

The God Who Hides Himself

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The Bible states that there is an invisible God, a God in scripture who hides Himself, a God whom no man has ever seen. A lot of focus has gone into that statement. I've heard it in various sermons. As sermons pop up on various archives, if they're on the record as God and Christ in scripture, I try to listen to them to see what argument is being made. The argument that no one has ever seen God keeps coming up again and again as one of the pillar arguments in the sermons that are being given. Since Jesus Christ has been seen—let's say He's been seen before, during, and after His human existence; He was seen after the resurrection as well—then Jesus Christ is not the invisible God. We would agree that far; that ought to be basic. You know what? I ought to be able to shut down right now and the sermon would be over. But somehow or other that doesn't quite register with the way scriptures are being interpreted.

Colossians 1 actually states that He, Jesus Christ, the firstborn over all creation, is the image of the invisible God. Who? Alright then, who do you think the invisible God might be? One guess? No guess! It's clear—the scripture says the invisible God is the Father. Now I wish life were so simple that we could just read a scripture and believe what the Bible actually says. I want to just give you a couple of references to how complex sometimes this issue unfortunately becomes.

Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God. That is a scripture in the Bible, okay? New Jerusalem is the city of the Living God—that's a scripture in the Bible. The Living God spoke to Israel from Mt. Sinai—scripture—therefore the Being who spoke to Israel from Mt. Sinai was Jesus Christ. Wrong!—sound the buzzer—pull that preacher off the podium. Why? Because that's not in the Bible. So why is it we can't teach what's in the Bible? Well, we can.

So, let's look at a different example: The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob glorified His Servant, Jesus. That's a scripture in the Bible. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob spoke to Moses at the burning bush; also a scripture in the Bible. Jesus said the God (and He referred to that God as "He") spoke to Moses at the burning bush—that's a scripture in the Bible; therefore the Being who spoke to Moses at the burning bush was Jesus Christ? Sound that buzzer—that cane should come out with its hook to grab you by the neck and pull you off the podium. What is the problem?

The problem is we sometimes don't actually believe what the Bible says. God's people, they have their own answer. The Bible says this is the scripture but here's what the answer is. Let me explain that to you. The same type of argument is made with God Almighty, as a term, the Most High God as a term, Yehovah of hosts, as it's recorded, as a term. When you get to that level, when you get into the Most High God and you get into the LORD of hosts, as it's recorded in scripture, that makes some people rather

nervous—there ought to be almost a shudder—because the last one is one that places God the Father in the Holy of Holies, and when you change that and put Jesus Christ in His place that ought to be a big event. In fact, that ought to be a big concern.

When you believe that Yehovah of hosts is Jesus Christ, then the entire point and purpose is that you're now going to change the focus of your worship. I know it's going to be said, well, that's not true. But it is true because when you put Christ into the temple and into the Holy of Holies, and you go up to Jerusalem to worship at the temple, now you are going up to Jerusalem to worship Jesus Christ. Well, I have a lot of friends, that is, I used to have a lot of friends—I have less friends now than I used to have in some arrangements—but there are a lot people I know, members of the church of God body, elders of the church of God body, pastors of the church of God body, who do not believe that Jesus Christ is represented in the Holy of Holies at the temple. When that teaching comes out more fully and more clearly, everybody has to make their choice. Well, quite frankly, that choice is already in play.

When I was a child I believed in Santa Claus. I thought everybody believed in Santa Claus when I was a child. That was just what everybody believed and I trusted my parents because that was the story they told. There actually did seem to be some evidence to back it up—cookies and milk were put out on the mantel of the fireplace and when some of the milk and the cookies were eaten—it was never gone—it was always Santa who would take only a bite out of the cookies, and he'd put the other part back and drink a little bit of the milk—he had to go to every house, he got full, so he ate only a little. After the cookie was missing and the milk was gone presents appeared under the tree. Wow! So there was some evidence for the belief that Santa had dropped those things off. Now I didn't wonder about those things—my parents reassured me, but there were also things that called the whole story into question.

