

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Last Sunday after the Epiphany [*Quinquagesima*](C)

Exodus 34.29-35

Psalm 99

2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2

Luke 9.28-36

Exodus 34.29-35

- 1) The book Exodus assumed its current form in the sixth century, B.C., following redaction by editors of the Priestly tradition. Regardless of editing, the book likely has its origin in an oral tradition which may be traced back to Moses.
 - a) The lesson for this week comes from the section (34.1-35) which tells of the remaking of the covenant between the LORD and Israel, after Israel had broken the covenant.
 - i) The verses for today follow immediately on the section in which Moses has brought to Israel the new tablets of the Law (the Ten Commandments).
 - (1) In other words, Moses has just encountered the LORD in person.
 - (2) This time, however, Moses himself has written the commandments on the stone tablets. Earlier, the Law had been written on the first set of tablets by the LORD Himself (31.18; 32.16).
- 2) Moses is described as having a face which was “shining” (reflecting, in very dim form, the LORD’s glory).
 - a) The verb “to shine” or “to be radiant” in Hebrew is also the denominative form of the *noun* “horn,” and thus the Vulgate (Latin) translation of the Bible (prepared by St. Jerome late in the fourth century) uses the word *cornuta* (“horned”).
 - i) This word, which appears only in ch. 34 of Exodus, is the origin of the artistic tradition of depicting Moses as having horns on his head.

Psalm 99

- 1) This is the last of the so-called “enthronement hymns,” which extol the glory of the LORD.
- 2) Vv. 1-5 call for all peoples (all nations) to worship the LORD; another example of the God of Israel being proclaimed as the God of all creation.
 - a) However, the LORD’s special relationship with Israel follows, at vv. 6-7.
 - b) Finally, in vv. 8-9, appeal is made to the mercy and justice of God.
- 3) God’s mercy and justice reflects His glory.
 - a) God executes His justice and righteousness (v. 4) in that He answers His people (vv. 6, 8), giving them just laws (v. 7), and forgiving or punishing them as necessary (v. 8).

2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2

- 1) In this section Paul is addressing the nature of ministry under the old covenant (the Law) and under the new covenant (life in Jesus Christ).
 - a) Paul contrasts his own ministry with that of Moses, as the latter is described at Exod. 34.27-35.
 - i) In vv. 7-11, Paul characterizes this contrast in impersonal terms (this is not about Paul!, *cf.* v. 1), describing his ministry as embodying splendor (*doxa*) as proceeding from the risen Lord.
- 2) Paul contrasts his ministry as bold. This may involve apologetic or polemic, but the point seems to be that the greater glory of the Christian ministry empowers Paul to speak plainly and with authority.
 - a) Moses' use of a veil was to hide the transitoriness of his ministry.
 - i) The followers of those opposed to Paul (who claim Moses as their father), are closed and not open. The closedmindedness is a "veil".
 - (1) Those who turn to God in Jesus Christ remove this veil.
 - (2) The veil having been removed, believers reflect God's glory. The process of salvation involves being conformed to Christ, and thus changing "from glory to glory".
- 3) Paul defends his ministry using a rare *middle* voice in Greek. His point is that his opponents should have renounced what they have accused him of.
 - a) He has not adulterated God's word (which—it must be recalled—at the time of writing consists solely of the Old Testament).

Luke 9.28-36

- 1) The teaching that Jesus had given at 9.22-27 (the way of the Cross) is so different from what He had given the disciples before that it needs divine sanction.
 - a) The disciples are commanded by God to listen to this new teaching.
 - i) The implications for the disciples of following the way of the Cross will be made clear in the balance of Luke's Gospel.
- 2) Jesus was proclaimed Son of God at His baptism (3.21-22). He has been portrayed as embodying God's glory in His kingdom ministry of vanquishing the forces of destruction (chs. 4-9).
 - a) Now it is made clear that Jesus is revealed in His glory as He goes to the Cross.
 - i) Compare John, in which Jesus' "hour" is recognized to be on the Cross, and Mark, in which Jesus' glory is revealed definitively on the Cross.
- 3) Moses and Elijah: The road upon which Jesus now embarks is in accordance with the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah).
 - a) Only in Luke is the topic of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah mentioned. In v. 31 we are told they spoke of Jesus' "departure," *i.e.* of His *exodus*, His journey to Jerusalem, to God by way of crucifixion.
 - i) Note that Moses and Elijah refer to Jesus' departure "which he was about to accomplish *at Jerusalem*."

- b) Peter misinterprets the light of Jesus' glory as the abundance of light of the Feast of Tabernacles. Hence his reference to building three "dwellings" (dwellings for God's light).