The Veil and the Glory

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Introduction
In this paper I would like to argue that the Apostle Paul's interpretation of veil and the glory in episode of Moses bringing the ten commandments (Ex 34:29-35) indicates that Paul sees himself and the other apostles of the New Covenant as like a "new" Moses or rather as Moses was in his generation so the apostles were in their generation bringing a new covenant from YHWH which was superior to the one given on Sinai and promised in Jeremiah 31:31. Secondly that for Paul the light he saw in Messiah's face meant that Messiah was the living image of God, YHWH, the Spirit, and that the light Moses reflected when communing with YHWH was the same light Paul, his co-workers and the saints (Qedashim) reflected when they communed with the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18) which was transforming them into the image of Messiah Yehoshua (Christ Jesus). In believing this he was reflecting the Church tradition seen in other New Covenant writings (John 1:1-18, 2 Pet 1:16-17). We will first look at the plain meaning of Moses second descent with the Covenant of the Ten Commandments, then notice how a modern interpretation of the episode and then finally look at Paul's interpretation of some aspects of the episode.

The Text
The narrator tells us the story in Exodus 34:29-35:

29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount that Moses knew not that the skin of his face sent forth beams while He talked with him.

30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face sent forth beams; and they were afraid to come nigh him.

31 And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him; and Moses spoke to them.

32 And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh, and he gave them in commandment all that Yahuah had spoken with him in mount Sinai.

33 And when Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

34 But when Moses went in before Yahuah that He might speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out; and spoke unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.

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1 The LXX translates the word qaran to send out beams of light as dedoxastai, translated by Brenton as Moses face being glorified
2 The LXX translates this as dedosaxmene from doxazo to render glorious, honor, magnify
3 The LXX translates this as presbuteroi the usual translation of elders.
4 LXX eneteilato meaning to enjoin, charge
And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses that the skin of Moses' face sent forth beams; and Moses put the veil back upon his face, until he went in to speak with Him. {S}

The Context: Exodus 19 – 34 the Narrative context

The narrator makes clear that getting these tablets of the covenant from God to Israel was no easy task. Moses had to descend with them twice(Ex.32:19,Ex.34:29). In the first instance he descended and found the people 5 worshiping a golden calf (called the sin of the eigel) and calling it the elohim (gods) that had brought them out of Egypt. Moses and YHWH see the making and worship of the eigel(golden calf) as a shocking act of idolatry with which Moses brother Aaron seemed to be complicit, Moses smashed the two tablets of God's writing, of the testimony(edut), his face hot with anger.6 Moses then beseeches (yachal) the face of YHWH for the 600550 Israel men remaining alive. YHWH tells Moses they are your people which you brought up from Egypt7 and Moses tellsYHWH they are ' your people which you brought up from Egypt"(Ex. 32:11). Moses, asks pointedly to YHWH "lamahYHWHYecherehypakka.Why does your wrath wax hot YHWH? ...shuvmecharapakevinchem al haraaahleameka” “Turn from your fierce wrath and repent the evil to your people”. Moses argument on behalf of Israel succeeds and YHWH calls off the destruction(32:14). However Moses having succeeded in calming YHWH down goes down the mountain with the sheiluchothaedarut (two tablets of witness).The narrative makes clear “haluchotmaaseh Elohim hemahvehamiktavmiktav Elohim hucarut al haluchot”, the tablets were the work of God, and the text was the God's writing graven on the tablets” . When Moses seeswhat YHWH had seen"yicharafmoshe” “the anger of Moses flared up” and he smashed the tablets of witness on the ground, crushed theeigel and interrogated Aaronetc. Aaron's reply “al yicharafadon "Do not let the wrath of Adoni wax hot".8 Moses calls for those on YHWH's side and gave a word from YHWH God of Israel for the punishment of the idolaters.9 In obedience the Levites, who rallied to the call then went from gate to gate10 and three thousand sons of Israel died at the hands of the Levites11. The narrative does not focus on the three thousand deaths, but on Moses who continued his ministry with a new ascent of the mount and a new defense of Israel before YHWH. Moses also asks to see YHWH's glory, something different from the earlier interactions. He is told YHWH would let his goodness pass by him, and he could see his back, but he would not be permitted to see his face for no man could see his face and live. In chapter 34 YHWH tells Moses to chisel another two tablets.

