

# Why Did Moses Veil His Face?

by Daniel Steele

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*Moses veiled his face to symbolize the transitoriness of the dispensation, but the gospel brings a glory that increases eternally, and the fullness of the Spirit is the heritage of every child of God.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 34:33, Romans 15:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 1:16

**Topics:** "Moses And Veiling", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Daniel Steele preaches about the significance of veiling in the Bible, particularly focusing on Moses veiling his face after speaking with the Israelites to symbolize the transitoriness of the Old Testament dispensation. Steele contrasts the fading glory of the law with the eternal radiance of the gospel, emphasizing the permanency and increasing brightness of the believer's experience through the Holy Spirit. He highlights the privilege of believers in the New Testament era to reflect the glory of the Lord without the need for a veil, experiencing the indwelling Christ and the Spirit of truth.

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## Transcript

The revision throws much light on this question, showing that the traditional answer is erroneous. That answer is, that the purpose of the veil was to subdue the excessive brightness, or to conceal it entirely, so that the Israelites could look at Moses and come nigh without fear.

Let us first study Ex. 34:29-35, in the A. V. and the R. V. The chief difference is found in verse 33. The A. V. reads thus: "And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face." The word "till" is in italics to indicate that it has no corresponding Hebrew term. The inference is natural that the veil is put on to allay the fear that kept the people at a distance. See verse 30. But the R. V. gives an entirely different meaning. And when Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face." This "when" completely contradicts the notion that the purpose of the veil was to banish fear and to draw the people to hear the message of Jehovah. For he spake with unveiled face, and did not put on the veil till he "had done speaking." Why did he veil himself then? Certainly not to allay the fears of his brethren, and draw them into audience with him. These ends had already been attained. In vain do we ask the Old Testament why the lawgiver veiled himself. Hence we turn to the New Testament. For the Bible has this peculiarity, that it is a self-explaining book when in the hands of a diligent student, who patiently confronts Scripture with Scripture.

Turn now to 2 Cor 3:7-18. St. Paul is contrasting the two dispensations, that of the letter that killeth, and that of the spirit that giveth life. The former he styles glorious, although it was the ministration of death

written and engraven in stones. The allusion to the law engraven on the two tables of stone suggests the glory that finds expression in the shining face of Moses bringing them down from Mount Sinai. But it was a transient, not an abiding and eternal radiance, as was evinced by the fact that Moses put on a veil to conceal from the people the evanescence of that glory, symbolizing the transitoriness of the dispensation which he was introducing. It seemed to be suddenly revealed to him that he was founding, not a system of realities, but of shadows of coming realities. Methinks, as this great prophet was descending the steep slope of Sinai, he had a sudden vision of a greater Prophet, who would stand upon the earth after fifteen centuries, and found a dispensation whose glory should never wane, but wax brighter and brighter forever. The contrast of the solar light streaming eternally from the face of the coming Messiah, with the quickly dying splendors which momentarily glowed on his own countenance, of whose rapid fading away he was himself conscious, prompted the veiling of his face, lest the Israelites, "looking steadfastly on the end of that which was passing away, ' would read its symbolical meaning, the transitoriness of their religion, and undervalue its blessings, and turn away from its requirements in disgust. Hence the purpose of the veil. But now mark the use that Paul makes of this act in heightening the contrast between the law and the gospel. The Pentecostal dispensation invests every believer with a glory which is not doomed to fade, but which will from its very nature eternally increase in brightness. We will never need a veil to conceal the vanishing glory. This is the privilege of the most obscure and illiterate disciple of Christ. Do you wish for proof? Harken, "But WE ALL, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."- R. V.

How beautifully this describes the permanency of that experience which Christ promises through the abiding of the Comforter in the heart of the believer, spoken of by Paul elsewhere as the temple of God, the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is not evanescent, because it is the glory of the indwelling Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Thank God, all ye believers in the Holy Ghost, that we live not in a dispensation of shadows, but of realities, not of types, but of the glorious antitype, our adorable Christ, through whom we receive and daily enjoy the Spirit of truth, or the Spirit of reality, in contrast with all the adumbrations and unrealities of all the rudimentary dispensations of Gentilism, Patriarchism, and Judaism.

The dispensation of the Holy Spirit is never to be superseded by anything more glorious on the earth. Its glory will not pale before any brighter dispensation. No future believers will ever need veils to hide the dying splendors of the abiding Paraclete. The indwelling Spirit is heaven below, just as it will be heaven above. For the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, described in Rev. 22:1, is only a poetic conception of the joy of the Holy Spirit filling to the brim the spirits of saints below and saints above.

"Angelic spirits, countless souls,

Of Thee have drunk their fill;

And to eternity will drink

Thy joy and glory still."

The future permanency of the fullness of the Spirit is implied in St. Paul's assured declaration, "I know that, when I shall come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ." -- Rom. 15:29, R. V. Here is no expectation of the subsidence of the conscious fullness of the Spirit. His positiveness

respecting the future undimmed brightness of the Son of God revealed within him (Gal. 1:16), seemingly excludes the possibility of his ever needing a veil to hide from men and angels the fading glory

This fullness is the heritage of every child of God who claims it in the name of Christ, and this confidence of its future abiding belongs as a birthright to every persevering believer.

"O little heart of mine! shall pain

Or sorrow make thee moan,

When all this God is all for thee,

A Father all thine own?'

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