Exodus 34:35 They saw that his face was radiant.

I want to make sure that you understand this text and what it is telling us. The first thing you need to know is that this text is basically goes all the way back to Exodus 19 and the fact that Moses went up into the presence of God. From that point on, every time Moses went into the presence of God this wonderful phenomena happened: Moses face was radiant. That means that Moses face glowed. It was shiny, but not the shiny that one would expect with sweat or maybe face oil, but shiny in the absolute sense that his face glowed. If you would, I want you to think of the face of Moses kind of like a watch face with phosphorescent paint and how when you turn off the lights that paint glows. The only difference is that Moses face didn’t fade right away. Evidently, this glow, the radiant face of Moses lasted for days and perhaps even weeks.

That leads us to ask the questions, “Why and How”? Our text, when you contemplate it carefully, leads us to both answers. First the easier one, “How?” The best answer I can give is that as Moses went into the presence of God, literally, as Moses entered the Glory and majesty of God, that glory of God would kind of stick to him so that he was radiant with God’s glory. Think about that! Moses was privileged to be in the very presence, majesty and glory of God. Considering that God is a Spirit and that is how God chose to manifest himself in the Old Testament is an awesome thing.

God’s glory was an event that the Israelites recognized was of and from God. So for instance, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire that lead the Israelites from Egypt and into the wilderness was a part of that glory of God. The Israelites saw the glory of God block the oncoming Egyptian army and the Israelites knew that the sea had been parted because of the power of God. As they traveled that pillar of cloud or fire, guided and directed them so that when it moved they moved and when it settled down on the ground, there they made camp.

So when the Israelites got to Mt. Sinai that Glory of God settled on the mountain and Moses was allowed to go up into that glory. Remember, the mountain was roped off and the rest of the people were warned not to go up on the mountain or they would die. (Although I can’t think of any record of someone trying that, I’ll bet someone did and that was sufficient for everyone to pay attention.) Yet when Moses came down, he was radiant! And then, once the Tabernacle was assembled, that Glory of God would settle on the Tabernacle and it was there that Moses went into the presence of the Lord and came out glowing because, as best as I can say it, the power and glory of God rested on and reflected off him. So as far as how, it happened because God caused it to happen.

Why? That is such an interesting question. From the outset the why is really kind of simple to grasp. It happened so that the people knew and understood that what Moses said, what Moses shared with them was of and from God himself. So we can surely understand that this radiance of Moses was a mark and symbol that Moses was absolutely and without doubt the spokesman, the prophet of God before the people. It was clearly also a sign and mark that Moses was to be listened to! As far as I know, I do not know of any other person in the OT who ever carried this radiance of God. Even others, like the elders who were allowed into the presence of God at one time, there is no record that when they came out they had this radiance of God upon them. Moses is absolutely unique in this.

Until Jesus!

Jesus is the only other person who had this radiance of God. Only Jesus did not have to enter into the presence of God to get it. What we are told is that this radiance, simply came out of Jesus, that He was transfigured before his disciples and was radiant, as bright as lightening and filled with glorious splendor. Moses was the first, Jesus was the second one, the greater one. Get the feeling there is a lesson in there? Our theme will be: **THE SHADOWS OF GLORY.**

I think you know what I meant by “shadow.” A shadow is a harbinger, a sign, a kind of likeness of what will be. In other words, the life of Moses had similarities to the life of Jesus. Moses glowed, Jesus glowed! The first thing that should strike you is that Moses was the instrument in bringing forth the law of God and Jesus is the instrument of the Gospel of God. And even with that thought there are a few things that just stand out as you compare the lives of these two servants of the Lord.

For instance, take the fact that Moses had to enter the glory of the Lord to glow and then Moses covered up that glow before the people by wearing a veil. What is most interesting is that as you study the life of Moses you get the feeling that most of the time Moses glowed. Moses wore that veil so that the radiance though seen and known was covered up. On the other hand, Jesus was the glory of God in person and the glory of Jesus was almost always hidden. Only one time do we see the fullness of the radiance of God in Jesus! No wonder Isaiah would prophecy about the Christ, **“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”** What a contrast this is.

