

**The Radiant Face of Moses**  
**(Exodus 34:10-35)**  
Expository Lessons from the Book of Exodus

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**I. Review and Background**

- a. The Lord has told Moses to make two stone tablets, similar to the ones he had smashed when he came down the mountain (**Exodus 32**), and to ascend Mount Sinai again, bringing the two tablets with him.
- b. Moses had asked to see the Lord. However, the Lord told him, “No man can see My face and live”. The Lord then placed Moses in a cleft in the rock and passed by, proclaiming His nature: full of mercy, yet also bringing the wicked to judgment.

**II. Promises and Warnings about Entering the Land of Canaan**

- a. Read **Exodus 34:10-17**.
- b. Storyline:
  - i. The Lord says He is establishing a covenant with Israel.
    - 1. Recall that a covenant is a formal agreement between two parties, generally with *terms and conditions* (for example, what each party is responsible for doing, and what the consequences are if they don’t fulfill their commitment).
  - ii. God promises to drive out the tribes currently inhabiting the land of Canaan.
  - iii. The Lord tells the Israelites they must:
    - 1. Take heed not to make a covenant with the people of that land, or it will become a stumbling-block for them.
    - 2. Destroy the pagan worship of the Canaanites
      - a. Destroy their pagan altars and pillars.
      - b. Cut down their sacred groves of trees.
      - c. Don’t worship their gods.
  - i. The Lord says He is a *jealous* God.

- ii. The Lord is *jealous* for His people, similar to how a husband is jealous if his wife becomes unfaithful to him.
- d. Don't eat at their sacrifices.
- 3. Don't give your sons or daughters to marry them; otherwise, they will lead them into following and "committing fornication with" their pagan gods.
- 4. Do not make any cast images (of gods).
- c. God is concerned that His people not become contaminated by the nations around them in the future.
  - i. God's plan for His people, Israel:
    - 1. Read **Exodus 19:3-6**.
    - 2. He wanted them to be His own special people among all the nations; a royal priesthood, a holy nation.
  - ii. **Questions:** Why did God begin by focusing so much on warnings and prohibitions regarding their future time in Canaan? Why such dramatic language here? And why does God describe Himself here as a *jealous* God?
    - 1. **Answer:** Consider what happened later, a story that unfolds in much of the rest of the Old Testament.
  - iii. The response of Israel: they were like an unfaithful bride.
    - 1. Hosea prophesied against the northern kingdom of Israel, shortly before the end of that kingdom, c. 750 BC, shortly before it fell to the Assyrians. Therefore, this is written about 650 years after the time of Moses.
      - a. Read **Hosea 1:2-3, 2:2-8** and **13:4-6**.
      - b. Israel (the northern kingdom) was to God like an unfaithful wife who ran after other lovers. The Lord shows that He felt like a *jealous husband* whose wife was committing adultery with other men.
      - c. The Lord tended them like a shepherd in the Wilderness (the desert). However, later on when they reached rich pastures and prosperity, they became complacent forgot the Lord.

2. Jeremiah, writing c. 627-582 BC, around the time of the fall of Judah (the southern kingdom), uses similar imagery.
  - a. Read **Jeremiah 2:4-13, 2:19-21, 2:26-28** and **3:1-5**.
  - b. Judah became like an unfaithful wife, defiled by fornication in going after Baal and the other pagan gods of the Canaanites.
    - i. Note that under the Law of Moses, a woman who left her husband and was with another man was not allowed to return to her first husband (**Deuteronomy 24:1-4**).
  - c. The people of Israel were worse than even the pagan nations around them.
    - i. Unlike the pagans, they had *changed their gods*.
    - ii. They had forsaken the Lord, the *fountain of living water*, and instead dug their own wells *that held no water!*
3. This is why Moses gave such a strong warning in **Exodus 34**. God knew the dangers of this temptation; and was warning them not to be led astray to their own harm.
- iv. **Question:** What are we supposed to learn from this warning and bad example of the Jews?
  1. "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." (**Matthew 5:13**, NKJV)
  2. "Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity." (**Luke 8:14**, NKJV)
    - a. This is similar to what happened to the Jews: they became entangled with the nations around them and were choked out.
  3. "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'" (**1 Corinthians 15:33**, NKJV)
  4. Read **2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1**.

