

## For the Glory of It All, Part 4

### Reflecting the Glory Exodus 34: 29-35

#### Focal Passage

<sup>29</sup>When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.<sup>30</sup> Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. <sup>31</sup>But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. <sup>32</sup>Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. <sup>33</sup>And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

<sup>34</sup>Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, <sup>35</sup>the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him. Exodus 34: 29-35 ESV

#### Background

In the first week of this series we began with the focus on God's glory with Moses' request to see God in all of His glory (33: 18). We have also studied the hope we have in God's glory (Romans 8: 18-25) and a life that is dramatically changed when Paul is overcome by His glory (Acts 9:1-19). As we conclude this series this week, we are returning to the life of Moses.

It is difficult to count the number of times Moses climbed the mountain to meet God. It seems that Moses made this journey at least four times.<sup>1</sup> The previous trips focused on receiving the commandments. In the focal passage today, we find Moses has gone to the mountain for the replacement of the tablets that he destroyed in Exodus 32: 19.

So, Moses has been up the mountain to talk to God at least twice, and back down the mountain to address the people at least twice. Physically, emotionally and spiritually this had been a daunting task. As he spends time with God replacing the tablets, he had been at the summit forty days and forty nights. He had been fasting the entire time he has been in the presence of God. On this visit, Moses makes the two new tablets that were to replace the broken tablets (Remember the first time God made the tablets).

- Has fatigue ever led you to do or say something that you regretted later?
- Have you ever had to "fix" something important because you did not manage the first thing well?

Many Old Testament Scholars have explained the two tablets by suggesting that one tablet contained commandments 1-4 (The laws dealing with Israel's relationship with God) and the other tablet contained commandments 5-10 (The laws dealing with human beings). In reality, each tablet contained all ten of the commandments. The custom of forging legal covenants in

biblical days would provide each party entering into the covenant with a copy of the covenant<sup>ii</sup> (Just like two parties entering into a contract today would have a copy of the contract). Remaking the tablets was essential to the ongoing covenant between God and ancient Israel.

Moses' actions seem fairly straightforward. Moses needed to replace the tablets of the Ten Commandments. After forty days fasting in the presence of God, he heads back down the mountain. However, one thing was different - this time Moses "did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God (Verse 29)." The intensity of God's glory radiated from the face of Moses after he was exposed to God's presence for such an extended period of time. It was the "afterglow" of God's glory.

The Hebrew Scriptures describes the remarkable light of God's glory reflected in Moses' face in a unique way. A literal translation of the Hebrew words in this verse can be translated this way, "the skin of his face sent on horns." Early translations of the Latin Vulgate used a literal translation of the verse. That is probably what Renaissance statues and paintings of Moses depict him as having horns. What the Hebrew is attempting to get across is the light of Moses' face radiated or pulsated out from his face. It was not sunburn, or the redness created from exposure to something hot, his skin literally shone with a radiating light ... a light that comes directly from the glory of God.

### **The Shining**

How should we apply this scripture to everyday life? First, we live in a dark world that desperately needs to experience the hope and grace of God's glory. Through the New Testament, we see this was a part of Jesus' mission (Read John 1:1-18; 3:1-21; 8:12; Colossians 1:13-14). So, Jesus came to bring the light of God's glory to a dark and oppressed world.

Second, as followers of Jesus Christ, we, too, are to bring the light of Christ into the world to confront the darkness (Read Matthew 5:14 -16; Philippians 2:15). Our lives – our words and our actions – should radiate the presence of Jesus. People should be drawn to Christ by the light of His presence in our lives. We are shine for Jesus so that others might come out of the darkness to the glorious light of His love and grace.

### **Something to Think About**

In Acts 4:1-31, Luke shares the history of Peter and John's arrest. They had been preaching and performing miracles and were arrested by the religious leaders of their day. Some of the men who had them arrested were the same leaders that conspired and condemned Jesus.

In Acts 4:13, the men judging Peter and John stated, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." What a statement! They "recognized that they had been with Jesus." Think about this thought a moment ... as the glowing face of Moses revealed that he had been with God, the life of Peter and John demonstrated a boldness that testified that they had been with Jesus.

As we examine our lives in relationship to these passages today, we need to ask ourselves the question, “Does my life radiate the truth that others see Jesus in me?” Are we too busy to spend time in God’s presence? Do we allow other things to dominate our lives and shift our passions away from God’s glory? How do we avoid the things that dim our light and diminish our lives from shining for Jesus?

### Things to Discuss

- How much time are you able to spend with God?
- What are the things that hinder you from spending time with God?
- What are the results of not spending time with God?
- Do we miss experiencing the glory of God by not spending time with Him?
- How does the lack of spending time with God diminish your witness to others?
- What can you do to adjust your life to spend more time with God?
- How different would our church be if our worship services and small groups shone with the glory of God because we had spent time with God before coming together to worship or coming to our groups?

### Making A Commitment

Here is a commitment statement for you to consider filling out. This is a statement between you and Jesus Christ. Prayerfully consider the cost and sign when you feel led to do so.

### My Covenant

Dear God, like Moses in Exodus 33:18, I want to see your glory. I understand that to see and experience your glory I must make adjustments to spend time with you. Today, \_\_\_\_\_ (Today’s date), I surrender to you my schedule so that I spend consistent times with you in prayer and meditation on your word. In doing so, I am open for you to change my life so that I might reflect your light to the people in my life who are overcome by the darkness of this world.

With All My Heart,

\_\_\_\_\_ (Your Name)

<sup>i</sup> See Exodus 19:3,7,20,25;20:21; 24:9,13;32:15; 33:19,23; 34:4

<sup>ii</sup> Phillip G. Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 1069.