

# In The Beginning Was The Word

## John 1:16-28

### INTRODUCTION:

John is a gospel written for a specific purpose: that we might believe. A key verse for understanding the Gospel of John is found at the end of the book:

### John 20:31

<sup>31</sup> But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

### John 1:16-18

<sup>16</sup> And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

<sup>17</sup> For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.  
(Exodus 20)

<sup>18</sup> **No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.**

1. This is probably also one of those questions that has lingered in your minds and in the minds of many believers.
2. Some things seem like contradictions because we do not understand them. But when we persevere with the scriptures it does become clear for all of us.

### 2 Corinthians 4:verse 4 & verse 6

<sup>4</sup> In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

<sup>6</sup> For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

### Colossians 1:15

<sup>15</sup> Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

**Here is such an example. Verse 18.**

<sup>18</sup> **No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.**

## Did Moses & Abraham See God?



Did Moses, and Abraham see GOD? In **Exodus 33:11** we see that Moses saw God face to face, but at the end of the chapter, we understand that still, Moses did not see God. In Gen 18, Did Abraham see God? In I John 4:12 we see that no one has seen God.



The answer to that question.

The Bible says in **Exodus 33:11**, "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle."

God says to Moses in the same chapter, in verse 18, "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."

1. We know that there are no contradictions in the Bible.
2. So how do we answer this one?

### We start comparing it with other Scripture.

The Bible says in Colossians 1:12-15, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the INVISIBLE God, the firstborn of every creature:"

The Bible says in I Timothy 1:15-17, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, INVISIBLE, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The Bible says in Hebrews 11:24-27, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is INVISIBLE." This passage right here gives us a clear clue, because it is referring to Moses.

As we can clearly see, God is INVISIBLE. John 4:24 says that He is a Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." A spirit cannot be seen by our physical eyes, unless revealed to us in some form. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and

bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39).

**Back to Exodus 33:11**, "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle."

Imagine for a moment, that you are in church. The pastor is up in front preaching to the congregation. Is he speaking to you face-to-face? Yes. Now, imagine that we make him like a spirit, invisible. He is still standing there, and he is still talking to the congregation, but you cannot see him. Is he still talking to you face-to-face? Yes he is. You cannot see his face, but only because he is invisible. He is still facing you talking, but you cannot see him now.

That is the situation in Exodus chapter 33. God is talking to Moses face-to-face, but Moses cannot see God's face when He is talking. This is not an isolated instance of this, nor is it trying to just "explain away" a contradiction. The same situation is seen in Deuteronomy.

**The Bible says in Deuteronomy 4:9-13**, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.

And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: YE HEARD THE VOICE OF THE WORDS, BUT SAW NO SIMILITUDE; ONLY YE HEARD A VOICE. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone."

Notice carefully that it is clear that they heard the voice, but that they did not actually see God, nor any similitude of God.

**Now look at Deuteronomy 5:1-4**, where it looks back and comments on that very scene. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The LORD talked with you FACE TO FACE in the mount out of the midst of the fire,"

Deuteronomy chapter 4 is very clear that they did not see God, but Deuteronomy chapter 5 is very clear that God was speaking to them face-to-face. That is not so hard to understand, when we realize that God is invisible. God can be looking right at man, speaking face-to-face, but man cannot see Him.

### **Here is another verse that speaks of Jesus Deity (God).**

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (I John 5:20).

1. As we step back a verse to John 1:17, we see the confirmation of Moses writings about the Law, but are also reminded that grace and truth has come by Jesus Christ.
2. Moses, in the law, or Pentateuch which is the five books written by him, frequently speaks of the Messiah as the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15)
3. As the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed. (Genesis 22:18)

**Genesis 22:18** And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Galatians 3:8 says the same thing).

1. The Lord is also referred to as Shiloh to whom the gathering of the people should be. (Genesis 49:10)

### **Genesis 49:10**

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until **Shiloh** come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

2. And as the great prophet, like to himself, God would raise up among the children of Israel, to whom they were to hearken: (Deuteronomy 18:15).