- a. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.
  - i. Similar to the command to the Israelites to not make covenants with the nations around them.
  - ii. How do we *apply* this to ourselves?
    - 1. *Clearly*, this applies to marriage.
    - 2. This was part of “counting the cost” (**Luke 14:25-33**) for me when, as a single man, I came to faith and wanted to be baptized in my late twenties. I realized that I had to *rule out* the possibility of marrying 90%+ of available single women! I must either remain single for the rest of my life or marry another committed Christian who followed Jesus and who loved God more than she loved me!
    - 3. This also applies to married Christians. We are committed to our spouses until death. Also, if we become widows or widowers, we must either remain single or marry another Christian.
      - a. “A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” (**1 Corinthians 7:39**, NKJV)
    - 4. For those who, for whatever reason, find themselves married to unbelievers or weak Christians, I encourage you to take to heart what Peter and Paul said (**1 Peter 3:1-6, 1 Corinthians 7:12-16**). Do your best to win over your spouse by your godly, loving way of life.
      - a. With our spouses, the greatest impact we can have to win them over is probably with our lives. There is an old saying (often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi; however, there is nothing to

document that he ever said it):  
 “Preach the gospel always; and use words if/when necessary”.

- b. Actually, St. Francis was a street-preacher, so let’s not ever use this saying as an excuse to not speak up to others about Jesus!
  - iii. Consider the implications of “being yoked together” regarding your closest friends, your business, renting, etc. On the other hand, Paul also says we can’t entirely “go out of the world” (**1 Corinthians 5:10**).
- b. Consider the sobering fact that *even Solomon, the wisest man* (before Jesus), was corrupted through his pagan wives, and thereby became entangled in idolatry (**1 Kings 11:1-13**, designated **3 Kingdoms 11:1-12** in the LXX).
  - i. When explaining the danger of being corrupted by ungodly people who are close to us, Paul warned us: “Do not be deceived...” (**1 Corinthians 15:33**)
    - 1. People who think they can have very close relationships with others and not be impacted negatively are *fooling themselves*, according to Paul.
  - ii. May we learn from the example of Solomon’s mistakes, have a sober estimate of ourselves, and never think we are above being influenced for evil by those we are closest to!
- c. One of Paul’s reasons why we need to avoid being yoked with unbelievers: we are temples of the living God.
  - i. “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’” (**2 Corinthians 6:16**, NKJV)
    - 1. Here Paul is quoting from **Leviticus 26:12**.

2. He may also be alluding to other Old Testament passages, such as **Exodus 25:8**, **Numbers 35:34** (LXX), **Ezekiel 43:9**, or the prophecy that Nathan gave to David about the one who will come who will build the temple, in **2 Samuel 7 / 1 Chronicles 17**).
- d. This concern for not being yoked with unbelievers is not limited to marriage. It has implications for other types of relationships, as well.
  - i. One example: if you start up a business and form a business partnership with another person. I have heard stories from Christians in businesses with unbelievers where that “unequally yoked” relationship brought extra strife where others did not have the same Biblical standard of integrity, righteousness and conflict resolution.
  - ii. While I cannot speak from personal experience on this (I have never formed a business partnership), I have been a landlord (renting out part of our 2-family home). Renting out to non-Christians in the past brought all sorts of unwelcome conflicts problems.
- e. In certain professions, it is very hard to be self-employed (or working for other Christians), and you have to work with others who are unbelievers. As Paul explained in **1 Corinthians 5:10**, we can’t entirely go out of this world and will have to live among others who are living their lives by very different (even totally evil) standards!
5. **Question:** Compare Paul’s statement in **2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1** with what he says in **1 Corinthians** in a similar passage on why we need to live holy lives. What can we learn about the Holy Spirit?
  - a. “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**, NKJV)

- b. Paul refers to our bodies as the “temple of the living God” and also as the “temple of the Holy Spirit”.
  - i. It seems to me that both statements refer to the same thing. If that is, in fact, the case, Paul has no problem referring to the Holy Spirit as ‘the living God’ (not the Father, but nonetheless God).
- c. Paul says this is in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, that the living God would dwell in us. This also fulfills what Jesus promised in **John 14**.
  - i. “...the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” (**John 14:17**, NKJV)
  - ii. Note Jesus refers to this “Spirit of truth” as “the Holy Spirit” right after that, in **John 14:26**.
- d. It seems to me that this is very consistent with what Peter said in **Acts 5:1-4**, regarding the Holy Spirit being referred to as ‘God’.
  - i. Peter challenged Ananias with the rhetorical question, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...?” (**Acts 5:3**)
  - ii. Peter then concludes, “You have not lied to men, but to God.” (**Acts 5:4**)
- e. Consider also the meaning of the word: *temple*. By definition, it is a building that people consider holds within it something people consider to be worthy of worship (whether God or a presumed pagan ‘god’).
  - i. If our bodies are described as *temples* of the Holy Spirit, that also points to the divinity of the Spirit.

