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Veil Upon Israel

Charles Lee Feinberg

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THE VEIL UPON ISRAEL



PROF. CHARLES L. FEINBERG TH.D., PH.D.
Talbot Theological Seminary - Los Angeles.

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THE VEIL UPON ISRAEL

Prof. Charles L. Feinberg, Th.D., Ph.D.

When dealing with unbelievers in regard to the Gospel, it is immediately evident that there is a definite barrier between them and the truth. There is a hindrance which no man alone can overcome. Scripture reveals there is a blindness induced by Satan that grips every unbelieving Gentile heart. Hear the words of the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 4:3, 4): "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." This veil will ultimately be removed. It is the prophecy of Isaiah that declares (25:7): "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations." But Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 reaches back to the experiences at Mt. Sinai to show that a veil rests upon Israel as well today. The historical account which is used as a basis for this disclosure is found in Exodus 34: 29-35: "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone by reason of his speaking with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses spake to them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw

of the atonement which you hold should not have been found by me." The answer was to the point: "I am not surprised at this. I tried to light my candle with the extinguisher on it."

The veil conceals and hardens both the mind and heart upon which it rests. Isaiah 6:9, 10; Matthew 13:14; John 12:40; Acts 28:26; Romans 11:8. The sad fact is that in the public reading in the synagogue the same veil remains. The veil on Moses' face is typical of the veil on the hearts of Israel, because they are bound by the letter without the spirit. It remains and is unlifted as long as the individual will not come to the Messiah who does away with the veil. Particularly does the veil consist of prejudice and unbelief. These are twin robbers of the soul. Men can be very open and clear-thinking on many matters, but their minds and eyes are hardened and blinded on the truth of the Messiah.

When Mark Twain was in Berlin he received an invitation asking him to call upon the Kaiser. His little daughter looked at the letter for a moment in speechless awe, then exclaimed, "Why, papa, if it keeps on this way there won't be anybody left for you to get acquainted with but God." It was an amusing remark; but it is sad how many there are who have a wide circle of acquaintance, but have their minds and hearts veiled concerning the Messiah, His love, and His redeeming grace. With Israel of that day in the wilderness the veil hid the face of Moses; today it hides the face of the Messiah. The veil on the heart obscures the real glory of the old covenant which pointed to the Messiah. The veil hides the Messiah. It was true in Jesus' day, for they did not recognize the Messiah. It is sadly true today as well.

Lastly, the Scripture makes known

THE REMOVAL OF THE VEIL. 16.

The passage has been somber thus far, but now we come to the word "But." What a glorious word this is, for it introduces the solution to the whole problem. It indicates the remedy; the case is not hopeless. Israel is not hopelessly

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the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him."

This Old Testament record is transferred to the New Testament and we read Paul's words (2 Cor. 3:7-16): "But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory. Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech, and are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look stedfastly on the end of that which was passing away: but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed to them that it is done away in Christ. But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

This interesting passage presents, first of all,

THE CONTRAST IN GLORIES. 7-11.

The law summed up in the ten commandments which demanded death for transgression, is called the ministration of death. In order to verify this statement, just note how many times the penalty of death is threatened in the law. Exodus 21, 22 and throughout. That which was written and engraven in stones (Ex. 31:18) was not the Mosaic law in general, but specifically the Decalogue. It came with glory because it was given through the disposition of angels. Acts 7:53. For fear the children of Israel could not look on the face of Moses. His face did not shine after his

first descent from the mount, because he had to break the tables before he came into the camp of Israel. The second time his face partially reflected the glory he had seen. The glory is represented by horns (so it is in the original Hebrew) of light issuing from him, as in Michael Angelo's statue of Moses. But this was a passing glory, for after the events at Sinai the glory passed away. This indicated the passing nature of the law. But why should this glory depart? The greater glory of the ministry of life and of the Spirit was to take its place. It is a ministration of righteousness found in the Gospel which proclaims the good news of Messiah's death for a sinful world. Just as the light of the moon pales in the presence of the sun, so the glory of the ministration of life surpasses that of the ministration of death. At Mt. Sinai 3,000 were slain in one day; at the inauguration of the new glory on the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 were brought into spiritual life.

In the second place, Paul speaks of

THE VEIL ON ISRAEL'S HEART. 12-15.

With such a hope as that just indicated in a present and future glory (see verses 8 and 9), Paul uses great plainness of speech. He speaks without reserve. He needs to use no disguise to hide a passing glory as Moses did. Israel was allowed to see the glory as an indication and credential of the ministry of Moses; then it was withdrawn. The glory of the law was thus a veiled glory. Now Paul takes this veil upon the face of Moses as a picture of that which is on the heart of Israel. Moses himself had declared that this law was not final, but would be displaced by the word of a greater Prophet. Deuteronomy 18:15-19. This greater Prophet is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. But if Israel views Moses under a legal veil, they cannot see the fulfillment of the law in the Messiah.

A preacher who denied the deity of Christ once said to an acquaintance: "Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seven-tent times, and it is very strange that the doctrine

of the atonement which you hold should not have been found by me." The answer was to the point: "I am not surprised at this. I tried to light my candle with the extinguisher on it."

The veil conceals and hardens both the mind and heart upon which it rests. Isaiah 6:9, 10; Matthew 13:14; John 12:40; Acts 28:26; Romans 11:8. The sad fact is that in the public reading in the synagogue the same veil remains. The veil on Moses' face is typical of the veil on the hearts of Israel, because they are bound by the letter without the spirit. It remains and is unlifted as long as the individual will not come to the Messiah who does away with the veil. Particularly does the veil consist of prejudice and unbelief. These are twin robbers of the soul. Men can be very open and clear-thinking on many matters, but their minds and eyes are hardened and blinded on the truth of the Messiah.

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abandoned to the veiling of their hearts and minds. Just as the veil still remains on the heart in unbelief, it can be removed in answer to faith now. The remedy is available just as surely as the disease is present. Moses removed the veil when he went in to commune with the Lord; so the heart in Israel has the veil lifted when it turns to Messiah as Saviour and Lord. In the future it will be realized for the nation (Zech. 12:10), but it is gloriously possible today for any Jew who will believe.

Mr. Moritz, a missionary to his people, in speaking to an assembly of Jews, gave this parable: "A poor Jew wanted very much to be rich; he therefore put a bandage on his eyes, that he might pray to Mazal (Fortune), and went everywhere through the streets, with head lifted to heaven, and crying, 'O Mazal, Mazal, make me rich!' At length Mazal threw down a great bag full of precious treasure, which fell right before him. The poor man did not take off the bandage, but ran on, and stumbled over the treasure. Neither did he turn back to see what it was, but went on, still crying, 'O Mazal, Mazal, make me rich!' Mazal, seeing her gift neglected, took it up again into heaven, and the Jew remained a beggar as before." The Jews who were present asked an explanation of the parable, which he gave them, by referring to Isa. 9:6, and the Second Psalm. A deep silence followed. At last some young men asked, "And will the bandage always be on our eyes?" He told them that the Spirit of God takes it away in response to faith in the Messiah as Saviour. Five of the young men were definitely impressed that night.

Friend, why be hardened and blinded with a veil upon the heart? It can and will be removed by faith in the Messiah as Saviour. Today it can be your blessed experience. Trust the Messiah now!

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