**Deuteronomy 18:15** <sup>15</sup> The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

### **Also each of the gospels emphasizes a different origin of Jesus.**

1. **Matthew shows Jesus came from Abraham through David**, and demonstrates that He is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament (**Matthew 1:1-17**).
2. **Mark shows Jesus came from Nazareth**, demonstrating that Jesus is a Servant (**Mark 1:9**).

**Mark 1:9** <sup>9</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

3. **Luke shows Jesus came from Adam**, demonstrating that Jesus is the Perfect Man (**Luke 3:23-38**).
4. **John shows Jesus came from heaven**, demonstrating that Jesus is God.

### **The testimony of John the Baptist.**

1. (**John 1:19-28**) John tells us who John the Baptist is.

Preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.” These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

a. John is insistent: I am not the Christ. For John, it was unthinkable that attention would focus on himself, because he was not the Messiah. His job was to point to the Messiah.

b. Are you Elijah? It might be easy for the priests and Levites from Jerusalem to associate John with Elijah because of his personality and because of the promise in [Malachi 4:5-6](#). If he is the forerunner of the Messiah, then is he Elijah?

### **Malachi 4:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

<sup>6</sup> And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

➤ In a sense, John was Elijah, ministering in his office and spirit ([Matthew 11:13-14](#) and [Mark 9:11-13](#)).

### **Matthew 11:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

<sup>14</sup> And if ye will receive it, this is Elias (*Elijah*), which was for to come.

### **Mark 9:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias (*Elijah*) must first come?

<sup>12</sup> And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

<sup>13</sup> But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

- When Jesus said that Elias (Elijah) had indeed come he was talking about John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:11-13).
- Don't believe me look at the scriptures to prove it. (Matt 17:11-13)

Here it is:

### **Matthew 17:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

<sup>12</sup> But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

<sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

- The Jews and Levite Priests did not want to believe John had been sent by God. Hence the questions they asked. (John 1:19-28).

They asked John:

- c. **Are you the Prophet?** This refers to God's promise through Moses in [Deuteronomy 18:15](#), promising a prophet to come. Based on this passage, they expected another Prophet to come.

**Deuteronomy 18:15** <sup>15</sup> The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

- d. **I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness:** John sees himself as the eyewitness ahead of the great King. His baptism was a preliminary conversion for the Jews to a Gentile religion.

Even Isaiah was used in the OT to speak to Jerusalem for Israel to follow the Lord.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness is an example of a call to all nations to follow the Lord. The cry in the wilderness is a direct call from God to follow him.

### **Isaiah 40:3**

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

- i. **The Jews in John's day practiced baptism.** It was an outgrowth of ceremonial washings. But the Jews of that time typically reserved baptism for Gentiles who wanted to become Jews. So to submit to John's baptism, a Jew had to identify with the Gentiles. This was a genuine sign of repentance.

Can you remember this question:

### **Matthew 21:24-26**

<sup>24</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

<sup>25</sup> The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

<sup>26</sup> But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

1. John indeed did baptize in the wilderness. But he did this for one reason only. It was a forerunner of those that wanted to turn from their Jewish or pagan religions to that of Jesus Christ. It was a way for them to show that they had made that transition to want to ask God for forgiveness and remission of their sins. It was not the baptism of the Lords, it was as the scripture says a baptism of repentance, and thereby the Lord could forgive them.
2. This was because the Jews used to use the same method to turn Gentiles to the Jewish religion. A gentile had to be baptized by the Jews to show his commitment before he could become a Jew in their religion.
3. So indeed John was turning them from their own religion to the religion of Christianity if you like.
4. It was an outward commitment to the Lord, it did not save them.

#### **Mark 1:4**

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the **baptism of repentance** for the remission of sins.

1. The conformation of John's baptism leads others to the footsteps of the Lord.
2. When they did come to the understanding that the Lord saves, they asked the Lord to save them, not John.
3. John did not save anyone through his baptism it is only the Lord Jesus who can do that and save someone. Here is more proof of that from the apostle Paul.
4. Look at the verses in Acts 19:3-5 to see that they finally were baptized by the Lord after John's baptism.

#### **Acts 19:3-5**

<sup>3</sup> And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

<sup>4</sup> Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> **When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

e. **I baptize with water (verse 26):** John's baptism was negative. It cleansed, but it gave nothing to help someone *keep* clean. John admits himself that he is only baptizing with water, which is the symbol of believing. The work of Jesus and His baptism of the Holy Spirit would be a positive baptism. Christian baptism illustrates both our death with Jesus and our rising to a new life with Him.

