

EXODUS 34:29-35 REFLECTING THE GLORY OF GOD

There is nothing more important than knowing God and knowing Him intimately. It is very fitting about this section regarding the golden calf ending with the passage about the glowing face of Moses. The main idea is God's grace and forgiveness, even though the people of Israel became rebellious, falling into idolatry by worshipping the golden calf. They knew they needed the presence of the divine but they tried to do it their own way. They fell into the way of thinking that Paul describes in Romans 1, which only alienates people from God and will ultimately destroy them. But God was very merciful and gracious with His people and used Moses, the very one who they dishonored and spoke disrespectfully of. God once again, brought him to the forefront as the mediator and intercessor for them. He interceded for them from being decimated. He had spoken with Yahweh and his experience was reflected in His face as He had sought after God because he wanted to know Him and His ways. It was when Moses had been with God again and came to the people to share His Word that the radiance was seen. They knew that Moses had been with Yahweh as his glow caused them to fear, and now they were ready to listen to their mediator as he delivered God's Word to them.

When we experience the face of God, it should transform our lives so that people cannot avoid the reality that we know God and have been with Him.

Let's open our Bibles and turn to Exodus 34:29-35 and learn a little more about the glory of God and the transformation of us that reflects His glory.

1. HUMILITY

V 29

A. HONORED AND PRIVILEGED BY THE LAW

It is a great favor to have the law given to us. Even though it is the law, it is God's grace that He would reveal it to us. It is a great honor to deliver God's law to others, as this honor was done to Moses. This favor was shown to Israel as the stone tablets were brought for a second time.

Psalm 147:19-20

After this, the people should not question the authority that was given to Moses, nor think lightly of him.

B. OBLIVIOUS TO HIS FACE SHINING

Moses had no idea that his face was glowing with radiance as he had been with the Lord.

Numbers 12:3 says he was very humble, more than any one on the face of the earth. So, even if he did know that he was radiant, he would not have used that as a matter of pride. In this case, he shows up, after 40 days and nights of being in communion with God. It was the effect of the sight of God.

Whatever beauty God puts upon us, we should be filled with humility.

2. FEAR OF GOD

VV 30-33

A. REACTION OF ISRAEL

The second time he came down from the mountain, he is not greeted with the sound of singing. Instead, the people are in fear. It was something like what it was when they witnessed the thundering and lightning and the mountain smoking in Exodus 20:18-21

Moses' face is shining so dramatically that it scares the living daylight out of Aaron and all of Israel. They see this man's face and rays of glorious light are emanating from his face. The glorious presence and manifestation of the Lord left this impression on him. This certainly left an impression on the people and their response was appropriate. This fear was good for them, for they must regain their first experience at the foot of Sinai. This is serious business, receiving God's law.

B. THE REASON FOR GOD DOING THIS

Being conscious of their guilt, they feared the worst. It must have been dazzling and struck an awe and terror in them. Holiness commands reverence and fear.

God needed to assure them. The Israelites had a reason to fear God's judgment which they truly deserved. We too, deserve the judgment of God because we deserve it. God did not want them to be afraid, but this is a lesson they needed to again fear the Lord and yet at the same time they were being told that they need not to fear. God used this manifestation to definitely get their attention.

C. RADIANCE ATTESTS TO ISRAEL

1. Moses is the mediator and they really need him. If not for the mediator, the people are left in their sin. God was telling them that He was sending back their mediator and he was shining in all that glory, meaning he was bringing God's presence.
2. God's Word needs to be listened to
All of Israel gathered around him and he spoke to them concerning God's law. They were ready to listen to it and abide by it.

D. MOSES' FACE **SHONE**

There is a word play here in the Hebrew language.

Karan is the verb form which means to radiate.

Keren is the noun form which means horn. This explains why the medieval artists pictured Moses as having horns. This is interesting because the mediator that the people built for themselves had horns but the mediator that God gave, had the radiance of God's presence. It is like God is saying, "You had an inanimate mediator made with trinkets that could not walk nor talk, and could not mediate and almost brought down the wrath of God. Here is my mediator for you and he shines because he has been in My presence." "This is My mediator and you need him.

Actually it refers to some kind of glow. In Hab 3:4 this noun refers to rays of light. Moses' glow was an afterglow from being in God's presence. It was something like the Divine glory was

remaining in him.

E. THE REASON MOSES VEILED HIS FACE

After he spoke to them he veiled his face. You would think that it was because of them being afraid. Ligon Duncan comments;

You might think from this passage that the reason Moses veiled his face was to keep from scaring the people, because we're told that the people were scared by the radiance. But did you notice, whenever Moses came back from Sinai to speak to the people, he did not veil his face. He only veiled his face after he spoke to the people, and Paul tells us the reason he veiled the face was so that the people would not see the radiance fade away and then begin to doubt the very lesson they had learned in seeing the radiance in the first place.

F. MOSES IS EXALTED BY THE LORD

Even though the people had maligned Moses, God honors him.

1 Sam 2:30, James 4:10

Moses was humble, yet the Lord exalted him.

G. THREE FOLD PURPOSE FOR THE RADIANCE

1. To exalt the mediator (Moses)
2. To take God's Word seriously (God)
3. Assurance of God's presence (People)

Moses is a witness to them that God is going to be among them.

3. THE UNFADING GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT vv 34-35

A. FORESHADOWING OF JESUS

Moses continued to have the radiance of God's presence. Apparently everytime he went up the mountain, he would come down with this radiance. In verse 34:3 we see that when he was communing with God and speaking to the people, his face was unveiled as it shone. This attested to Moses and God that they were assured of God's presence. This illumination reminds you of the transfiguration of Jesus. When Jesus was transfigured, Moses was there talking with Him. The glory of Moses and his role as the mediator points to the ultimate glory of the Mediator, Jesus.

Matthew 17:1-3 This glory was actually inherent in Jesus.

B. JESUS' GLORY WILL NEVER FADE OR BE VEILED

Moses' fading glory was hidden by the veil. When he was with God or speaking to the people the glory shone. When he was not, he veiled himself as the glory faded away.

1. Inherent Jesus' glory is always there. That is Him. John 1:14
2. Permanent His glory will never fade/

C. GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT

2 Cor 3:7-18 completes the story of Exodus and the Old Covenant.

The law was a shadow. There is the fulfillment in the New Covenant.

Moses' veil was similar to the veil in the Tabernacle. Just as the people could not enter the Holy of Holies to behold God's glory, they could not behold all the glory of God reflected in Moses.

If a covenant like the old one which could only show us that we are sinners produced a glory like that, think of the effect of a covenant

that can produce the very character of Christ in us. The Old Covenant could not produce the character of Christ because it could not overcome our nature of sin. The New Covenant changes us into the glorious image of Christ.

In 2 Cor 3, Paul is talking about the people who love the law of Moses but don't see Christ in the law of Moses. Until you see Christ, the veil remains over the spiritual eyes but when you see Christ, the veil is lifted. We have nothing obstructing the view of Christ.

The glory of the New Covenant gives us these things.

1. Hope (v 12) Hope does not disappoint—Rom 5:5
2. Boldness (v 12)
3. Liberty (v 17) We are freed from our bondage of sin.
4. Transformation (v 18) This is a continual, progressive transformation. We are being more transformed into Christ's image. That is the ultimate goal. Rom 8:29

All of this means that we are being transformed and we are to allow the Spirit to work in us to keep being transformed. The Word of God gives us this renewal. Keep seeking Christ and getting the view of Him to be transformed from glory to glory.

Let us pray.