthians 1.282. A lone voice in favour of a restricted reference to ministers—Paul and his co-workers—has been Linda Belleville, who stresses the difficulty of accounting for the sudden and isolated inclusive reference in a context otherwise exclusively devoted to ministerial credibility and behaviour; see Reflections 275–76. Against this, see Hafemann, Paul, Moses 408–9, n. 226, who argues that Paul’s first person plural references across the passage are “apostolic plurals,” referring to Paul himself, so that “all” here cannot refer to a broader group of apostles.”
προσωπωποί) of the glory of God. They behold (κατοπτριζόμενοι) the divine glory in the "mirror"\(^{42}\) constituted by Christ, who, as indicated a little later (4:4), is an "image" (εἰκών) of God.

As Moses acquired a measure of glory in his unveiled communing with the Lord, so the unveiled vision that believers enjoy has a transformative effect upon them.\(^{43}\) They are being "transformed (μεταμορφομένοι) into the same image" (εἰς τὴν σωτήν εἰκόνα), that is, into the same glorious image of God that Christ is (4:4), according to the original design of the Creator for human beings (Gen 1:26–28; see Ps 8:5–8; Rom 8:29b).\(^{44}\) In contrast to the case with Moses, however, the glory they acquire is not a fading or a transient glory. It is a glory that increases “from one degree of glory to another” (ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν).\(^{45}\) A final comment (καθάπερ ἄποκρισιν πνεύματος [v. 18b] picks up the identification of “the Lord” with the Spirit in the quotation from Exod 34:34 cited in v. 17b, thereby attributing the increasing transformation to the same divine agency.

e) An Open Ministry of the Gospel, Sourced ultimately in the Creator:

4:1–6

A transition back to first person plural reference to Paul and his co-workers at 2 Cor 4:1 is smoothed by the phrase “having this ministry” (ἐχώντες τὴν διακονίαν ταυτήν). The strong demonstrative gathers up all that has been said of the privileged access of believers to the glory of God and the accompanying transformation (3:18). The ministry of Paul and his co-workers is shaped by this “content” that it both serves and brings about. Hence (διὰ τοῦτο) they “do

\(^{42}\) For a comprehensive discussion of the meaning of the rare term κατοπτριζόμενοι used by Paul here, see Thrall, \textit{II Corinthians} 1.290–92, who, along with most recent commentators (Barrett, \textit{II Corinthians} 124; Furnish, \textit{II Corinthians} 214; Martin, \textit{2 Corinthians} 215; Harris, \textit{2 Corinthians} 314; Hafemann, \textit{Paul Moses} 411–12; Back, \textit{Verwandlung} 133–36; Barclay, “2 Corinthians” 1360b; NRSV) opts for “see as in a mirror,” as against the chief alternative suggestion of “reflect” (so Belleville, \textit{Reflections} 278–81; Hays, \textit{Echoes} 146; JB; NIV). Evidence for the latter at the time of Paul is very slender.

\(^{43}\) “Believers thus become like what they see; the vision molds its viewers” (Barclay, “2 Corinthians” 1360b). See also 1 John 3:2. On the similarity of the transformation through vision to the same motif in 2 Bar 51:3–12 and other post-biblical Jewish literature, see my “Sons of God”—“Seed of Abraham”: A Study of the Idea of the Divine Sonship of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background (\textit{AnBib} 83; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979) 65–67. In the \textit{Baruch} text the transformation involved the acquisition of an angelic existence that prepares the faithful for receiving the heavenly world to come. This has clear affinities with what Paul says of the faithful acquiring an “eternal weight of glory” in 2 Cor 4:17.

\(^{44}\) The transformation does not simply involve becoming “like” Christ but being transformed into the image (of God) that Christ is. Paul indicates the same process as the destiny of all believers in Rom 8:29; see my \textit{Romans} 272–73; earlier, ‘Sons of God’ 122–26.

\(^{45}\) See Harris, \textit{2 Corinthians} 316.
not lose heart” (οὐκ ἐγκακοκομέν). This assertion, repeated inclusively in 4:16, “encloses” the whole sequence (4:1–18) as its major theme. With such confidence (see 3:4, 12) Paul needs no recourse to trickery or misrepresentation of the word. He simply places it openly before the conscience of all (4:2).

