

Christmas SHINY!

I love shiny.

I love sparkly, glittery, light-filled, dazzling *anything*.



My motto is, “If it don’t shine, it ain’t mine.” And I’m not alone. When women visit Dallas, one of the most popular places for friends to take them is to a huge [store](#) that sells thousands of pieces of costume jewelry with more bling than you can imagine.

Why do so many of us like shiny? I think it’s because we are hard-wired for worship and we long for heaven where even the streets gleam with gold, and beautiful jewels and pearls abound. Heaven is a shiny, glorious place that radiates the beauty of a shiny, glorious Savior.

But our early “shiny” is a poor, sad imitation of the true glory of God. I especially love how God reveals Himself in the Bible through His *Shekinah glory*, where the invisible God makes His glory visible and weighty with importance and value.

We see more instances of the Shekinah glory in the book of Exodus than any other book in the Bible:

Moses and the Burning Bush: God appears to Moses as a fire within a bush that doesn’t consume the bush, revealing Himself as the great I AM, calling Moses to lead His people out of slavery into the Promised Land.

In the cloud by day, pillar of fire by night. God led His people for forty years in their wilderness wanderings by a

visible manifestation of His presence.

The cloud on Mt. Sinai where Moses met with God, and He gave Moses His rules for relationship in the Ten Commandments.

Moses asks God to show him His glory. While up on the mountain, Moses asks to see God's glory; God basically replies, "You can't see My face and live. While My glory passes by I will hide you in a cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand. Then I'll let you see My backside. That will be safe for you."

After seeing God's Shekinah glory, **Moses' face shone so brightly** that it hurt to look at him. It was reflected glory, the way the moon reflects the sun's light. Still, it was so powerful that his face literally shone when he came down off the mountain to speak to the people.

The cloud of Shekinah glory covered the Tent of Meeting and filled the Tabernacle when they dedicated it. The glory was so intense Moses couldn't go inside.

We see the Shekinah glory one more time in the Old Testament, when Solomon's temple was dedicated, and God's glory fills the temple like it had filled the Tabernacle. Then we don't see it again for hundreds of years.

The next time in scripture we see the Shekinah glory is the night Jesus was born!

And while Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem for the government's census, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the

Lord's glory [*the Shekinah glory*] surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." (Luke 2:6-18)

But wait! But that's not all!

Matthew 2 tells us about the magi, the wise men from the east, who traveled to Jerusalem in search of the baby King of the Jews. They followed a star that moved until it stopped right over the house where the toddler Jesus and his family were living.

My husband Ray says it wasn't a natural conjunction of planets or stars, since they don't move like that and certainly don't stop over a house. In his Probe article "[The Star of Bethlehem](#)," he suggests it was the Shekinah glory leading the Magi to Jesus.

The same Shekinah glory we see in Exodus appears in the Christmas story. So much of the Old Testament points to Jesus, and we get to see it start to unfold in the Christmas story.

God is all about connecting the dots so we understand how things fit together. Not so we can enjoy the intellectual satisfaction of puzzle pieces interlocking, but so we can truly grasp that He made us for Himself, He made us for relationship with Him.

The Shekinah glory in Exodus points to the glory revealed in

the Christmas story, where the Son leaves heaven and comes to earth as a perfect, sinless human, fully God and fully man. He lives a perfect, sinless life then dies on the cross to take the punishment for our sin onto Himself. Three days later He rises from the dead and He is alive today.

Little Baby Jesus isn't still in the manger: He is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven in glory!

Shiny, resplendent, luminous glory. And that is the *real* reason I love shiny. It reminds me of Jesus, of heaven, of what lies ahead for those of us who have trusted Christ.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/christmas_shiny on Dec. 15, 2015.

Watching Transformation Happen

Last week I was privileged to attend the annual [Exodus Conference](#) along with a thousand people coming out of homosexuality, as well as some family members and people like myself who minister to them. Nothing has built my faith in the power and the loving heart of our life-changing God like my decade-long involvement in this kind of ministry.

I got to experience the power of answered prayer as I stood in worship with a divorced couple whom I have known online for several years but met at the conference. The husband had gone AWOL for the past year, choosing to pursue his feelings instead of his identity as a beloved child of His Father. He

told me “something” kept drawing him back into the light: with a smile, I told him that Jesus has His hook in his heart because he belongs to Jesus! And there he was, reconnecting with his God and his wife in worship and the beauty of repentance.

I got to hear the testimony of a beloved young woman, deeply wounded, whom I have watched soften and become so much like her Jesus over the past several years. As we were singing the words “Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow,” she suddenly and violently experienced the memory of being a sexually abused five-year-old, sitting in the tub with blood everywhere. In the pain of that moment, the Father met her there with the same words He had spoken to [Sy Rogers](#), that evening’s speaker, about his sexual abuse: “Daddy sees, and Daddy’s sorry.” As His compassionate love washed over her, healing came.

And I got to see actual physical transformation in a dear lady with whom I have been walking out her repentance from lesbianism. As she has dared to believe that God really means everything in His word, especially about His love for her and how He sees her as a precious, beautiful, beloved daughter, change has come. She has gone to great lengths to drink in her Abba’s love in intimate ways (and has taught me what that can look like in the process). Halfway through the week, she caught a glimpse of herself in a plate glass window and was amazed to realize that her posture had changed: she was walking more upright and confidently, assured that she was “a real person” (her words). At the end of the week, she said she believed the change in her was permanent and lasting. She finally feels solid, not hollow. That’s the power of God’s healing love.

And that’s why it is such a joyful privilege for me to serve people whose thorn in the flesh is unwanted same-sex attractions. As their SSA drives them to Jesus, transformation happens.

And it is beautiful.

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/watching-transformation-happen/ on July 21,
2009.