

Seeing God

Jude intended to write an epistle about “*our common salvation*,” but “*the necessity to write*” an appeal that his audience “*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*,” v.3 prevailed instead. Perhaps I understand how he felt. I wanted to preach a sermon on *Fearing/Having Reverence for God*, but decided that although we certainly can *fear* what we cannot see- our imaginations often provide a picture much worse than the reality, “*Seeing God*” needed to come first. So...

John 1:18a empathically states that “*No man has seen God at any time;*” Deut.34:10 describes the relationship between God and Moses as “*face to face*,” but even Moses was only allowed to see the “*back*” of God’s *glory* after He passed by, cf. Ex.33:12-23.

We may sometimes find ourselves in a similar position as that of Moses... of wanting see the God we *serve* and *follow*. Indeed, many people today, somewhat like Thomas (cf. John 20:25b), refuse to *believe* in a God they say they cannot see.

But we, and they, can see God! Here’s how:

1. God can be seen *through the Creation*, Rom.1:18-23.

This *truth* must be “*suppressed*” (*katecho-* to *check* or *hold back a ship’s headway*; to *restrain, hinder, or hold back*) in order **not** to be seen. The only way we can **not** “see” God through the Creation is to *suppress* and *refuse* to accept the evidence, cf. Ps.19:1-6. The majestic beauty of a Spring sunset/sunrise, the brilliance of an Summer cloudless day, the gorgeous pallet of a Fall woodland, the purity and still quietness Winter’s snow-white blanket, the splendor and wonder of a billion twinkling stars, and the wondrously simple to the unfathomable complexity of millions of creatures both microscopic and immense, even *man* himself, all “show” us God. Through them, His “*eternal power*” (He is the first and only *uncaused Cause*, the *Eternal* that created the *temporal*, Heb.3:4), and His “*divine nature*” (His *goodness* and *graciousness*- He could have created a *gray-scale* world!) are “**clearly seen**” and “**understood**” through “**what has been made**,” vv.19-20! Indeed, “There is none so blind as him who will not see!” Only those who “*suppress the truth*,” ignore the obvious, and refuse to *honor* Him because of their *foolish, darkened hearts* can fail to “see” God in this way, cf. vv.18-19, 21-22.

2. God can be seen *through His Word*, John 1:1.

A simple question with a simple challenge: “What are ‘words’?” and please define them without using any of them. Words are *vehicles of thought*. They transport a thought or its expression from one mind to another. Skillfully utilized, they do so with wonderful *clarity*, specific *precision*, and eloquent *beauty*. Though grunts and gestures can convey general ideas and basic information, *words* can communicate everything from the mundane to the sublime... they even allow us to “see” God, John 1:1! When the Almighty *said* (and we *read*), “*Let there be light*” (Gen.1:1), the Universe not only began, it *heard, understood, and obeyed!* Grunts, groans, and gestures simply cannot produce such understanding or obedience. But *words* not only allow us to “see” God’s majestic power, they also show us His *attributes*. His *Word*, the Bible, is filled from beginning to end with expressions of His *righteousness, goodness, grace, mercy, love, provision*, and even His *wrath*. These

are not just *stories*, neither are they mere *factual accounts*- they are *revelations* of the *existence, nature, and prevalence* of God in the Universe, the World, Nature, and in Our Lives. Every Book, Chapter, and Verse- all composed of *words*, allow us to “see” God... if we will *read, understand, and heed* them, 1Cor.2:12-13.

3. God can be seen *through the Man, Jesus Christ, John 1:2-5,9-14*.

“God” is a *spirit*, John 4:24; and therefore to not only *worship* Him but also to “see” Him, we must do so *spiritually*, cf. 1Cor.2:14-16. But we have help. God the Father sent us a *corporal or in the flesh* “manifestation” of Himself in the *person* Jesus Christ. He is the *tangible representation* of God in *human form* (Col.2:9) that mankind could/can not only “see,” but also *touch, and experience* first-hand. But perhaps most importantly, Jesus “*explained*” God (John 1:18b) by being the “*exact representation of His nature*,” Heb.1:3. Jesus of Nazareth, allows us “see” the somewhat *abstract, spiritual* God in “*flesh and blood*” man who was “*made like His brethren in all things*,” Heb.2:14,17. Through Jesus, we “see” God- His *nature, His attributes, His compassion, His justice, and most importantly, His love*, John 3:16.

4. God can be seen *through faithful Christians, 2Cor.4:1-15*.

Note a few specific *words/phrases* from this text:

- “*ministry*,” v.1; a *work or mission* is under consideration;
- “*to every man’s conscience*,” v.2; the *object or mission field* if you will;
- “*veiled*,” v.3; even the gospel (words) can be *curtained/shielded* to some by Satan, or their own prejudices, desires, and rebellion;
- “*do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants*,” v.5; this is the *mission*- to manifest “*light out of darkness*” and to “*give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*,” v.6; to help others to “see” God and Christ ***through us***;
- “*treasure in earthen vessels*,” v.7; in context, this refers to Paul and other inspired teachers/writers; but today, it applies to us as *representatives* of Christ who manifest “*the surpassing greatness*” of the “*power of God*.”

So how do we help others “see” God? **By being and doing what vv.8-15 say!** It’s not easy by any stretch of the imagination. But by acting/reacting and living in this way, “***the life of Jesus*” (and therefore God) is “*manifested in our mortal flesh*,” v.11!**

Conclusions:

- Every person has the capability to “see” God- not *literally*, but through ***His Creation, His Word, His Son, and His People***.
- Our job, or *ministry/mission*, is to help those willing to “see” Him in and through these means to do so.
- Therefore, show them God ***in His Creation, of His Word, and through His Son, and in His People*** so that they may “see” Him and live!