So when I was a young child, we would go to Hennessy's department store in Butte, Montana, and Santa was actually right there in the store; you could give him your wish list. You could sit on his lap, tell him what you wanted, go home later and see what took place. Well, the presents that showed up under the tree never were from Santa. I thought to myself, that's interesting; Santa didn't actually get them for me, he told somebody what I wanted and they did it on his behalf. But you know, then again there was that thing about the chimney. Even as a child, I thought, excuse me, I don't think so, especially as he is a big man and that's a small flue. I mean he's not going to get down it. That's okay, my parents said; don't worry about it. You know what? When you believe in a false narrative, I don't care what it is, it is not okay. And when it's scripture it is really a dangerous thing.

The invisible God, the God who hides Himself, the God whom no man has ever seen, is a thread of reference throughout the Bible in scripture, and I want to go through some of those references today. Isaiah 45, starting in verse 9, and how do we walk away from this? Well, we won't. We're not going to walk away from what the Bible says.

Isaiah 45:9. Now remember the context of Isaiah. Hezekiah is being challenged by the army of Sennacherib and Sennacherib comes in and has his envoy explain, look, the gods of all of these nations, they didn't save those nations—I conquered those nations and your God will not save you. And the response is, our God is not like those gods. Our God will, indeed, save us; He's the only one who will. So when you get to the word "God" in the Old Testament, there's Elohim, and there's El, and there's Elohe; Elohe, the God, generally is going to be the Father. El, not exclusively, but oftentimes is the Father, but Elohim most of time is the Father as well, but it is a term that can be used for judges or angels; it is not exclusive. When someone says there's only one God and they're reading from Isaiah and the word is Elohim, we have to know there are other Elohim, there cannot be one Elohim. So it's another context. But now there's only one Yehovah, so with the Yehovah Elohim, there's only one of those. So when you are in Isaiah, the argument is being made that our God is not the god of these other nations, so you've got to understand the way the argument is being framed. But in verse 9, Isaiah 45:

Isaiah 45: 9 *"Woe to him who strives with his Maker! (NKJV)*

Who's the Maker? The Maker is God the Father. In Acts, when Paul is up on the Areopagus, and is arguing there about God and the Unknown God, he is clearly calling Him the Creator, and it is God the Father who is being referenced. So you can try to walk around that, which means you're going to have to walk around some other thing, and then you're going to have to walk around something else. Let's just not do that.

9 repeated) *"Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands'?"*

10) *Woe to him who says to his father, 'What are you begetting?' Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?'"*

11) *Thus says [Yehovah] the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker [very clear from scripture]: "Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; and concerning the work of My hands, you command Me,*

12) *I have made the earth, (NKJV)*

Christ was with God, all right? It was for Christ, and Christ was there to assist. He was the Servant. But the actual reference to Creator in the Bible is to God.

12) *I have made the earth, and created man on it. I—My hands—stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded.*

13) *I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build My city and let My exiles go free, not for price nor reward," says [Yehovah] the LORD of hosts. (NKJV)*

Yehovah of hosts is the one who dwells between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies in the temple; that's who is represented.

14) *Thus says [Yehovah] the LORD: “The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you, and they shall be yours; they shall walk behind you, they shall come over in chains; and they shall bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, saying, ‘Surely God [El] is in you, and there is no other; there is no other god [elohim].’”* (NKJV)

There is no other Yehovah Elohim. There are other elohim. So you can't say we're going to take this one verse and we're going to ignore all the other verses. That's simply not how the Bible works. But notice verse 15:

Isaiah 45:15 *Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!*
[Skip to verse 18.]

18) *For thus says [Yehovah] the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: “I am [Yehovah] the LORD; and there is no other.* (NKJV)

There is only one of those. There is no god like Yehovah. He is not like the other gods who are around in the nations that have been conquered and overcome—there is only one Yehovah and that is the way that passage is actually to be read. It says, You are the God who hides Yourself; it's God the Father who hides Himself. That's why He is called the invisible God. The God of Israel who is the Savior in the Old Testament is God the Father. The Holy One of Israel who is their Creator and Maker is God the Father. Christ became Savior in the New Testament. He wasn't the Savior in the Old Testament. He became the Savior when He died so that our sins could be remitted. The blood He took on Himself—the sin—and died, giving His life in our stead. But that wasn't something that was already then in place.