### III. Reminder of Important Laws

- a. Read **Exodus 34:18-26**.
- b. A lot of this is repeating what was given to Moses earlier, which we covered in prior lessons in this series.
- c. Three festivals per year when all the men (males) had to appear before the Lord. We discussed this in our lesson on **Exodus 23:10-19**, ‘*Three Feasts that Matter*’. Those three feasts were:

- i. Feast of Unleavened Bread / Passover
  - 1. Paul explained in **1 Corinthians 5:6-8** that this foreshadowed the reality that we must get the sin out of our lives now that Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been slain.
- ii. Pentecost / Feast of Weeks
  - 1. This harvest-related feast was celebrated one day after seven weeks ( $7 \times 7 + 1 \text{ day} = 50 \text{ days}$ ) after the Passover.
  - 2. It foreshadowed the great spiritual harvest that began at the gospel message being preached and the first 3,000 baptized in **Acts 2**.
- iii. Feast of Ingathering / Tabernacles
- d. Sabbath requirements (resting on the seventh day). We discussed this in our lesson on **Exodus 20:1-17 – The Ten Commandments, Part 2**.
  - i. Rest on the seventh day of the week (the Sabbath, last day of the week, which was Saturday).
    - 1. Even the servants and donkeys get the day off!
  - ii. In a prior lesson we discussed what this foreshadowed for Christians.
    - 1. In **Hebrews 3 & 4**, it explains that the rest we are looking for will come *at the end*. Therefore, we are still living in the time of work!
- e. All the firstborn males “are Mine” says the Lord. All the firstborn males “who open the womb” are to be redeemed, even from among the livestock.
  - i. **Question:** Why did the Lord establish this unusual requirement?
  - ii. Read **Exodus 13:11-16**.
  - iii. This requirement to set apart the firstborn for the Lord pointed back to what the Lord did at the time of the original Passover.
    - 1. At the original Passover, a lamb was slain from each household to redeem the firstborn males from among the Israelites as well as their livestock. In contrast, the Lord struck down the firstborn of all the Egyptians that night, even from among the livestock.
    - 2. This, of course, also points to Jesus: our Passover Lamb, who has redeemed all those who follow Him.



- a. “Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore. let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 **Corinthians 5:7-8**, NKJV)

#### IV. The Radiant Face of Moses

- a. Read **Exodus 34:27-35**.
- b. Storyline:
  - i. Moses descended Mount Sinai after being there 40 days, fasting during that time.
  - ii. He wrote the 10 Commandments on the two tablets and came down the mountain.
  - iii. Coming down from the mountain, after being with the Lord, Moses’ face *radiated light*. However, Moses was not aware of this.
  - iv. When Aaron and the others saw Moses like this, they were (understandably) afraid to come near him.
  - v. Apparently, whenever Moses went in (to the tent?) to meet with the Lord after this, he would remove the veil. Then he would cover himself with his veil after he came out.
    - 1. Maybe he didn’t want to scare the people?
- c. **Question:** Why is this detail of the radiant face of Moses included in the story? Why is this detail important for us to know?
  - i. This is one more aspect of the fulfillment of the prophecy of **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**, where the Lord said he would raise up a prophet “*like Moses*” in the future, whom the people must listen to.
  - ii. **Question:** Who, among all the prophets who followed Moses, was like him in this regard? *Who else* had a face that radiated light after being on a mountain with the Lord?
    - 1. **Answer:** The only other person I can think of whose face radiated light was *Jesus*, when the Lord spoke to Him on the Mount of Transfiguration.
    - 2. Read **Matthew 17:1-8**.

3. Peter recounts this story in **2 Peter 1:16-18** to establish his own credentials to speak with authority about Jesus and the faith. Peter was there in person and heard the voice of the Lord speaking with Jesus on that mountain.
- iii. Paul explains the glory we have is even greater than that received by Moses.
1. Read **2 Corinthians 3:7-4:6**.
  2. The ministry of the Spirit is even more glorious than the one given to Moses.
    - a. His was the ministry of *death*, while ours is the ministry of *life*!
  3. His glory faded away over time, but ours *does not*.
  4. This should motivate us to be *bold in speech* when sharing our faith with others.
  5. The unbelievers are blinded, veiled; in Christ, when we turn to the Lord, the veil has been taken away.
    - a. The “god of this age”, referring to Satan, has blinded those who will not believe.
  6. We must be transformed to become more like Christ over time.
  7. The same God who commanded light to shine out of darkness (**Genesis 1:3**) has shown in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.