

• *A written record of God's law – early stages*

Moses is told to write out the reminder of the law^{□1} (referring to 34:10–16). This is obviously an early stage in the writing of the five books of Moses. Although not every word of Genesis to Deuteronomy was written by Moses, he started the process of collecting the material which eventually got into our 'books of Moses'. He wrote the minor laws of 34:10–16; God Himself wrote the Ten Commandments (as 34:1 tells us), but no doubt Moses kept a record of what was happening. This kind of covenant has law at its heart. This means that the requirements have to be written down. Moses did this when the covenant was first coming into being^{□2}, and now he does it again.

□1 34:27

□2 see 24:4

• *Moses' 40 day fast on Sinai*

Again on this occasion Moses stayed on Mount Sinai for forty days throughout which he was fasting without food or water^{□1}. It was a very heavy time of fasting. It is the kind of fast which should not be followed without exceptional guidance, a forty-day total fast without food or water. Moses refers to this period later in Deuteronomy 9:9, 18. Jesus also fasted for forty days^{□2}. Elijah once travelled for forty days without food^{□3}. Such a fast requires supernatural strength. Normally it cannot be done (because the body cannot go such a length of time without water). In the three cases known to us (Jesus, Moses, Elijah) they must have been given special enabling. Jesus was helped by angels, and so far as we know only did this once in His lifetime.

□1 34:28a

□2 Matthew 4:2;
Luke 4:2
□3 1 Kings 19:8

• *Exceptional – special guidance*

Moses gets close to God

1. Talking with God transforms us without our being very conscious of it

God writes again the Ten Words^{□1}. 'And He wrote on the tablets ...' The word 'He' refers to God (as we can see from 34:1).

□1 34:28b

• *Shining face*

1. Talking with God transforms us without our being very conscious of it. Moses comes down from Sinai, bringing the law to the people. He does not realize that his face is shining^{□1}. He would never ascend Sinai again. Talking with God is the greatest way of holiness. It transforms us without our being very conscious of it. It is a biblical principle that you become like the one that you worship. 'They went after vanity, and they became vanity' says Jeremiah 2:5. On the other hand if you spend forty days with Yahweh, you are likely to come out of the experience with something of God's shining glory becoming yours. One day 'we shall be like him, for we shall see him'^{□2}, but even now it is possible by fellowship with Him 'to be transformed into the same image'^{□3}. Moses got nearer to God than most ever do, and already foretastes of the resurrection body arose in his very appearance.

□1 34:29

□2 1 John 3:2
□3 2 Corinthians 3:18

• *Transformed by fellowship with Him*

2. The closeness of God's law brings fear

2. The closeness of God's law brings fear. When the people see this shining face of Moses, it creates fear in them^{□1}. Moses seems to have been transformed into some kind of shining super-saint. But Moses encourages them to come to talk to him^{□2}, and then the people come near also^{□3}, and the law of the renewed covenant is given to them^{□4}.

□1 34:30

□2 34:31
□3 34:32a
□4 34:32b

• *The people see Moses' shining face*

3. Moses has to overcome the fear-inspiring effect of the glory of the law

3. Moses has to overcome the fear-inspiring effect of the glory of the law. After he had spent time with the people, Moses put a veil over his face, so that they could not see his shining face^{□1}. His reason for doing this was that he did not want the people to be afraid of him. He took the veil off when he went to speak to God^{□2}. Each

□1 34:33

□2 34:34

• *Veil put on so that they would not fear*

time he came out from the presence of God his face would be shining^{□3} and he would put on this veil again^{□4}. (The idea that Moses put on a veil **in order that** they might not see that the glory of the law was fading is surely a mistake. One can understand 2 Corinthians 3:13 as a result clause: ‘... with the result that they did not see ...’ It was not Moses’ **purpose** to hide the fading nature of the law, and 2 Corinthians 3:13 does not say otherwise.)

□3 34:35a
□4 34:35b

Paul in 2 Cor 3

• *Contrasts the glory of the law with the greater glory of the gospel*

We must remember the use that Paul made of this story in 2 Corinthians 3. (i) The law came with glory; the gospel comes with greater glory. (ii) The glory comes in a different way. In the law it was for Moses only; under the gospel it is for every Christian (‘we **all...** behold... the glory of the Lord’). (iii) The glory of the law fades; the glory of the gospel does not, and its effect upon us grows ‘from one degree of glory to another’^{□1}. (iv) The glory of the Lord produces fear and distance; the people wanted to keep away from Moses. But the glory of the gospel produces boldness^{□2}. We have liberty in God’s presence^{□3}. (v) The law ministered condemnation^{□4}; the gospel ministers righteousness^{□5}.

□1 2 Corinthians 3:18
□2 3:12
□3 3:17
□4 3:9
□5 3:9

Set free from the fearful nature of the law

The important matter is that Moses felt the need to encourage the Israelites because the glory of the law was so fearful. He encouraged them by covering the glory on his face. We too must not allow the fearful nature of the law of God to discourage us. The law has for us faded away altogether! The law is abolished for us^{□1} and we fulfil its righteous demands by heeding the voice of Jesus and walking in the Spirit. We are under Jesus, not under Moses. For the people of Israel, the glory of God was seen in Moses’ face and they feared what they saw. For us, the glory of God appears in Jesus’ face and we love what we see. Although the law of God was great and wonderful, it is nothing compared to the marvels of salvation in Jesus. There is no veil over the face of Jesus; there is no veil over our hearts. The terrors of the law are gone. The law pointed to Jesus – every jot and tittle of it – but now Jesus has come. With unveiled face we gaze at the loving, glorious, merciful face of Jesus and find ourselves, without even knowing it, being changed from one degree of glory to another. If we get closer to Him, our very faces might shine with His love.



□1 see 2 Corinthians 3:7

• *Abolished for us*

• *Walking in the Spirit*

• *The glorious merciful face of Jesus*

• *We are changed!*

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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