Paul concedes that the proclamation does not always meet with success: there are those for whom the gospel is “veiled” (κεκαλυμμένον), placing them on the way to loss of salvation (v. 3a). Earlier (3:14–15) this image had described the negative response of both the Israelites and contemporary hearers of “Moses” in the synagogue. It referred to a “hardening of minds” or “veil over the heart” that prevented hearers from grasping that “in Christ” the time had come for the removal of the veil. At that point in the letter Paul did not ascribe the veiled situation to any agency in particular—though clearly, as in biblical thought generally, any contribution by non-human agency (divine or supernatural) left room for human responsibility. Now, however, he boldly ascribes the failure to the action of Satan, “the god of this world” (v. 4a). Satan has “blinded the hearts of unbelievers” so that they fail to see (μὴ σύγκοψαί) what, presumably, believers do “see”: namely, the gospel’s “illumination” (φωτισμός) of the glory of Christ, who is the “image” (τύχων) of God (v. 4b). The ultimate credibility of the gospel and by implication the authority of those who minister it rest upon the glory and associated authority that attends Christ as bearer of the divine image. It is in this respect—that is, as “Lord” (κύριος) of the universe (Phil 2:11; see 1 Cor 15:22–28; Gen 1:26–28; Ps 8:3–8)—that Paul and his co-workers proclaim him (see Rom 10:9, 12; 1 Cor 12:3), eschewing any “proclamation” of themselves other than as the “slaves” (δοῦλοι) of the believing community in this regard (2 Cor 4:5).

Over against the death-dealing blinding action of “the god of this world” (v. 4), in a final comment (v. 6), Paul “sources” the apostolic ministry in the action of the Creator, who is reclaiming the world in Christ for the new creation (2 Cor 5:17; see Isa 43:18–19):

For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to light up (πρὸς φωτισμόν) the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Most interpreters find at least an allusion to Gen 1:3–4 in the words attributed to God here. Most also find in the following clause an allusion on Paul’s part in general terms to his own conversion experience (see Gal 1:15–

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46 The term φωτισμός has the sense of an active lighting: see BDAG 1074; Furnish, II Corinthians 221.
47 Beyond mere “likeness,” τύχων can have the sense of “visible expression” (German Abbild); see Harris, 2 Corinthians 331.
48 The language also has affinities with LXX Isa 9:1.
The plural “in our hearts” suggests, however, an extension of the enlightening, beyond the unique experience of Paul and the closed group of resurrection witnesses listed in 1 Cor 15:5–11, to the believing community as a whole. The proclamation of the gospel and its acceptance in faith renders the unique experience of the resurrection witnesses the common experience of all. But the active language here, especially φωτισμός (“enlightenment” or “illumination”), and the sense of direction indicated by the preposition πρὸς suggest that more immediately in view is the missionary work of the apostles who bring about that effect: “the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” In their proclamation of the gospel they are the instruments of the Creator, “extending” the divine command of illumination, “Let there be light!” throughout the world in the new creation.

In the quasi parallel earlier in 4:4 Paul speaks of “the illumination of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.” Here he speaks of the illumination to bring about “the glory of God on the face of Christ.” Moses veiled his face so that the Israelites could not see that the glory of God on his face was a transitory, passing glory (3:13). Those who respond to the gospel in faith “see” the glory of God on the face of Christ—a lasting glory that, through the Spirit, works their eschatological transformation (3:18).

While it is most natural to associate glory with the risen state of Christ, it is not unlikely that the face of the Crucified is also in view. Paul describes his own conversion as a “revelation” of God’s Son (Gal 1:16). He recalls his initial preaching to the Galatians as a public portrayal of him as crucified (Gal 3:1c). He has insisted earlier to the Corinthians that his preaching was of a crucified Christ (1 Cor 1:23) and that he “knew nothing among them except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (2:2). Later he speaks of the “rulers of this world” having crucified, in their ignorance, “the Lord of glory” (2:8). Until his experience on the Damascus road, Paul had known Jesus of Nazareth only as a crucified messianic pretender, concerning whom blasphemous claims were being made. Is it not possible that the “light” that God the Creator “shone” at that moment in his heart was a light of divine radiance (glory) shone upon the Crucified, revealing him precisely as such to be image and Son of God? And is it not no less likely that the gospel proclaimed by Paul has at its centre a presentation of the same Crucified One, who believers, through the power of the Spirit, believers see, not as a failed messianic pretender, but as the glorious revelation of God (see Gal 3:1–5)?