And there is more. Moses was radiant almost all the time and yet, what kind of impact did that have on the people? Answer: Almost none! The nature of people is that they are so hard hearted and sinful that even when there is the clear and visible demonstration of God’s acting, they ignore it. Think of the numerous times these people rebelled against God, the many times they easily and clearly threw off the truth of God for whatever suited their needs. The Golden Calf! Think of how Aaron and Miriam, though they never glowed, decided that they were just as important as Moses in leadership and rebelled. The grumbling, complaining, whining and out and out disobedience to God’s laws never stops among these people. Even when God miraculously feeds them day after day, they just complain.

On the other hand, Jesus who showed his glory in his miracles, showed that God was truly among the people in his transfiguration, Jesus who was God among us, this same Jesus is treated the same way as Moses. And yes, we would have to say that the vast majority of people out and out rejected and turned away from Jesus. Visible evidence of God among them and they reject Jesus to the point they even shouted to have him murdered by crucifixion.

And I suppose we think we are better than they were! We today, have the Word of God among us on the pages of Scripture. We know the glory and wonder of this word, the wisdom of God it reveals and the power of God it brings for our eternal life and salvation. And yet how few really know it. How few study it and make it their personal foundation. And even when many do read it instead of believing what it says they determine what they want to believe and then force God’s Word to agree with them. People who proclaim what we must do and be, how we must obey and love or we are not really God’s children. They do this is such a manner that clearly they are teaching righteousness by the law and then they completely ignore the fact that God tells us that when you do that, you make it so that “Christ died for nothing.” In other words, though we have the full revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior before us, many still don’t see his glory and believe his message.

Yet get this, these people who saw Moses radiant, who knew that before them they had the law of God and who heard faithfully from Moses the point of it all, just didn’t believe. Not only did they NOT keep this law of God they eventually believe falsely about this law. They got to the point where they thought, they believed, they considered that they were obedient, that they were godly and upright, holy and perfect before the law of God, never quite grasping that the law and its obedience was a fading thing in their lives. Moses radiance faded, as a shadow that someday, one day the law was going to fade from their lives. And they completely cast aside the fact that the ceremonial laws always and purposefully pointed to the Savior and his redemption.

Then jump to the life of Jesus. Here was Jesus fulfilling the law of God for the people. Here was Jesus in his life enacting, completing, and revealing the point of the law that the people might grasp the truth of God’s grace and love. They reject this. They reject that Jesus fulfills what their ceremonial laws are all about. They reject that Jesus is the Passover lamb sent to save them from death and slavery. They reject God’s promises and wonders revealed and won in Jesus and instead cling to the laws only insofar as they saw them and understood them. Here was “God with us!” Here was the fullness of the deity in bodily form and the people of Jesus day miss what God has done for them.

The sadness of this is how so many today still miss this wonder and marvel of Jesus. Instead of grasping that Jesus is the whole power and wonder of salvation there are so many who believe and live like it is still the law that counts when it comes to getting to heaven. They proclaim that unless you do this and be that, unless you have this or that experience then you cannot be saved. Me, I believe what Jesus taught. Salvation is about God’s one and only son. Salvation comes to us by faith (believing) and by trust (when God’s Word says baptism saves, then trust what is said!). Our salvation is based on what Jesus has done in his atoning work. No, I don’t believe that Jesus “came to show us the way.” I believe that Jesus is the Way! Everything depends on him! So simple. So wonderful. And if you pay attention, you recognize that this simple message was even what was preached and believed by Moses too! Faith is always the key and nothing more.

It is so interesting this comparison of Moses and Jesus. Moses the first prophet of God and Jesus the last prophet of God. Moses the giver of the law who had fading radiance and Jesus the fulfiller of the law who with his exaltation has never lost the radiance of his glory. May we grasp that Jesus is indeed the fullest measure of everything in our lives. Amen.