Now notice Hebrews 11. It's interesting; did Moses know about Jesus Christ? Well, yes. How do we know that? Well, as we learned as children (from the song), the Bible tells me so. ((laughs)) It says so. Hebrews 11, verse 23.

Hebrews 11:23 *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.*

24) *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,*

25) *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,*

26) *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.* (NKJV)

So it's talking about Moses and it's talking about the reproach Christ suffered. We can say, that's from a New Testament perspective, that's not from an Old Testament perspective. Well, let's see what it says. Who is it also now going to address? It says,

27) *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. (NKJV)*

Who is invisible? Is Jesus Christ invisible? Well, He could be. But did He hide Himself? No, God the Father hid Himself! He is the invisible God. Jesus Christ was seen. He was seen then; He was seen during His life on earth; He was seen after He was resurrected. He is not the invisible God. That doesn't apply and it doesn't work.

28) *By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

29) *By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned. (NKJV)*

Moses knew a distinction between the reproach Christ suffered and seeing Him who is invisible. Those are two different references and Moses knew the difference between who the sender was and who was going to be sent. Let me show you that. Go back to Deuteronomy 18. It's really important to understand some of these distinctions because sometimes the interpretation can, let's just say, silt up the stream a little bit. Let's just see what the record of scripture clearly is. Deuteronomy 18 and verse 15.

Deuteronomy 18:15 *The LORD [Yehovah] your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me [so the Prophet is going to be like Moses] from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,*

16) *according to all you desired of [Yehovah] the LORD your God in Horeb ...*

If Yehovah your God raised up a Prophet like me and it is God the Father who is going to raise up Jesus Christ, well, they can't be the same, and Jesus Christ isn't Yehovah your God. Paul said, I worship the God of my fathers. He did not say, I worship Jesus Christ. He said, I worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

16 repeated) *according to all you desired of [Yehovah] the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of [Yehovah] the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'*

17) *And [Yehovah] the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good.*

18) *I will raise up for them [Yehovah will raise up for them] a Prophet like you [Jesus Christ] from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.*

19) *And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him [I'll hold him accountable]. (NKJV)*

That's why this is a critical issue. What difference does it make? Well, I'll tell you. The first commandment is a matter of salvation. Lack of understanding, not knowing God judges according to what we understand, is one thing. What our convictions then are in response—for he who knows to do good and does not do it, it's imputed—makes us accountable. So in the record here, Moses clearly knew that Yehovah was going to raise up a Prophet like him and that that would be in the future. Now look at Acts 3,

because this certainly exceeded what Moses understood, even though Moses was in a very personal relationship with God. Acts 3 and verse 17. It says:

Acts 3:17 *Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, [obviously they killed Jesus Christ] as did also your rulers.*

18) *But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer [the prophecies about Jesus Christ were in the mouths of the prophets in the Old Testament; they were there, the record was in place], He has thus fulfilled.*

19) *Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,*

20) *and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before [He was preached to them, but He was also prophesied to them],*

21) *whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

(NKJV)

Moses wasn't the only one who knew that Jesus Christ, in the flesh, one day would be sent, so that people could hear what He had to say, and that He would have the words of God. They knew that.

22) *For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God [Yehovah your God] will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.*

23) *And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'*

24) *Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. (NKJV)*

Samuel knew that Yehovah would send a Prophet and that would be down the road.

25) *You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*

26) *To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." (NKJV)*

So you go through the passage and the reference to God here occurs about five times, and the reference is to the Father; it's in the passage and it's the way that passage is read. Why then did God hide Himself? What was the point?

Let's go back to Deuteronomy 4 and 5. I've walked through some of these scriptures before, but this passage, this understanding, is important to address. Deuteronomy 4 and verse 1.

Deuteronomy 4:1 *“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD [Yehovah] God of your fathers is giving you.*

2) You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD [Yehovah] your God which I command you.

