**The Radiant Mediator**

Exodus 34:27-35

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* John Owen…. “The light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is the only good which will satisfy me and which I desire.”[[1]](#footnote-1)
  + Four Applications….[[2]](#footnote-2)
    - #1 - Decide – Make up your mind that to behold the glory of God by beholding the glory of Christ is the greatest privilege which is given to believers in this life.
      * John 17:3 - *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*
    - #2 – Strive – Beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is a great mystery which requires much spiritual wisdom to come to a right understanding of it and to practice it aright.
      * Matt. 16:16-17 - *Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*
    - #3 – Think – Learn how to behold the glory of Christ by remembering how you once set your mind on worldly things.
      * Col. 3:2 - *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*
    - #4 – Forsake – Do not rest satisfied with only an idea of this truth or a bare assent to the doctrine.
      * Heb. 5:14 - *solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil*.
* BELOVED….Beholding the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is the only thing that will satisfy your soul.
  + Decide… strive… think… and forsake.
    - One of the clearest passages in the Bible that helps us understand this truth is our focus today as we see the Radiant Mediator.

**The Reading of God’s Word** – Exodus 34: 27-35 (Page 75 in the Pew Bible)

*27 And the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” 28 So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.*

*29 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. 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. 31 But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. 33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.*

*34 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, 35 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.*

**The Preaching of God’s Word**

1. The Light of His Countenance (vs. 27-28)
   1. *And the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.*
      1. Throughout the Book of Exodus, Moses has gone up to meet with the Lord on M. Sinai at least four other times,[[3]](#footnote-3) but this is the second time (Ex. 24:18) that he has gone up for 40 days and 40 nights.
         1. How did the man Moses survive?
            1. God must have supernaturally kept him alive.

It is easy for the One who makes bread fall from the sky and causes water to gush from a rock to sustain his servant.

* 1. But the most important part of this passage is how it relates to this section in the book of Exodus.
     1. J. A. Motyer helpfully summarizes this potion this way.
        1. Ex. 32:1-6 – Moses doubted.
           1. 32:7-14 – The Covenant threatened (Golden Calf)

32:15-19 – The tablets broken

32:20-24 – False security: longing for the visible

32:25-29 – practical devotion

32:30-35 – the angel leading: sin faced

33:1-6 – the angel expelling: sin acknowledged

33:1-7 – spiritual devotion

33:12-23 – True security: not the visible but the audible

33:1-4a – The replacement tablets

* + - * 1. 34:4b-28 – Covenant renewal (Moses’ devotion)
      1. 34:29-35 – Moses Validated
    1. POINT: This interaction on the mountain is directly addressing the greatest need of the people, which is to be in covenant fellowship with their GOD.
       1. When we read that “he”, the passage is ambiguous about if it was God or Moses, wrote the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.
          1. It is language of a remarriage.

The Prophet Isaiah’s words could rightly fit this scene when we read…

Isaiah 54:4ff - *Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the Lord has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord, your Redeemer.*

* + 1. The servant of God on the mountain is sustained by grace and power to make known to all the people that God’s steadfast love has plumbed the depths of their disgrace and his mercy goes deeper than their sin.
       1. Now the countenance of their redeemer is seen in His law.
          1. Victor Hamilton is probably correct when he notes, “all the material in Leviticus and through Numbers 10:10 that the Lord speaks to Moses he speaks while the Israelites are still encamped at Sinai.”[[4]](#footnote-4)
  1. The Character and Countenance of God is recorded in His Word… but it also is validated in the appearance of His SERVANT, the mediator Moses.
     1. But How?

1. The Brilliance of His Presence (vs. 29-35)
   1. *29 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.* 
      1. Here is Moses with the two tablets… meaning here are two copies of the covenant that will go in the Ark of the Covenant to symbolize the ratification of the relationship.
         1. But as Motyer pointed out… the passage has more than just the ratification of the relationship… it also has the validation of the mediator.
            1. In Exodus 32, the people despised Moses, then they worshipped the Golden Calf.
         2. Now the man, Moses appears, and there is something utterly different about him.
      2. *Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone*
         1. If you google Michelangelo (the Italian sculptor, not the turtle… Cowabunga Dude!) and Moses, there is a unique feature to the marble rendering of the Prophet…. He has HORNS!
            1. The word used here in the Hebrew is not the common one for shined… it is often used for “developing / sprouting horns” as in Psalm 69:31 to describe oxen.

