

# Exodus 34:29–35

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 July 2017

Preacher: TJ Morrisette

[ 0 : 00 ] Our theme this summer has been accurately entitled Exodus God Settles.

We arrive still on the backside of Israel's egregious repercussions of their great sin with the idolatrous actions concerning the golden calf.

At a point in the book right before Moses comes and gives them intricate details from God about the construction of the temple, the construction of the Ark of the Covenant or even Sabbath regulations.

We'll see that in the weeks following. This is the point of transition that serves to show us not only has God through Moses settled his people, but the unique way that God himself settles amongst his people.

Amen. I have subtitled this sermon, though, a transforming glory, a transforming glory.

[ 1 : 15 ] See, because it's it's not enough for God to merely transfer his people out of slavery from Egypt. If God doesn't transform his people from slavery to sin.

It's not enough. It's a transforming glory we're looking for. So our text today moves us, I would say, in two halves. Look at the text, verse 29 through 33.

If you're looking at the first few words in verse 29, he says, when Moses came down. And then the second half, verses 34 and 35, you'll see the first few words in verse 34, whenever Moses went in.

Right. Right. So then we also get the endings of each of those sections versus look at again at verse 33.

He says, and when Moses went and when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Or in like manner, look at verse 35, B, and Moses would put a veil over his face again until he went in to speak with him.

[ 2 : 32 ] In one instance, he's putting a veil over his face. In one instance, he's putting a veil over his face for the people to be shielded from something. In another instance, he's taking the veil away so that he could experience something.

From these two sections, we arrive at two questions the people would be considering as they witness all this take place. Two questions to consider.

What does Moses' return confirm for the people? What does his descent confirm for the people?

Second question. What does the veil glory conclude for the people? What does his return confirm for us and for them?

Well, for starters, for the people of God, Moses, the mere fact that Moses is making his way down the mountain for the second time with the new words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

[ 3 : 40 ] If you ever, like me, like Mel Brooks, history of the world, Moses comes down, he accidentally trips and drops the commandments. It's not what happened.

The reason the commandments were broken is because the people broke the commandments. They broke the covenant. Second time he comes down, God is saying, let's just do this again.

Let's try this one over again. The Ten Commandments, having been up on the mountain as we saw last week, 40 days and 40 nights with no bread and water. We see Moses coming down in verse 29 with the tablets of testimony.

What does his return mean for the people of Israel? In ancient Near East times, this would mean that the people finally got a leader. They're not just kind of out there.

They're not left unprotected. But what it also means that is if their sin had any reason why they lacked communication with God, if their sin caused separation, then the news that Moses is coming brings a key element of communion to the people.

[ 4 : 57 ] If according to chapter 33, verse 3 is true, if what is true in chapter 33, that God will not accompany his people in the promised land, then whatever Moses, whatever update Moses has now, oh, that's not just key for their survival.

It's key for their transformation. Moses is coming down. Their sins will not be counted against them. That's what it means.

We get to see the reaction of the people even. Look at verse 30. 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. They were afraid to come near him. It's funny because it's similar to chapter 20 when Moses was about to head up.

And the people saw the flashes of lightning. And they're looking at it like, nah, we good. You go on up there by yourself, Moses. And the scripture actually says, and they fell back.

[ 6 : 03 ] They went back the other way. Well, Moses, having been in the presence of divine glory, is before people who know now more than ever that there's a God that is for them.

There's a God that is for them and not against them. Now, even their attitudes toward Moses has to change. You remember grumbling and complaining.

I mean, where is Moses anyways? What they said in 32 verse 1, as for your fellow Moses who brought us out of Egypt, we don't even know what happened to him.

I mean, you can detect the sarcasm in their voices. Now they know where he's been. For Aaron and the people, they get the confirmation that Moses indeed is their representative.

As they sit amongst him, listening to him preach God's commands, face shining and all. Can you imagine? No, we're listening.

[ 7 : 14 ] We're listening. Keep going. That's my imagination. And even more importantly, that God has confirmed that Moses is the leader over these people. As we look even closer to the narrative of the first half, we see that this confirmed leader has himself been transformed by being face-to-face with the glory of God in conversation.

As Moses' face glows and the people have to bear the shine, it would be hard for them to understand anything of what is truly happening regarding eternity.

They're still dealing with what's happening just in front of them. I mean, this dude, his face is shining. For all they knew, just the fact that Moses was talking with God, this is the cause of the shining.