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5 Yah describes them as "amka", as the people Moses brought from Egypt and am qashehoref (stiff necked)
6 Perhaps his face was red with anger, this will contrasted with his face shining in the later episode.
7 For the apocryphal Epistle of Barnabus(2nd century) this was then an end of that covenant. “But they lost it turning unto idols …Moses understood, and threw the two tables from his hands; and their covenant was broken in pieces, that the covenant of the beloved Jesus might be sealed unto our hearts in the hope which springeth from faith in him” Barnabus 4:7-8 (Trans. J. Lightfoot)
8That is he almost says to Moses what Moses said to YHWH Reflecting the idea represent earlier in Exodus that Moses would as Elohim and Aaron would be his prophet (Exod 4:16). Paul see's Jesus as Lord (Yhwh) as God and himself as a messenger of mouth piece of Messiah (2 Cor 13:3)
9A similar image is seen in Ezekiel 9, and a similar action is done later by Jehu the king who wiped out the house of Ahab.
10Gates representing the place of justice in those days.
11In the tradition of the Jesus movement 3000 people are saved when the New Covenant is confirmed by the sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Shavuot 1490 years after the Covenant of Horeb (Acts 2). It was ratified the same day and follows traditions in Philo and the Midrashim regarding the Torah being given in the languages of the nations, the disciples received the Holy Spirit and began to speak in the languages or tongues of the nations.
YHWH wrote again and Moses tried to take them from God to Israel once more. He went down and his face was glorious and sending out light beams. The people were afraid of him, and he was not aware as to the glory radiating from his skin. They feared to approach him. However when he spoke they knew it was him. His voice removed their fears (Ex 34:31). Moses then talks to the leaders and after this to the people.

In the second descent down the mountain he again has the same covenant but his status is different he now reflects the glory of YHWH. Whereas he could not see YHWH's face and live, the people fear to approach him because of the change in his face. His talk with YHWH mouth to mouth as a man does with his friend (Num. 12) changed his appearance but more than this it appears to be connected to his intercession he made for Israel after the sin.

The narrator makes clear that the Aaron and Israel saw this and were afraid to come near him. The qara'ana'orpanav (the skin of his face beamed) is clearly a central feature of this narrative. It is only Moses who sends forth beams and the narrator connects them to speaking with YHWH (Ex 29:34). After discovering he was beaming Moses finishes his speech Israel and the covers his face with a masveh. The narrative does not tell us why he put the masveh on. But since he takes it off when he goes into to speak with YHWH until he comes out we can understand that it is for the sake of Israel that he veils his face. These themes of the face, the tables bearing the writing of God, the first attempt to bring the written copy of the covenant, the connection of judgement/condemnation and death with the failure to keep even the oral version of the covenant and the intercession to save the people are all themes which are taken up in Paul's rhetorical use of the episode.

**Modern Interpretation 1: Moses Authority Reestablished after the sin of the Eigel**

Durham (1987) sees the episode as the reestablishment of Moses authority after the sin of the golden calf. "This brief conclusion to the Presence- Absence-Presence narrative of Israel's first disobedience and it's aftermath handily deals with the single theme left hanging after the sin of the calf- the question "of Moses authority" (Durham, 1987). For him Exodus is analyzed into three sections, 1. Israel in Egypt (1:1-13:16), 2. Israel in the Wilderness (13:17-18:27) and, 3. Israel at Sinai (19:1-40:38). Part three is divided into two sections the first of which is Israel first disobedience and its aftermath. With the sin of the calf came anger and judgement and the threat of YHWH leaving his residence among Israel. But the judgement of the sin began a process of restoration. Through Moses intercession Israel is restored and YHWH renews the covenant relationship (34:10-28). Finally Moses authority is completely restored through his descent with the shining face. Moses who had been "dismissed during his absence with sarcastic words of anxiety" (Durham, 1987, p. 465) was now "reaffirmed …as Yahweh's authoritative representative, the transmitter of Yahweh's own revelation and instructions" (Durham, 1987, p. 465).