The idea is that image is of Moses’ skin radiating brilliantly.

There is a brilliance that emanates from his face.

* + - 1. So why the rare word?
         1. Hamilton notes…

It is forcing the issue.

“Whom will God have to lead his people, the horned calf or bull of chapter 32, or the “horned” Moses of Exodus 34? Will he go with the bovine of chapter 32 or with he-of-the-beaming-face of chapter 34?”

* + 1. The simplicity of that question is answered in the reality of how the people reacted.
  1. *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.* 
     1. Moses’ radiance is scary.
        1. So in kind mercy, we hear the compassion of the man transformed by his time with God.
  2. *31 But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. 33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.*
     1. With reassurance Moses draws attention to the Lord with his words so that the people would be in awe of God by putting a veil over his face.
        1. Interesting thought… Moses will be with the Israelites for another 40 years, but this is the only place where a veil is mentioned.
           1. Hamilton – “The veil that prevents anybody from gazing on Moses seems to be replaced by the veil that separates the holy place from the holiest place lest anyone gaze on the Holy One.”[[5]](#footnote-5)
        2. Here is a picture of holy fellowship.
  3. *34 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, 35 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.*
     1. Almost like a flashlight who batteries would dim over time, Moses had no glory inherent in himself.
        1. But when he abided in the presence of God MOST HIGH, there was a physical illumination of the spiritual transformation.

1. Conclusion
   1. Beloved, the work of the mediator Moses always pointed to the greater mediating work of Jesus Christ.
      1. Moses abided in the presence of the Lord for 40 days and then makes known the law of God for a people redeemed by grace.
         1. But it was Jesus Christ who emerged from the wilderness after 40 days and began to publically proclaim the Kingdom of God to all people while resisting the temptations on the Evil One (Luke 3:22-4:10).
      2. Moses’s face radiated the light of the Lord’s glory in a way that terrified the people, but the brightness of his veiled face FADED (2 Cor. 3:7,11).
         1. Here our better mediator stands our supreme.
            1. The disciples gathered at the Mount of Transfiguration saw the brightness of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ Matt. 17:1ff).

And rather than shrinking back in terror, there was an attraction and awe.

This was but a precursor to the prayer that Jesus prayed right before his arrest where he said…

John 17:5 - *And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.*

* + - * 1. Here the Son of God doesn’t simply reflect the brightness of the Father,

Hebrews 1:3 - *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,*

* + - 1. Yet the One who is Very God of Very God, begotten not made, became disfigured for you on the cross.
         1. On Mount Calvary, the Light of the World was encased in darkness as the perfect mediator suffered in the place of his people.

Beauty and glory became grotesque…

Isaiah 52 - *his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind*

* + 1. Then in a way reminiscent of Moses when he would take his veil off before going into the presence of God, Jesus Christ removes his face-veil and neatly wraps it in the tomb as the chains of sin and death burst.
  1. Now the mediator of the New Covenant is better than the giver of the law on Sinai…. He, Jesus Christ, the is Life-giving Spirit who conveys resurrection life (1 Cor. 15:45).
     1. For as the Apostle Paul has declared to us…
        1. *2 Cor. 3:12 Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, 13 not like Moses, 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. 14 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. 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.* 
           1. This is the supreme statement of what difference being born again means… that you turn from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9) because you have an new heart.
        2. *17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.* 
           1. Fading glory of Moses vs. the Abiding and Surpassing Glory of the Son (vs. 7-8)
           2. Glory of Condemnation vs. the Glory of Righteousness (vs. 9)
        3. *18 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. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
           1. Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ… you beloved are now the light of the world (Matt. 5).
           2. Because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit… you beloved are called to walk in the light (1 John 1:5-7).

1. *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* (2 Cor. 4:6)

**Prayer**

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* (Rev. 1:5-6).

**Benediction – Numbers 6:24-26**

*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

1. John Owen, *The Glory of Christ*, 30 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *TGC*, 22-24 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ryken helpful notes the ascents in Exodus 19:3, 7, 20, 25; 20:21; 24:9, 13; 32:15; 34:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Victory P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, 586 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 589 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)