Moses likely didn't even know the fullest extent to the emblematic nature of the glory he was representing in those moments. Perhaps we get the privilege on this side of the cross to know just what these types and images might lead to.

Let me just tip you off. Jesus Christ. As the people fear, as he's preaching with authority, as he puts a veil over his face, perhaps in humility, Jesus Christ.

- [ 8 : 42 ] Consider Christ in these moments. Our Lord, the Lord of light. And all we see here in Moses is a figure.
- This Christ will come to instruct his people. And will call his people as Moses did. Moses, look again.
- He calls them in verse 31. But Moses called them. Aaron and the elders. Jesus calls his disciples. And yes, he's calling you today.
- Or perhaps consider the conversation that in John's gospel between Christ and the woman at the well. John 4, 19.
- And she said, well, now, hold on now. Dude, some of your people worship on the mountain. Some worship in Jerusalem. And Jesus responds. Excellent.
- [ 9 : 38 ] An execution as he is. He's like, well, it's not about the mountain or Jerusalem. The father seeks worshipers who will worship in spirit and in truth. And mind you, we worship what we know.
- And you worship what you don't know. Moses' descent means that there is an end to the Mount Sinai talking.
- And now he's meeting with the Lord in this tent. And then later, there's a presence in the tabernacle, all to be coming to fruition in Jesus Christ himself. But I digress.
- The conversation with Christ was that he wants worshipers to worship in the presence of God correctly. The father is seeking worshipers.
- Or perhaps that's not enough for you. Perhaps we look at the Mount of Transfiguration, Matthew 17. As Christ is speaking to Moses and Elijah in sort of like a boom tube, if you're a DC comic fan, talking to them as Peter, James, and John are watching like, I don't even know how to describe this in words.
- [ 10 : 54 ] The disciples fall in fear of what they see. And Moses, as Moses comes down the mountain, he calls the men to listen to him. Likewise, Christ, as he is transfigured on the Mount, the voice comes from heaven, stopping Peter's words.
- And he says, this is my beloved son, with whom I'm well pleased. You know what? Listen to him. Or even perhaps in some soft effect, the way that Christ and Moses share this type of humility of action, their humble servants.
- Perhaps Moses, Moses in verse 33, covers his face after speaking with the people. We find Christ after transfiguring, warning his disciples not to tell anybody until after the resurrection.
- Maybe. Both Christ and Moses appear bright and unbearable, symbolizing the immense glory. The glory of God that they are dealing with.
- It is all at once compelling and a transforming glory, while at the same time terrifying to any who behold it.
- [ 12 : 11 ] While Moses here is talking to the people concerning God's commands, his instructions, that they are at the same time witnessing a glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Moses giving these instructions.
- Moses is sent here to translate God's words for the people. He is the mediator that is needed between a great God and a sinful people.
- Christ upholds that role. Even John's gospel picks it up again in the narrative of the glory of Christ. John chapter 1 verse 14, And the word became flesh and dwelt among us in what we have seen as glory.
- Glory as the only son from the father. What? Full of grace and truth. What's good here is the fact that God's, not only is God's glory going along with the people now, but his voice is back with the people.

He is the, he has the mediator for the people. Moses' return amongst the people and the radiant shine upon Moses' face confirms that there is a way to be made right before God.

[ 13 : 36 ] That's good news for us today. Since there is a mediator, since the mediator has met with God and the covenant that God has made with his people is now still intact, we have our sins handled as lack of better words.

Have we confirmed God's presence in our own lives? Or perhaps, is Christ your mediator today?

But then we get to the second half. What does the veiled glory conclude for the people? Verse 34 and 35, our text kind of turns to a setting of Moses no longer on a mountain, but speaking with God in the tent of meeting.

We find ourselves witnessing a continual practice of Moses going into the tent and speaking with God. That's what's meant in verse 34 by whenever Moses went in before the Lord.

Now, keep in mind, verse 33 and 35, make it clear that this was a continual action for Moses to be glowing in his face.

[ 15 : 00 ] Every time he went in, he didn't just glow one time. Every time he went in, he would come out glowing. It was continual. Our writer begins to speak specifically on the practice of Moses in the continual removal and the placing of the veil on his face.

So he keeps, in one sense, taking it off to be in the presence of God, then putting it on after speaking with the people. This continual action. It's almost like we get a sense of something being undone.

Um, not fully fulfilled, not fully fulfilled, not, not, not all the way there. The verb here occurs, uh, in a sort of imperfect fashion.

