

Ruth Eardley draws lessons from when Moses encountered God on Mount Sinai.

THE SHINING FACE OF MOSES

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.¹

Students of forensic science will be familiar with Edmond Locard's famous principle: 'every contact leaves a trace'. Moses had been in God's presence and his face shone. It is hard to imagine luminescent skin but the Hebrew word has the idea of sending out rays.

The Latin Vulgate Bible seems to have erred at this point. It translates 'sending out' as 'horned' so that much medieval art, for example, Michelangelo's statue of Moses (in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome) features the prophet with horns sticking out of his head. Moses did not realise he was reflecting God's glory but this strange phenomenon alarmed Aaron and the Israelites. Moses had to veil his face.

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 is a marvellous parallel passage. The apostle Paul compares the fading glory of the old covenant with the

'surpassing glory'² of the new covenant in Christ. Moses removed the veil when he spoke with the Lord and, when the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us, the veil is removed from our hearts, the barriers are broken down and we can communicate directly with the almighty God.

How amazing! How wonderful that we can 'with unveiled faces, contemplate the Lord's glory.'³ What an honour to be transformed and reflect the beauty of Christ in our lives.

We do not need physical sight to see God's glory, nor for it to be seen in us. Ephesians 1:18 talks about the 'eyes of [our] heart' being enlightened. Is the beauty of Jesus seen in you? God changed Moses. He can change you too.

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references

1. Exodus 34:29
2. 2 Corinthians 3:10
3. 2 Corinthians 3:18