

## Shekinah Glory

The word *Shekinah* does not appear in the Bible, but the concept clearly does. The Jewish rabbis coined this extra-biblical expression, a form of a Hebrew word that literally means “he caused to dwell,” signifying that it was a divine visitation of the presence or dwelling of the Lord God on this earth. The Shekinah was first evident when the Israelites set out from Succoth in their escape from Egypt. There the Lord appeared in a cloudy pillar in the day and a fiery pillar by night: *“After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.”* This information is found in [Exodus 13:20–22](#).

God spoke to Moses out of the pillar of cloud in [Exodus 33](#), assuring him that His presence would be with the Israelites ([vs. 9](#)). [Verse 11](#) says God spoke to Moses “face to face” out of the cloud, but when Moses asked to see God’s glory, God told Him, *“You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live”* ([vs. 20](#)). So, apparently, the visible manifestation of God’s glory was somewhat muted. When Moses asked to see God’s glory, God hid Moses in the cleft of a rock, covered him with His hand, and passed by. Then He removed His hand, and Moses saw only His back. This would seem to indicate that God’s glory is too awesome and powerful to be seen completely by man.

## Shekinah Glory (Continued)

The visible manifestation of God's presence was seen not only by the Israelites but also by the Egyptians: *"During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, 'Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt'"* (Exodus 14:24-25). Just the presence of God's Shekinah glory was enough to convince His enemies that He was not someone to be resisted.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the dwelling place of God's glory. Colossians 2:9 tells us that *"in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,"* causing Jesus to exclaim to Philip, *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9). In Christ, we see the visible manifestation of God Himself in the second person of the Trinity. Although His glory was also veiled, Jesus is nonetheless the presence of God on earth. Just as the divine Presence dwelled in a relatively plain tent called the "tabernacle" before the Temple in Jerusalem was built, so did the Presence dwell in the relatively plain man who was Jesus. *"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him"* (Isaiah 53:2). But when we get to heaven, we will see both the Son and the Father in all their glory and the Shekinah will no longer be veiled (1 John 3:2).