**Modern Interpretation 2: The face: Panim**

For Propp (2006) on the other hand the episode occurs in the section of the book which is focused on

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12 Exodus 34:1 and Deu 10:4 are taken as authoritative in indicating that Yah wrote the texts and not Moses. Exodus 34:28 appears to be saying that it was Moses who wrote **Exo34:27** “And Jehovah said to Moses, Write these words for yourself; for on the mouth of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel. And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread, nor drank water. And He wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.”

13 We assume this although a list of a different set of commandments is given in the text.

14 Source criticism have assigned these verses to P, Some however disagree and consider it a special source. See Durham for Bibliography.
"How will Yahweh be present among his people?" (Propp, 2006, p. 619). For him the theme of the section is panim or face, at times referring to Israel in the word lifnai or presence, at other times to Moses as seen in the transformation of his face but in most cases to YHWH. "Yahweh's Face is hypostasis, i.e. a part of the divine being that stands for the whole" (Propp, 2006, p. 619) He refers to the connection of name and face in the representation of YHWH "If a face is a visible symbol, a pictogram so to speak, a name is an audible symbol. God is not the sound "Yah-weh" but these syllables, or the four letters Y-H-W-H, in some contexts represent his presence. In Deuteronomistic literature, it is Yahweh's name that inhabits the temple instead of an idol...Pious Jews still call God "the Name"[hashem]. This language has old Canaanite roots; in Ugaritic myth the goddess'Attartu (Astarte) is called [Bal'u's Name]" (Propp, 2006, p. 619). Hence the episode is about YHWH's presence, by face and by name. Propp then raises the question: Is Moses the Minotaur? He discusses the significance of the word qaran or beams of light or horns. Notes "If this [shining] is the true meaning of qaran, the veiled, shining Moses may be regarded as a walking Tabernacle, manifesting and yet concealing Yahweh's splendor"(Propp, 2006, p. 621). Propp also suggests another possibility that Moses might represent his people. He alone was able to be so close to YHWH for the transfiguration. "The people durst not gaze even upon the reflexion. But Moses was the representative of his nation, and the glory upon his face was a pledge and symbol of the abiding of the divine glory upon the whole people" (Propp, 2006, p. 622). Propp also brings for the comments of Fretheim(1991) "Moses now acts as divine messenger...We are told in 33:11 that God speaks to Moses face to face. Yet it is twice stated that God's face can not be seen in all its fullness even by Moses(33:20,23). One might then say that Moses' shining face is the vision of the face of God which is available to the community" (Fretheim, 1991, p. 623). Two other interpretations of the term qaran are observed, the first being that Moses skin hardened or dried up in the heat of YHWH's presence or secondly that Moses was literally horned or wore a horned mask reminding us of the Minotaur. We will see that Paul follows the first image of Moses shining. Both Durham's and Propp's observation have import in illustrating Paul interpretation although probably Propp's suggestions are closer to the mark.

Enter Paul
Paul writes about this episode mainly in his second letter to the four year old Corinthian assembly of God, a mixed community of Jews and Gentile קדושים in the Roman province of Achaia in what is modern day Greece. However he expands on the images he uses in his letters to Colossians, Galatians, in 1 Corinthians etc. and reflects the same ideas as the New Covenant tradition regarding the themes. The second letter of Paul to the Corinthians is dated to about 55 AD (Barrett, 1973) (Plummer, 1915), 25 years after the date of the gospel events that Paul claimed to be testifying about as he proclaimed in his gospel and which he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, his kerygma. His whole interpretation goes back to his first encounter with the character he called Yehoshua the Mashiach (Jesus Christ) or Mashiach Yehoshua (Christ Jesus) or simply Mashiach. This message was that proof that Jesus was Messiah was the his resurrection from the dead for Gentiles and Jews (Acts 17:31, Rom. 1:4) this was the evidence that he was YHWH (Phil 2:6-11)and Lord to creation (Rom 10:9), and Son of God with power (Rom 1:4). In being the son he is the perfect form (Phil 2:6) and image of his Father, God2 Cor 4:4), as will be shown below.

