



Some people today say they have seen God. Preachers teach that people in the Bible saw God. Is this true? What does the Bible say?

“The Son is the image of the *invisible* God”—Colossians 1:15 NIV

“To the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*”—1 Timothy 1:17 NIV

The Bible says that Almighty God is invisible. What is invisible cannot be seen by human eyes. He has always been “invisible”. **“I, Yahweh, do not change” (Malachi 3:6 NJB)**

“Yahweh said, ‘ . . . no human being can see me and survive.’—Exodus 33:20 NJB

“No one has ever seen God”—John 1:18 NIV; 1 John 4:12 NIV

“No one has ever seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father”—John 6:46 NIV

“God . . . who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see”—1 Timothy 6:15,16 NIV

Thus, the scriptures throughout the entire Bible are very clear that no one has ever seen God!

HOW ABOUT SCRIPTURES THAT SEEM TO SAY HUMANS SAW GOD?

What about those instances where someone is said to have seen God? One thing to keep in mind is that, **“In the past spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and IN VARIOUS WAYS” (Hebrews 1:1 NIV).** *(Emphasis ours)*

Angels at times spoke or acted on behalf of God. —See **Genesis 16:7-13**

“Yahweh appeared to him at the Oak of Mamre . . . and there he saw three men standing near him” (Genesis 18:1,2 NJB). One of these angels represented Yahweh. **“While the men left there and went to Sodom, Yahweh remained in Abraham’s presence” (Genesis 18:22 NJB).** **“When he had finished talking to Abraham Yahweh went away . . . When the two angels reached Sodom in the evening . . . —Genesis 18:33; 19:1 NJB).** This is a clear indication that the **“men”** were materized **“angels”**. **Hebrews 13:2** confirms that **“some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it” (NIV).**

“Jacob” said, ‘I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared’” (Genesis 32:30 NIV), after **“He struggled with the angel and overcame him” (Hosea 12:4 NIV).** The angel was not God, but represented God.

Some have asserted that Moses saw God at the burning bush. However, the scriptural text

actually says, **“the angel Yahweh appeared to him a blazing fire from the midst of bush (Exodus 3:2 LSB)**. We notice through a careful reading of the text that it was “the *angel* of Yahweh”, and not Yahweh himself.

“Manoah said to his wife, ‘We are certain to die because we have seen God’”. Taken out of context, this looks like they had actually **“seen God”**. But had they? The context reveals: **“Manoah understood that this had been the angel of Yahweh.” (Judges 13:21,20 NJB)**.

THE COMMANDER OF YAHWEH’S HOST

The following account is asserted by some to be an appearance of Almighty God himself:

“Now it happened when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, ‘Are you for us or for our adversaries?’ He said, ‘No! Rather I indeed come now as commander of the host of Yahweh.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and bowed down and said to him, ‘What has my lord to say to his slave?’ The commander of the host of Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy,’ And Joshua did so” (Joshua 5:13-15 LSB). Some have claimed Joshua worshipped this “man” because he “bowed down” to him. But such an idea reads something into the text that isn’t there. Joshua encountered what the scriptures call “a man”. Since “God is not a man” (Numbers 23:19), it is not possible that this man was God. Moreover, “Yahweh” speaks to Joshua at Joshua 6:2, suggesting that the man Joshua saw wasn’t Yahweh. In Revelation, we learn of “Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon” (Revelation 12:7 LSB). Daniel 10:13 refers to “Michael, one of the chief princes” (LSB), and at Daniel 10:21, “Michael your spirit prince” (NLT). These scriptures suggest that Michael is “the commander of the army of” “Yahweh” (Joshua 5:14 NIV; LSB). The fact that “Michael” is “the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people” (Daniel 12:1 LSB), gives another clue

suggesting that Michael is “the commander of the army of” “Yahweh” ([Joshua 5:14](#) NIV; LSB). Joshua’s removing his sandals because he’s told he’s standing on holy ground isn’t any more proof that “the commander” is Yahweh, than “the angel of Yahweh” who “appeared” to Moses at the burning bush was Yahweh ([Exodus 3:1-6](#)).

VISIONS OF GOD

Sometimes God was seen in visions.

“The word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision”—[Genesis 15:1](#) NJB

“Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel . . . they saw God, and they ate and drank” ([Exodus 24:9-11](#) NIV). This is often cited by those who like to believe that Almighty God has been seen by humans. However, if this rendering is literally true, it contradicts other scriptures which say that ‘No one has ever seen God.’ The Hebrew can also be rendered as, **“they had a vision of God, and did eat and drink” ([Exodus 24:11](#) The Emphasized Bible [EB]).** (*Emphasis ours*)

“God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, ‘ . . . I am God, the God of your father’”—[Genesis 46:2,3](#) NIV (*Emphasis ours*)

“My eyes have the King, Yahweh Sabaoth” ([Isaiah 6:5](#) NJB) is often cited as “proof” that Isaiah had **“seen the LORD Almighty”**. However, this claim is debunked when the wider context of the Book of Isaiah and the entire Bible is taken into consideration. For instance, **“These are the visions that Isaiah son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. He saw these visions during the years when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah” ([Isaiah 1:1](#) NLT).** Thus, the Book of Isaiah opens with an explanation of how Isaiah received his information—It was through **“visions”**. (*Emphasis ours*)

Ezekiel 1:26-29 is sometimes asserted by those who want to believe that Ezekiel saw Almighty, however, Ezekiel opened his book by explaining: **“the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God” (Ezekiel 1:1 NIV)**. So, any seeming view “of God” is explained to be in “visions”.

Stephen **“looked up intently to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said. ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55,56 NAB)**. This account is also used to “prove” that Almighty God. However, the phrase **“the heavens opened”** is almost identical to Ezekiel’s phrase **“the heavens were opened,”** where he explained he **“saw visions of God”**. Once again, when the wider context of the entire Bible is considered, it is obvious that Stephen had a vision of God and Jesus.

“The Lord called to him in a vision, ‘Ananias!’” —Acts 9:10 NIV. The account is narrated to explain that Ananias had **“a vision”** of **“the Lord”**.

How about where, **“Yahweh said: ‘ . . . if there is a prophet among you, I reveal myself to him in a vision, I speak to him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses . . . to him I speak face to face . . . he sees Yahweh’s form’” (Numbers 12:6-8 NJB)?**

This is asserted to mean that Moses actually literally saw God. But, yet again, when we consider both the local and the wider Biblical context, Almighty God explains what he means, **“to him I speak . . . plainly and not in riddles” (Numbers 12:8 NJB)**, and when Moses asked to see God, **“Yahweh said,’ . . . no human being can see me and survive’” (Exodus 33:19,20 NJB)**.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the entire Bible is very clear that, **“No one has ever seen God” (1 John 4:12 NIV)**, because he is **“invisible” (1 Timothy 1:17 NIV)**..