

PAUL'S SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

LEARNING HOW TO BE A HEAVENLY CHURCH IN A CARNAL WORLD

2 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 3:1-3

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY?

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING THE RIGHT HEART FOR HIS MINISTRY

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Ministry, Salvation, Heaven, Hell, Decision

Introduction to the Text; **2nd Corinthians 3:1-3**

2 Cor. 3:1-3

Do we **begin again** to **commend** ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, **epistles of commendation** to you or **letters of commendation** from you? :2

You are our **epistle written in our hearts**, **known** and **read** by all men; :3 **clearly** you are an **epistle** of Christ, **ministered** by us, **written** not with ink but **by the Spirit of the living God**, not on tablets of stone but on **tablets of flesh**, that is, **of the heart**.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY
IS THAT IT TRANSFORMS EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

SUFFERING, DIFFICULTIES AND TROUBLES AS A GATEWAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

1.) It is obvious to the believer

v. 1

IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE BELIEVER

1a.) Obvious because of **its origin**

v. 1a

Verse 1a

Do we **begin again** to **commend** ourselves?

PAUL HAD HIS DETRACTORS / THE JUDAIZERS

Commend συνίστημι **sunistemi**, *soon-is'-tay-mee*; to announce, proclaim, promote or sell one's self.

By What Standard or Requirements Are We Qualified?
Insecurity Should No Longer Plague The Christian

Prov. 27:2

Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth;
A stranger, and not your own lips.

We're not looking for anyone else's
approval - including our own.

We have been called by God to tell the world about Him and to serve those
who believe in Him.

Even Jesus Christ Himself

John 10:37-38

If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; **:38** but if I do, though
you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that
the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him."

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY
IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE BELIEVER

1b.) Obvious because of **its authority**

v. 1b

Verse 1b

Or do we need, as some others,
epistles of commendation to you

Changed Lives @ Corinth

Heb. 4:12-13a

For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. :13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight,

Called by God means Equipped by God which means Provided by God which means Produced by God which means Owned by God.

epistles ἐπιστολή **epistole**, *ep-is-tol-ay'*; a handwritten message or letter. a qualified message or an account of a message lived. The telling.

Jer. 3:15

And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE BELIEVER

1c.) Obvious because of **its influence**

v. 1c

Verse 1c

or **letters of commendation** *from* you?

**Our New Lives Bear Witness That
We have been ministered to by God using others in our lives.**

**A God-Ordained ministry is something observable.
Man cannot endorse it or refute it with effect because of what it has or is
producing. – fruitfulness and faithfulness.**

What's Happened to Classic Christianity These Days?

Acts 17:6

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.”

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

SUFFERING, DIFFICULTIES AND TROUBLES AS A GATEWAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

2.) It is obvious to the observer

v. 2

IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE OBSERVER

2a.) Obvious because of the example

v. 2a

Verse 1a

You are our **epistle**

You Corinthians are our Proof of Calling / Authenticity.

I was recognized in Washington D.C. as being a pastor

that has his church engaged and motivated to be salt and light and so on, then I was asked to speak.. “what could I say ? - - I simply said that *“the people at our church are in love with Jesus, they love the Bible and they love living out their faith – they are the ones who have made me look good.”*

I AM BLOWN AWAY TO THINK OF THE PEOPLE

Whose lives have been changed forever because of the word of God that has gone out from here and is going out is truly amazing.

*Did you know that if you go to Africa,
there are those there who have been changed by what's happening here.*

But Wait There's More

*you go to Russia, Mexico, Germany, Canada, England,
China, and across the USA,*

The Real Radio / Real Life Long Term Mission Reach
Real Christian Fellowship Churches Across America

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE OBSERVER

2b.) Obvious because of *the commitment* v. 2b

Verse 2b

written in our hearts,

if there was ever a "Behind The Scenes" Report...
The World (observer) is to see a gathering of people,
a unique group, a strange lot – united and devoted and committed
to one another.

Paul is Saying – This Was Born in His Heart Before It Was Ever a Reality.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE OBSERVER

2c.) Obvious because of *the effect* v. 2c

Verse 2c

known and read by all men;

1John 4:17
Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the
day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

Known AND read

There is no Greater Investment Than Time with Jesus

Acts 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

So What's The Point ?