49 See Thrall, II Corinthians 1.316.
50 As in 4:4; see n. 46 above.
51 See Lambrecht, 2 Corinthians 66.
52 See Seifrid, 2 Corinthians 196–9; also Hays, Echoes 149.
The Glory Shining through the Fragile Bodily Life of the Apostles: 4:7–18

In line with the overall theme—“We do not lose heart” (4:1, 16)—Paul now begins a lengthy sequence outlining both the precarious nature of apostolic existence and the confidence and hope that sustains it. The “treasure” (θησαυρὸς) that the apostles hold in the fragile “clay jars” of their mortal bodies is, presumably, the gospel that proclaims the glory of Christ (4:4, 6) and sets those who respond to it in faith in the line of salvation (Rom 1:16). The apostles’ bodily conformity to the “being done to death (νέκρωσις) of Jesus” (v. 10a) has the same effect as his death: namely, the generation of life (vv. 10a–12). Hence, despite the continual risk of being put to death, their faith leads them to “speak,” that is, to proclaim the gospel, on the pattern of the Psalmist who speaks in LXX Ps 115:1 (= MT Ps 116:10): “I believed, therefore I spoke,” trusting in the power of God to raise them—should they in fact be put to death—as God had raised Jesus (vv. 13–14). The ultimate aim of the ministry is that “grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God” (v. 15). The doxological conclusion recalls the most basic biblical sense of δόξα as that which manifests the being and power of God.

A final anthropological instance of glory appears in the last paragraph (vv. 16–18) of the sequence 2:14–4:18 as a whole. This continues the expression of hope despite the affliction that is the daily lot of the apostles: “For this momentary lightness of affliction (τὸ ... παρακατά τὴν θλίψιν) is preparing (κατεργάζεται) for us beyond all measure an eternal weight of glory (αἰωνίων βάρους δόξης)” (v. 17). The glory in consideration here has a clear future reference (as in Rom 5:2 and 8:18). It is likely, however, that what is in view is the eschatological revelation of a present yet hidden glory in a transformation that, as described several sentences earlier (2 Cor 3:18), is already under way.

53 The reference to the raising of Jesus suggests that Paul could be identifying here not only with the faith of the Psalmist but with the faith of Jesus in face of his death on the basis that the Psalms, conventionally attributed to David, provide the “script” for the Messiah as David’s Son. See the discussion of this possibility in Thrall, II Corinthians 1.340, citing A. T. Hanson, The Paradox of the Cross in the Thought of St Paul (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987) 51–53.

54 This reverses the fundamental (idolatrous) lapse of human beings who, “though they knew God, did not glorify (him) as God or thank him (οὐχ ὡς θεον ἔδόξασαν ἢ προσηνάχθησαν)” (Rom 1:21a).

55 Note the present tense of the verb κατεργάζεται and also the past (!) tense of the verb ἔδοξασαν in Rom 8:30. The adjective αἰωνιός means “eternal” but not in the sense of referring only to the future; the lasting duration in view can include the present. By the same token παρακατά here must mean “temporary,” “momentary,” rather than “present” as opposed to future; see Thrall, II Corinthians 1.353–54; Furnish, II Corinthians 262.
What is also and perhaps more significantly at stake in the paragraph is a distinction between what is external and visible (“our outer self”), on the one hand, and what is interior and invisible (“our inner self”), on the other (v. 16). The latter has a superiority resting on its eternal (αἰώνιος) duration as opposed to the purely present (πρόσκοπος) nature of what can be seen (v. 18). This distinction between what can and cannot be seen, along with the rather Platonic evaluation of the latter’s superiority, throws significant light on Paul’s whole appeal to “glory” going right back to where it began in 3:7–11. Paul deployed the scriptural contrast with Moses in order to demonstrate—on the a minore ad maius logic—that his ministry was attended by an accrediting glory, albeit one that could not at present be seen. The fact that it was not able to be seen—that it was masked by the fragile and precarious bodily existence of the ministers (4:7–15)—was no derogation of its value but in fact an indication of both its reality and its superiority at the same time.

CONCLUSION

As in the case of the transformation indicated in 3:18, the glory in question, in both its present and future aspects, ultimately pertains to all believers. But Paul has the apostolic life—its credibility, its responsibilities, its risks and its hope—primarily in view throughout 2 Corinthians 4, and in effect down to the close of the apology at 7:4. It is because he is defending the validity of his ministry despite its fragility and unprepossessing outward appearance that he lays claim to present possession of the glory attending the new creation (Rom 8:22). Accredited by divine glory, it is both his privilege and his unremitting apostolic task (1 Cor 9:16) to minister this new dispensation of the life-giving Spirit (2 Cor 3:6, 8).