Going on then to verse 7,

7) For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as [Yehovah] the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?

8) And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

9) Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,

10) especially concerning the day you stood before [Yehovah] the LORD your God in Horeb, when [Yehovah] the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words ...

If it was His usual habit to come down and have lunch with them, and walk around and have a conversation with them, then why would He say He’s now going to let Israel hear His words? Because this is God the Father.

10 continued) ... and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.

The point was God the Father wanted them to hear His voice, but He did not want to be seen. Go down to verse 15.

15) Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when [Yehovah] the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire,

16) lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female. (NKJV)

And He goes down and gives other stipulations. Moses said, *you saw no form*. This is the invisible God. This is the God no man has ever seen. You know what? It is not Jesus Christ. It is the one who is going to *send* a Prophet one day who is Jesus Christ. That’s pretty clear. Then why is it so hard to understand?

Well, sometimes we have vested interests. Sometimes we have our long-held customs and traditions. Sometimes we have a paycheck. Sometimes we have power and control issues. Sometimes we just want to have our friends and our potlucks and our socials, and we want to go and keep the Feast with our friends. Well, you know, sometimes maybe we ought to just want to put God first and that ought to be the highest priority. Maybe the first commandment comes ahead of let’s just have a good time and

let's be comfortable and let's not have any trouble. But unfortunately everyone isn't actually willing to sacrifice what it would take to put God first.

Deuteronomy 5—let me just break this on down. Let's just go to verse 4 because there's so much of the passage that repeats itself, but I just want to reinforce.

Deuteronomy 5:4 *The LORD [Yehovah] talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire.*

Face to face. Did they see His face? No! Did they see His form? No! He talked to them face to face. So face to face does not mean you see Him. It means He is there; it means He is present. Face to face means right there, immediately, all right? They never saw any form but He spoke to them.

5) *I stood between [Yehovah] the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of [Yehovah] the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. He said:*

6) *'I am [Yehovah] the LORD your God ...*

Who is that? God the Father. Is that Jesus Christ? It is not! You know what it's called when you put something ahead of God the Father that comes before Him—it's called idolatry. Oh no, that's not true, we don't believe that. Well, believe this.

6 repeated) *'I am [Yehovah] the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

7) *You shall have no other gods [elohim] before Me. (NKJV)*

Are there other elohim? Yes there are. Can they be before God the Father? No! Can Jesus Christ come before God the Father? He cannot. He's an Elohim and you can't put Him ahead of the one who is speaking here. That's the rule and you can't make a carved image. Therefore God is not going to appear and show Himself so that you can make an image that looks like He does.

How many pictures of Jesus Christ have you seen in your life? A great many, right? How many pictures of God the Father have you seen? I don't know; what would one look like? I'm sure I've seen carvings of something but nobody said they were God the Father. I came home from Vietnam with a beautiful woman's head, carved—I brought it home and had it in the house for years. Finally, at a yard sale, we were getting rid of it; we'd been serving in the ministry, and, I don't know, we weren't using it anymore, so we took it to the church yard sale and donated it. The woman who was running the yard sale was an ex-Catholic. She threw it in the trash. It was a nice piece of wood but she threw it in the trash. It was Mary. I didn't realize that—it wasn't God the Father, it was Mary. We had it for decades. I didn't even know what it was, but an ex-Catholic knew what it was, because she had seen those images everywhere she went and that's what they look like.

You know, it's an interesting thing. You just don't have many pictures or carvings of God the Father because nobody has ever seen Him and nobody has even told anybody they've seen Him, unless it's in some kind of vision or something. Deuteronomy 5 and verse 22.

Deuteronomy 5:22 *"These words [Yehovah] the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness ...*

Because He's invisible; He's hiding Himself. The Angel of the LORD didn't have to hide Himself—He appeared. Now I'm not saying every time that word comes up it is Christ in the Old Testament. I understand this is a judgment call. I get the e-mails saying, Mark, you're making an interpretation. Yes, I am making an interpretation. The answer is in the New Testament, not the Old Testament. The answer of who Christ is and when He appeared and the fact that He was there is actually in the New Testament. So when you move to the Old Testament, now you are indeed making a judgment call and it's based on a variety of things. I accept that. I tell you what—when you recognize who God the Father is, it is not a judgment call, this is what it says. So if we're going to default, let's not default on the Father. If we say, I don't know about a particular reference to Jesus Christ, we can dispute that—fine, but the references to God the Father are pretty well fixed in place.