The point is that - wherever Christianity has gone – man's purpose and value and meaning has been elevated and the quality of life has improved.

Think About Certain Cultures and Faiths in The World.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

SUFFERING, DIFFICULTIES AND TROUBLES AS A GATEWAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

3.) It is obvious to the Redeemer

v. 3

IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE REDEEMER

3a.) Obvious because of His work

v. 3a

Verse 3a

clearly you are an **epistle** of Christ,
CLEARLY JESUS CHRIST OWNS YOU – PROPERTY OF THE LIVING GOD
a church or a minister, pastor, priest, leader – cannot change your life.

At our best **we can only point you to Jesus Christ.**

Each of us are “Sentences and Paragraphs” in
a long, ongoing Epistle

BTW – Never Judge The Church By One Person

A True Christian is Unmistakably “**Christian**”
A real example of someone who has been with Jesus **Christ**

John 17:21b-23

...as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. :22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: :23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE REDEEMER

3b.) Obvious because of **a work**

v. 3b

Verse 3b

ministered by us,

Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, has Commissioned His Followers to be Servants of God to the Church of God.

ministered διακονέω **diakoneo**, *dee-ak-on-eh'-o*; to be an attendant of. To wait upon as a host, friend, teacher. to deacon. To serve others in physical and spiritual needs.

It is a false premise to think that we, as mere people can change someone for the good of heaven. That is simply impossible.

2Tim. 3:16-17

All Scripture (*not your priest or bishop or pastor*) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, :17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Verse 3a

not with ink **BUT by the Spirit of the living God**,

Plato once said *“A good teacher does not write his message down in ink – over time ink fades, but he writes his message down in the heart of his student.”*

It is the Work of Holy Spirit to Emboss God’s Word upon the hearts of his students.

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

**WHAT’S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY
IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE REDEEMER**

3c.) Obvious because of the work v. 3c

Verse 3c

not on **tablets of stone** but on **tablets of flesh**, that is, **of the heart**.
These “Tablets of Stone” can refer to several things at that time.

A stone representing authority or commissioning. Or a stone engraved with a seal of rights or ordination from such and such school of ministry or magistrate. Or it could imply the Law upon stones or tablets – the Ten Commandments.

Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa Ordination

As desirable as this is, this isn’t the proof of my calling. You Are !

Church - How you live now in public and private is the proof. Who you are now compared to who you once were is the proof.

Personally – It’s what Jesus Does That Blows Me Away.

Even In The Old Testament God was Preparing the Way

Ezek. 11:19-20

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the **stony heart** out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, :20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them;

not on **tablets of stone** but on **tablets of flesh**, that is, **of the heart**.

Why? Because whatever you write on stone stays as it is on that stone.

“it’s written in stone” = meaning it can never be changed.

God never told the Jews to take the Law to the ends of the earth.

Jer. 31:31-33

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel (*Israel first then the world*) and with the house of Judah - :32 **not according to the covenant** that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My **covenant** which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. :33 But this *is* **the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: ***I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.***

Church Listen - Things written in hard, cold impregnable stone are fixed forever – UNLESS someone has the power and ability to remove what’s etched in that stone.

1Cor. 6:9-11

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, :10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. :11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

The Testimony of Stone Cannot Help Us. We Needed Something or Someone Greater...

Col. 2:13-14

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **(tablets of stone)** He has made alive together with Him, **(tablets of flesh)** having forgiven you all trespasses, **:14** having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Phil. 2:13

for it is **God who works in you** both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

**WHEN GOD DOES A WORK
IT PRODUCES CHANGE = PURPOSE IN US.**

Heb. 10:14-17

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. **:15** But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, **:16** *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,”* **:17** then He adds, *“Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

So What's The Point ?

**WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY IS
WHAT THE GOD OF CHRISTIANITY OFFERS YOU –
NOW & EVERYDAY & FOREVER.**

>>>> The Cross, The Christ, The Call <<<<

Come Forward for Prayer

End of Study