

March 3, 2019

Exodus 34:29-35

II Corinthians 3:12-4:2 Luke 9:28-36

Scriptures not literal words, not Mohammad sitting in a cave taking dictation

Scriptures are recorded experiences of God, records that have been revised numerous times

Christian scriptures have been influenced by scriptures that have been influenced by scriptures

This does not negate their sacredness, it makes them even more sacred

Transfiguration of Jesus is a story based on an interpretation of another story

Read scripture lessons

I begin with newest story – transfiguration of Jesus

Disciples want not only to describe their experience of Jesus, they want to say what it meant to them

So, with the help of the Apostle Paul and their knowledge of Hebrew Scriptures, we have

Jesus on the mountaintop, face and clothes glowing

What is being said?

Jesus' teachings embodied the rules of the Law and its interpretation by the Prophets

We know this, because he spoke with Moses, the Law Giver, and Elijah, the prophet taken up alive to heaven

To give Jesus even more authority, his face shone like Moses', but now even Jesus' clothes shone

All of this leading up to the climax, "This is my Child, my Chosen, listen to him!"

Given the fact that Paul wrote his second letter to the church in Corinth at least 20 years before Luke and the other Gospel writers wrote down their stories, I am convinced Paul helped them put their experiences in context

Paul was riffing on the Moses' story – the Hebrew scriptures take on encountering the Divine, the original One-Who-Cannot-Be-Named

In the Moses story his encounter with God left him glowing – God’s glory was seen in Moses’ shining face

Moses has to hide his “divinity” behind a veil because people feared looking upon the face of God

Paul, riffing, is laying the groundwork for why the Law is no longer needed

In Jesus we see what God wants – what God wants is unveiled in the words and deeds of Jesus, unveiled in and by Jesus

Paul takes it even further, Jesus is Lord and the Lord is the Spirit

So, when we “look upon Jesus”, when we try to live into the Spirit of Jesus, into the glory, we, like Jesus (and Moses) will be transformed

For this, no Law is necessary

Next Sunday, first Sunday in Lent, we will begin our focus on who Jesus is

There is much to unpack in Paul’s phrase: the Lord is the Spirit – next week I will begin to unpack it

Until then, hold on to this: these stories, told about Moses and Jesus, are true stories; they tell us truths about God, our understanding of God, and how we relate to God

And, as we struggle to understand all the meanings layered in these stories, may God’s Spirit unveil our eyes, as we look to Jesus, seeking to be transfigured, transformed ourselves. Amen.