22 repeated) *These words [Yehovah] the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud,*

Who speaks from a cloud? Angels? Do angels speak from clouds? I looked—maybe. I couldn't find one. Does Jesus Christ speak from a cloud? Maybe—but I couldn't find an example. I could not find a reference. Who speaks from a cloud? God the Father. Why? Because He's the invisible God; He hides Himself.

22 continued) *and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.*

Well, just go on down; it just keeps going, over and over. Breaking into the middle of verse 24,

24) *... we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives.*

Sorry if you thought He had lunch with men all the time. No, not God the Father; that's not how this works.

25) *Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of [Yehovah] the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die.*

26) *For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? (NKJV)*

Who is the Living God? Who is the Son of the Living God? (That's a clue.) The Living God is God the Father. Period. You just have to tear that page out of your Bible if you don't like the way it was written. It is God the Father who hides Himself.

So on that basis did the God who hides Himself eat and drink with the elders of Israel? I've heard that brought up so many times. I've heard it laughed about, snarked over, mocked, you know, the idea that anybody would think any differently than that. Why is that even a question? Is God the Father going to sit down and have a hamburger with you? I don't think so. Fish and chips? Not even that.

Let's go through a passage in Exodus 24; I want to show you where the references are that will connect to it.

Exodus 24:3 *So Moses came ...*

We've gone from the time of Deuteronomy 5 back to the earlier time of Exodus 20, the two times where this description is made, so the accounts overlap, but I'm in Exodus 24 here at this point.

- 3) *So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said [Yehovah has said—okay?] we will do."*
- 4) *And Moses wrote all the words of [Yehovah] the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- 5) *Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to [Yehovah] the LORD.*
- 6) *And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.*
- 7) *Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that [Yehovah] the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."*

So here we have the covenant being sealed, with blood. Now go down to verse 9. Here's where all of a sudden the silt pours into the stream and now we don't really know what is taking place. Well, actually, we do know.

- 9) *Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,*
- 10) *and they saw the God of Israel.*

Okay, it says so. Who is the God of Israel? God the Father. Jacob's name was changed to Israel and his family became a nation—the nation of Israel—so the God of Israel is the same as the the God of Abraham. That's the way that works.

10 repeated) *and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.*

11) *But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.*

You know what it doesn't say? It doesn't say they saw God, and God ate and drank, does it? It doesn't say that. At some point we're going to have to ask, what does the Bible actually say? They saw God, and they ate and drank. Do you think God the Father is going to have a hamburger with them? No! It's not going to happen, all right? So how do we understand this passage? Well, I guess you just have to read more of the Bible than the part we've read here.

Let's go to Ezekiel, chapter 1. Notice here it says there was a paved work of sapphire stone under His feet. You're going to know what Ezekiel 1 is because it is one of the portrayals of God's throne in heaven, and if you start at the beginning (I'm eventually getting there) and read verse 1, it says, *I saw visions of God.*

Can you see God the Father in a vision? Well, what about when Stephen was killed? He looked up and he said, I see God the Father, and Jesus Christ standing at His right hand. How did he see that? In vision. So can God appear in vision? The Bible says so. It's a vision, though. It's not as if He's just sitting down and you're looking at Him across the table, but the vision is what's being addressed here. So go to verse 26.

Ezekiel 1:26 *And above the firmament [I don't want to go through the whole portrayal of the throne and the creatures; it just says] over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone ... (NKJV)*

Well, there you go; you have a sapphire appearance, which is what the elders saw in the book of Exodus, and then you have here in Ezekiel a reference to the same image—God on His throne—which is being portrayed with angelic beings around the throne, living creatures, living beings, and it says it's in a vision. So since God is the invisible God, He's the God who hides Himself, He's the God whom no man has ever seen, since Yehovah is God who hides Himself, that's actually a match between the two references (Exodus 24 and Ezekiel 1). And you know what the elders did? God allowed them to see Him in a vision. It just doesn't have the word "vision" there. But here's the same description that is in a vision.