Paul's Interpretation of the Episode
The Glory on the face of Moses and the Saints and the Image of the Veil
Paul does not tell the episode as a story but uses elements of it to bolster his and the New Covenant's status in the eyes of the Churches and to explain his understanding of the experience of the community of קדושים (saints/ set apart ones) had with Messiah. The first evidence that he sees himself and the apostles as Moses was in his generation is the full scale appropriation of the images in the episode. Thus he selects the images of the tablets, the face of Moses, the glory and the veil and toeach one he gives a new interpretation in the יְהֹוָה יִתֵּן לְךָ(2 Cor 3:3, Jer 31:31). In this interpretation he follows the eschatological imagery of the prophets Jeremiah(Jer. 31:33) and Ezekiel(Ez. 11:19): the tablets of stone become tablets of human hearts(Ez. 11:19, Jer 31:33), the writing with the finger of God is done...
by the Spirit on to the tablets of the heart(1 Sam 23:2 plus Ps. 45:2), the Spirit which in the NT tradition Messiah Yehoshua had declared was the finger of God (Luke 11:20). For Paul the godeshim had already entered the Messianic age ahead of time, the Messiah was already reigning in the midst of enemies through them, and in the YHWH was in the process of putting down Messiah's enemies (Ps. 110, Ps. 8, Ps. 2 1 Cor, 15:24). The position of the face of Moses is in the New Covenant is taken by the face of Paul, the apostles (2 Cor 3:13) and the קדושım (2 Cor 3:13). Paul executes this substitution by saying "We all with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of YHWH are transformed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of YHWH"( 2 Cor 3:18). By this he applies what Propp (2006) cites as the "transfiguration" of the face of Moses to himself and the godeshim. More pointedly he makes a direct comparison between Moses and himself and his apostolic team. "Having such a hope, we use bold speech and not like Moses, who put a veil over his face"(2 Cor 3:13). It is this reference to the veil of Moses which introduces the equivalence between Paul's and the Apostle's roles and Moses role. We will return to this later.

The evidence that the role of YHWH is taken by the Spirit (of Messiah) is the references to the glory. In Paul's interpretation the glory comes from the Spirit who Paul calls the Lord (kurios)(2 Cor 3:18). It is clear from the semantic context that by kurios here he means YHWH, and not simply adonai or some other inferior title(see Phil 2:6-11, Rom 10:13). Kurios is the Greek word used in the LXX to refer to both the terms Adonai and YHWH and is used by Paul and the NT and the early Church to refer to Jesus the Messiah and YHWH(Hylton A. M., 2013. Feb) As Moses face began to be transformed so that it began to shine, so now all in the New Covenant are now in the position of Moses, as they look at the glory of the Lord, the Spirit, they begin to be transformed and move from one degree of glory to another(2 Cor 3:18, cf Jn 3:2).