Verse 35, 34 and 35. Take a look at verse 34, a imperfect, right? 34, a, whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out.

Or how about 35 B? And Moses would put the veil over his face again until he went in. There's something that is happening that continues to keep happening.

[ 16 : 19 ] Our writer begins to show us this practice that Moses had, but still keep it left undone.

Moses face seemed to shine the brightest when he went in and talk to God. Even though his face shined before the people though, Moses was merely, merely, and listen to me, he was merely reflecting a glory.

And in fact, the word there shown or shining, it literally means emits to reflect. It, it, it, it, it, it, it means it's reflecting so much that it was even looking like horns were coming from his head.

You'll find that in ancient medieval drawings of Moses, the shine was so immense that it looked like horns. I tend to think that they didn't really know how to describe it.

His face shined bright before the people. He was reflecting. He was merely a mirror. He wasn't it. He was just reflecting it.

[ 17 : 34 ] He's admitting this glory as he reflects the fact that he has been in the presence of God, but Moses veiling himself concludes to the people though, that their eyes as, as Moses goes in and he gets the glow and comes back out, they, he, he, he's telling the people with the eyes of Moses, without saying it, that your eyes need to always be gazing upon the glory of God.

The only one powerful enough to transform a people. The, the, the transformation also represents the mercy that God has on his people.

Even Moses, as he is able to now talk to this God who at one point said, lest I break out against them, don't have them come. The people were reminded that this is the God of heaven who made the heavens and the earth and the seas and all of the dry land.

Listen to the words of Psalm 97, verse six, the heavens declare his righteousness and all the people have seen his glory. All the people have seen his glory. And at the same time, Paul picks up this passage in second Corinthians chapter three, verse seven through 18.

Just turn over there with us real quick. Paul, let's see what Paul does with this passage in verse seven through 18 of chapter three, second Corinthians.

[ 19 : 04 ] Now, starting in verse seven. Now, if the ministry of death carved out, carved in letters of stone came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses's face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the spirit have even more glory?

Look at verse nine. For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.

Paul draws the conclusion about the ministry of this law. He called it the ministry of death. I mean, Moses is coming down with the new commandments.

It means good stuff for them, but, but Paul picks it up and says, no, no, no, no, no. What Moses was doing, he was bringing a ministry of death in one sense.

He's saying that the law is coming to an end. And the new covenant, that's what, that's what that is. The new covenant, the ministry of the spirit, as he writes it in there, having more glory in verse seven through eight.

[ 20 : 29 ] Paul states his point that while what Moses brought down from Mount Sinai brought condemnation and glory along with it, the one that brings righteousness now far exceeds the law, but he also comes with glory himself.

That's what you see in verse 11. Look at it. For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more, much more will what is permanent have glory.

Christ is the permanent in here. The transfiguration of Moses in verse 12 through 13 was imperfect.

According to verse 12 through 13, since we have such a hope, we're very bold according to Paul. Not like Moses though, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end, but their minds were hardened.

For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted because only through Christ is it taken away. Paul makes the claim here that the purpose of the veil was so that the people could not see the outcome of what was being brought to an end.

[ 21 : 49 ] That is the old covenant. What was being brought to an end? According to Paul's argument, the ministry of Moses, the old covenant, this would be taken over by a more permanent and more sure mediator.

That is Christ. According to Paul, this more permanent glory, this unfading glory, this that transformed, transforms more than faces of people, has to be something that can transform the heart and the mind.

It's not enough to just have a transformed face. It has to sink within. Verses 14 through 16, the real issue with the people, with the people that Moses is dealing with, is that their hearts are hardened.

But Paul uses the veil of Moses as a metaphor for what, what cannot be seen and truly experienced by the people in Exodus, because they do not turn to the one who can lift the veil of their hearts.

That is Christ. Lastly, just read, read verse 15 through 16 with me. Yes. To this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts.

[ 23 : 06 ] But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Do you need a veil removed from your heart today?

I would argue that's every last one of us. Paul's argument in this case is that Christ is the conclusion of Moses Moses and all the prophets.

That Christ far outweighs and outdoes and supersedes the glory seen in Moses, if there was any at all. This new covenant is more glorious, because while Moses does place a high significance on the old covenant, this only means, according to Paul's words, that the new covenant is that much more better.

The fact that God is not writing commands on stones anymore, he's writing it on the hearts of some folks in here. Back in Exodus, though, what is veiled, what this veil glory concludes then for us, that with everything surrounding what Israel gets in Moses, none of it truly compares to what we have in Jesus.

