The Letter and the Spirit
2 Cor. 3:1-18

Introduction:
A. Paul defended apostleship against Judiazing teachers (cf. Ax 15:24; 1 Cor. 9:1; 2 Cor. 12:11-12).
B. Paul contrasts the nature of two testaments (vv. 6, 14 cf. Rom. 7:6)
C. Paul does not contrast the letter and spirit of the law.
   1. Exact words of any scripture is important. (Gal. 3:16; Heb. 8:8,16).
   2. Exact words of Jesus are important. (John 21:21-23).
   3. Exact word about baptism, Lord's Supper, "first day of week", etc. important.
D. Paul shows the importance of the N.T. us by contrasts with the O.T.

Discussion:
I. New Testament is New rather than Old. (v. 6,14)
   A. New foretold by the old. (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:6-13).
   B. New, not old, mediated by Christ. (Heb. 9:15).
II. New Testament was engraved on hearts rather than on stone. (vs. 3,7).
   A. Old associated with letters on tables of stone. (Ex. 31:18)
   B. New associated with Spirit on hearts of men. (1 Cor. 2:11,13; Eph. 3:1-4).
III. New Testament gives life rather than kill. (v. 6)
   A. Old brought the condemnation of sin, without the remission (cf. Heb. 10:4)
   B. Old could not free one from sin and death. (Rom. 7:7-13; 8:1-3).
   C. New takes away sin and gives life. (Heb. 9:15)
IV. New Testament is more glorious than glory of O.T. (v. 8-11).
   A. Old was glorious and served its purpose. (Gal. 3:19-29).
   B. New is more glorious and better for us. (Heb. 7:22; 8:6).
V. New Testament was given by Jesus rather than Moses. (vs. 14-17).
   A. Moses only a servant in God's house, Jesus is over God's house. (Heb. 3:2-6).
   B. Moses pointed to Jesus as the one to be heard. (Acts 3:22,23).
VI. New Testament Remains rather Passing Away. (v. 11-18)
   A. Old nailed to the cross. (Col. 2:14-16).
   B. Old, including 10 commandments, has passed away.
      1. Sabbatarians say 10 commands not part of law that passed away. (cf. Rom. 7:7).
      2. Sabbatarians say Sabbath from beginning like marriage. (Deut. 5:3, 12-15).
      3. Sabbatarians say "ministration" or "administration" changed, but not law itself -- but law itself
         was written in stone, not administration.
   C. Old Testament, as law, passed away -- but it still profitable to us. (cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-12).
      2. English law is profitable for U.S. lawyers, but U.S. law is our standard.
Conclusion:
A. We must turn from letter (old) to Spirit (new and better) for our religious practices.
B. We must understand that the two systems cannot be fully followed at the same time. (Gal. 5:4;
   Heb. 7:12-14).