Into the picture of the Lord with the unveiled saint, Paul introduces the idea of a mirror or looking glass(2 Cor 18, cf. Num 12:6). Since for Paul every believer in the resurrected Messiah is a new creation(2 Cor 5:17) created in the image of the creator (Col 3:10, Gen 1:26). When they look in the mirror the image they see is both their image but at the same time the image of God, who is the Messiah (2 Cor 4:4), because they are made and being made into his image(2 Cor 3:10). This image goes back to creation to before Adam sinned in the garden, where both male and female as one are created in God's image (Gen 1:26). The image of God in Genesis 1:26 is understood as before all distinctions, That is is pre Jew and Gentile, pre Abraham and male and female are equally included in the image. For Paul this image of God is the Messiah Yehoshua. He says"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Messiah Yehoshua" Gal 3:28). Another catalogue of unified man, with the removal of distinctions in the renewed creature, the image of God is repeated in Colossians "Lie not to one another, seeing that you have put off the old Adam with his deeds; and have put on the new Adam, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Messiah is all, and in all"(Col 3:10). Thus Paul sees in the image of God in Gen 1:26, not simply as one man but all men who are perfected through transformation which is completed in the future coming of the Messiah (Col 3:10). The image is the firstfruits, the saints are the rest of the harvest.

He also represents this vision as a hope for the future ""For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away...For now we see through a glass[looking glass, mirror], darkly; but then face to face"(1 Cor 13:13 cf.Num 12:6). Here in the end of the vision he uses synonymous language of our episode with the term face to face used of Moses and YHWH in Exodus 33:11. Thus even as Moses is said to speak face to face with YHWH, Paul has it as an aspiration to see YHWH face to face at the end of a process of glorification climaxing in the coming of Messiah and the appearance of those who have been transformed with him (Col 3:4, 1 Jn 3:2). This is all evidence supportive of the fact that in seeing Messiah Paul understood the believer was in the holy of holies comming with YHWH over the mercy seat where YHWH used to meet Moses, and before that on Sinai. This brings us to the question of the veil. What effect does the veil have on this communion?

In the New Testament book of Hebrews the veil is seen as both the entrance into the holy place (Heb
6:19), the Most Holy place (Heb 9:3) and the physical body or flesh of Messiah (Heb 10:20). In the NT before the resurrection only Peter, James and John are given glimpses behind the veil of Jesus flesh, and as in the case of Moses with YHWH it happens on a mountain (Matt 17:1ff). When this happened Yehoshua is shown between Moses and Elijah and his face is shining like the sun. Moses and Elijah are transformed in that light, by the son is central (Luk. 9:29-31). Peter testifies to the experience in 2 Peter 1:16-19. John testifies about seeing the light in his gospel (Jn 1:5). Both have a focus on the light in darkness imagery (2 Pet 1:19, Jn 1:5) John however ties his experience directly to the Episode of Moses giving the Torah "For the Torah was given through Moses, but grace and truth came by Messiah Yehoshua"(Jn 1:17). The image of grace and truth "chesedveemet" connected with YHWH description of himself to Moses in Exodus 34 just before Moses descends. This points to glory as inner character (cf. Ex 34:6mighty, merciful compassionate, slow to anger full of grace and truth, guarding grace etc. Ex.34). Paul too sees the light of Messiah but this time after the resurrection on the road to Damascus. "At midday o King, I saw in way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining around about me" (Acts 26:13). Here his focus in light above light not in darkness. Paul also heard a voice who introduced himself as "Yehoshua whom thou persecutest".

Paul interprets the veil in a two-fold manner. Firstly Moses puts it on so Israel could not see the fading glory (2 Cor. 3:13) . Secondly puttingit on had the meaning that the minds of those who listen to the Torah without Messiah, are blinded (2 Cor 3:14). As Propp (2006) noted above the veil made Moses into a walking tabernacle. The Israelites were only allowed short glimpses into the glory, only Moses and Yehoshua bin Nun (Jesus ben Nun in the LXX and the NT Heb 4:8). They cannot see the glory of Moses permanently. However Paul says when a man turns to YHWH(kurios), the veil is removed (2 Cor 3:16), and the glory can be seen. For Paul if someone is reading the Torah and does not repent and turn to the Lord, the veil covers the heart, he cannot see the glory). This veil is no longer physical as was Moses veil, but spiritual. So in Moses time the veil covered his glory, in Paul's time the veil covered the glory of Moses words when read. Paul initially appears to claim that he and his team, unlike Moses do not need to put a veil on because the glory which they have, unlike that of Moses, will remain forever. It is as it were the everlasting righteousness promised by Isaiah(Is 51:8). It is the Torah in the heart (Is. 51:7) But in the next chapter Paul puts in conditions and notes that even as Moses glory was hidden from the Israelites so to the glory of the gospel is hidden to certain categories of people. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the mind of them which believe not, lest the light of the knowledge of the gospel of Messiah, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"(2 Cor 4:4, cf. Acts 26:18).