It doesn't compare. What you find out in Moses, it doesn't compare to what you have in Jesus. It just points to Jesus. As much as a type of Christ that Moses is, the text also comes to this conclusion that Moses is not enough.

[ 24 : 40 ] Moses is not the Christ. As I close off here, I got five ways Moses falls short of Christ in Exodus 34. Number one, Moses did not know as he came down the mountain, says in verse 29, back in Exodus 34, Moses did not know that he was shining.

He didn't know Christ, however, was fully aware of who he was. He was fully aware of his glory. On the Mount of Transfiguration, it wasn't a surprise for Christ.

Oh, he knows. Christ reveals his divinity before the men, so much so. Number two, though, Moses has a borrowed glory. Jesus has his own glory.

Jesus has no reason for a re-up. You know who does? We do. Again, 2 Corinthians 4, 6. Look back at it.

2 Corinthians 4, 6 says, just like this, for God, who said, let the light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

[ 25 : 58 ] Number three, the people were afraid to come near Moses. What does Christ say? If I be lifted up, I'll draw all men unto me. Number four, Moses' glory faded away longer, faded away the longer he stayed away from God.

Moses' shining was unique to Moses. Christ's shining is revealing who he actually is. It is us who need to constantly gaze at Christ. It is us that need to continually behold who Christ is in the world and uphold who Christ is in the world.

Remember, what Jesus asked Peter when he fell in the water, why do you doubt? Because Peter's looking around at the storm and he's about to sink. The issue is we, we are transformed only by constantly looking at Jesus Christ.

What are you looking at today? Who are you looking at today? The issue with the Corinthians is that they were upholding these super apostles or upholding these, these traditions and saying, no, no, no, no, no, this is what it is.

And Paul's like, no, no and no. Christ needs to be lifted up. His glory will never fade. Whether you get with the program or not.

[ 27 : 18 ] And then lastly, number five, Moses' glory is not enough to transform people. with the effect that Moses had and it was tremendous.

It wasn't enough. It might have been a sight to see Moses coming down with the commandments, but back to Paul's argument, it didn't actually get the job done.

The gospel is what takes away the veil according to Paul. Under any other jurisdiction, you don't find freedom, you're still in chains.

are we able to stand with Paul as he says back in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, he says in verse 17, the Lord is spirit and where the spirit is, there is freedom.

And we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

[ 28 : 24 ] For this comes from the Lord who is spirit. As the theologian of our time, Fred Hammond, once said, glory to glory to glory.

glory. Well, this veil glory thus concludes for us in Exodus that whatever whatever glory people do see in you, they themselves would come to the conclusion prayerfully, Lord willingly, that God is much more glorious.

Is that true for us? That if there is a glory that is transforming any of us in here today, that the evidence of that glory will point to the conclusion that, I did this one in C's, that Christ will have no competitors, that there will be nothing to whom Christ can be compared, that you could humbly correct those in error, that there will be no confusion as to who's running it, and that you can courageously proclaim with full counsel the full counsel of who God is.

Well, I'm done, but I felt the need to bring one more witness to the stand just to push the point a little bit further. This dude named Stephen in the Bible chosen amongst the guys to help, full of grace, full of confidence, full of faith, as they say.

And as he's doing nothing but waiting tables and serving amongst the people, they start asking him questions about this Jesus he says he believes in, and he stands up, Stephen, and starts to tell him about how Moses, Moses wasn't it.

[ 30 : 22 ] Christ is it. And the people go, what? Get him. But something interesting happens to our brother Stephen.

Acts chapter 6, verse 14, I dare you to read it. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.

Verse 15, and gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. According to Luke, according to the people, upon Stephen preaching the gospel in hostile territory, his face starts to transform.

Stephen, if you don't know the story, is stoned. But right before he's stoned, something else happens. He looks up and he says he sees the heavens open and he sees the glory of Christ coming down.

Stephen's witness meant that a divine, supernatural, supernatural radiance should follow our witness.

[ 31 : 46 ] And while our faces will probably never shine like an angel, does even our witness testify to the transforming nature of God's glory for our lives?

Let's pray. Lord, we need you to come down. For some of us in here, we're burdened down by sin.

We're weighed down. For some of us, we struggle just to know you every day. But God, I know just as you stood on that mountain with Moses and Elijah, as you told Elijah, you have kept for yourself those that have not bowed their knee to Baal.

I pray that what glory you reflect in us will preach the truth about you every single day. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Would you please stand and sing with us? God?