**In the book of Acts 18:24-28 we read of Johns baptism and its limitations.**

**Acts 18:24-28**

<sup>24</sup> And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

<sup>25</sup> This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

<sup>26</sup> And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

<sup>27</sup> And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

<sup>28</sup> For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

1. Although Apollos was mighty in the scriptures, he was still only preaching Johns baptism, which was not able to save.
2. It took two other converts Aquila and Priscilla, who took Apollos under their wing and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Here is another reference to Jesus as God by the way.
3. This man Apollos did much to convince the Jews publicly showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

f. **Who sandal strap I am not worthy to loose(verse 28)**: untying the strap of a sandal (before foot washing) was the duty of the lowest slave in the house.

- i. Among Rabbis and their disciples, there was a teacher-student teaching relationship and one of respect. But.....
- ii. One of the things which was considered “too low” for a Rabbi was to expect his disciples to untie the Rabbi’s sandal strap before foot washing.
- iii. John says he is *unworthy* to do even this.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.....

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2. ([John 1:29-34](#)) **John the Baptist tells us who Jesus is.**

a. **Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

1. At the very dawn of His ministry, Jesus is greeted with words that remind Him of his destiny:
2. His sacrificial agony on the cross for the sin of mankind.
3. The shadow of the cross was cast over the entire ministry of Jesus.

b. **For He was before me:**

1. John the Baptist was actually born before Jesus - and John would know this (Luke 1).
2. So, when John says He was before me, he refers to the eternal pre-existence of Jesus.
3. John knew very well that Jesus was God.

c. **Upon whom you see the Spirit descending**, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit:

1. God gave John the Baptist the sure sign to know the Messiah.
2. He would be the one on whom the Holy Spirit descended upon from heaven.
3. John is a reliable witness regarding who Jesus is, because he has had confirming evidence from God.

d. **I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God:**

1. John the Baptist gives his solemn testimony: this Jesus is the Son of God.
2. He is the Son of God in the sense shown in [John 1:18](#) : the One who perfectly declares the nature and personality of God the Father.

[John 1:18](#) <sup>18</sup> No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

- i. The gospel of John emphasizes John's role as a witness, not a baptizer. Witnesses give testimony as to what they have seen and experienced, in an effort to establish the truth. Beyond that, they are unreliable, and operate on hearsay.
- ii. Witnesses are also **not neutral** - they are committed to the truth of their testimony, or they are unreliable witnesses. John is a reliable witness, and knows who Jesus is because of what he has seen with his own eyes.

**D. The testimony of the first disciples.**

1. ([John 1:35-39](#)) Two of John's disciples begin to follow Jesus.
2. ([John 1:40-42](#)) Andrew brings his brother, Simon Peter to Jesus.

3. ([John 1:43-44](#)) Jesus calls Philip to follow Him.
4. ([John 1:45-51](#)) Nathaniel overcomes prejudice to follow Jesus.

- But what does He mean by the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man? (Verse 51)
- i. This may be in connection with the dream of Jacob in [Genesis 28:12](#), where Jacob saw a ladder from earth to heaven, and the angels ascending and descending upon it.

[Genesis 28:12](#) <sup>12</sup> And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

- ii. Perhaps it is that; Jesus says that *He* is the ladder, the link, between heaven and earth.

### **Son of Man (Verse 51):**

1. The idea behind this phrase is not “the perfect man” or “the ideal man” or “the common man.”
2. Instead, it is a reference to [Daniel 7:13-14](#), where the King of Glory is coming to judge the world is; is called the Son of Man.

### **Daniel 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

<sup>14</sup> And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

- i. Jesus used this title often because in His day, it was a Messianic title free from political and nationalistic opinion.
- ii. When a Jewish person of that time heard “King” or “Christ” they often thought of a political or military savior.
- iii. Jesus emphasized another term, often calling Himself the Son of Man.

So with these words we close today, to celebrate and realize that Jesus Is our Saviour of all time. There is NO OTHER.

PRAYER.....CLOSE