The veil is the blindness on the eyes of the unrepentant and hides the saints and the glory of Moses from them. It makes the apostle and qodeshím walking tabernacles, dwelling places of God in the Spirit as Paul describes them "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own?(1 Co 6:19) or more directly :"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"(1 Cor 3:17). The revelation to the outside world of the nature of the qodeshím does not take place until the process of transformation is complete at the eschatological return of Messiah(Col 3.4) Included in this seems to be reflection on the anomaly mentioned above by Fretheim(1991) above, that YHWH said to Moses he could not see his face and live(Ex 33:20,33) , and yet he saw his face (Ex 33:11) and appeared to live (Ex 33:12). Paul and the qodeshím's vision of the face takes place after death and resurrection, both after physical death but before this in the death of the old man created after Adam's image, and resurrected after Messiah's image, that of God. "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam, a life giving spirit...The first is of the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"(1 Cor 15:45ff. cf. 2 Cor 4:10).Paul divides reality into above and below. He sees those inside the veil as above and those on the earth as below, much like in the temple in Paul's time had the holy of holies at a higher elevation than the outer court. "If then you are risen with Messiah, seek those things which are above, where Messiah sitteth at the right hand of God, set your mind on
things above, not on things on earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Messiah in God. When Messiah who is our life shall appear then ye shall appear with him in glory." (Col 3:1-3). Thus for Paul the glorious transformation of Moses becomes the glorious transformation of all who turn to Messiah. The Moses glory was not permanent but the gospel glory was permanent. The veil remains in place as long as Messiah is not acknowledged through repentance and is pictured in Moses covering his face so that the Israelites were not permitted to see the glory of Moses from day to day. In Paul's terminology he often uses the name Mashiauch Yehoshua (Christ Jesus), or Yehoshua Mashiaich (Jesus Christ) referring to the character who is the one who is in the image of God. The Church does not see it as a coincidence that whilst Moses had spoken face to face to YHWH in the tabernacle and then left, a man who bore the name Jesus in the LXX and Yeshoshua in Hebrew remained in the tent longer than Moses. Both the Epistle of Barnabus and Eusebius History of the Church believe that this name IESOUS in Greek Yehoshua in Hebrew was given to the successor of Moses with the intention of pointing to the name of the coming Messiah. This may have in some sense been in Paul's mind as he repeatedly uses that name.

Conclusion
We have seen that that the Apostle Paul's interpretation of veil and the glory in episode of Moses indicates that Paul sees himself and the other apostles of the New Covenant as like a "new" Moses or rather as Moses was in his generation so the apostles were in their generation bringing a new covenant from YHWH which was superior to the one given on Sinai and promised in Jeremiah 31:31. Secondly we have seen that for Paul the light he saw in Messiah's face meant that Messiah was the living image of God, YHWH, the Spirit, and that the light Moses reflected when communing with YHWH was the same light Paul, his co-workers and the saints (קדשים) reflected when they communed with the Spirit(2 Cor 3:18) which was transforming them into the image of Messiah Yehoshua (Christ Jesus). We have seen that Paul in understanding that the Messianic age had begun for the saints made a distinction between those saints who lived from above and those common people who lived from below. That he had a vision of the above coming below at which time those living below would see the glory of the above that is the glory of Messiah not just on him but on all who belonged to him. This inner transformation, taking man back to a time when Man reflected the pure image of God as male and female and one man in unified glory before the distinction of nations and Jews had taken place.

Bibliography