So you can't say, well, that doesn't agree with my personal conviction. I like the way James Smyda put it in a sermon: "That's not emotionally satisfying to me!" I use that all the time now. I say, "You know what?—that's not emotionally satisfying!" It just rings a bell for me. ((laughs)) Somehow or other, God the Father is just not emotionally satisfying, in the church of God, in the way that you would imagine. Why is there so much animus against God the Father? Why is there so much accusation and rancor against those who would proclaim God the Father's name in the church among His

people? Let's go to that account in Acts 7, because I want that to be pretty clear. I don't want it to be said, well, Mark said that. No, here's what it says. Acts 7 and verse 54.

Acts 7:54 *When they heard these things [they're going to kill Stephen] they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.*

55) But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ... (NKJV)

"No one has ever seen God at any time." Now you can go back to the gospels, or you can go forward toward the end of the accounts of the New Testament—it doesn't really change. Look, here's Stephen—I used to bring this up. I would say, what? No one's ever seen God? Stephen saw God. But no one has ever seen God! I said, it says here, Stephen saw the glory of God and Jesus at the right hand of God. The heavens were opened and the Son of Man was standing at the right hand of God. Is that true or not? It's true. Then there has to be a way that God gives allowance in vision—this would be a vision—this is from heaven and God allowed this. How do I know exactly what took place? God allowed him to understand what this was. Stephen did not say, look, there are two big blobs up there and there is one blob bigger than the other blob, and, I don't know, the big one must be God. No! Stephen knew what he was seeing. He comprehended it. Well, that's a miracle, because you can't have visions on your own. God allowed him to see it. God allowed him to understand it. We have to accept the fact that these scriptures don't actually discount one another. They have to go together and they actually match.

Sometimes I think of the riot in Ephesus: "Great is the goddess Diana of the Ephesians! Great is the goddess Diana of the Ephesians!" And then I think of people saying, "No one has ever seen God at any time! No one has ever seen God at any time!" The ones insisting on this are just throwing dust in the air for the phrase to get the emotional response, so that they can then cast people out of the synagogue, so to speak.

Frankly, I don't see what is happening in our day to be much different. When I was making my argument for the record of God the Father and Jesus Christ in scripture, no discussion on these matters ever took place. I will repeat that for the sake of the record. When I was making my presentation there was no discussion that ever took place. All the people who come through and say there was a discussion and there was a presentation and there was a decision—I'm telling you—you can believe them or not. Somebody might have had a discussion when I wasn't present. There was no discussion when I was there—there was none.

The God who hides Himself didn't just *allow* Israel to hear Him, He *wanted* Israel to hear Him. Go back to Exodus 19. There are so many of these references. I've tried to group them into passages. As I go past this there will be places where I just kind of move around in scripture but I want to go through as many of them as I can because it is consistent. Exodus 19 and verse 7. This is where Moses tells them what the rules are going to be, and the people say, yeah, yeah, okay—we'll do that.

Exodus 19:7 *So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.*

8) *Then all the people answered together and said, "All that [Yehovah] the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to [Yehovah] the LORD.*

9) *And [Yehovah] the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever. (NKJV)*

God wanted His own voice to be heard, but He didn't want to be seen, because He didn't want people carving up and making images, paintings, portrayals, or any form of idolatry or idolatrous practice.

Go over to Psalm 99. We have pretty much a similar account. Verse 1 says:

Psalm 99:1 *The LORD [Yehovah] reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim ...*

He dwells between the cherubim—that is not Jesus Christ. If you're going to get up and argue and teach that this is Jesus Christ then you should tremble. You should tremble.

1 continued) *Let the earth be moved!*

2) *The LORD [Yehovah] is great in Zion, and He is high above all the peoples.*

3) *Let them praise Your great and awesome name ...*

I was talking to somebody just recently. I said, you know it says, *hallowed be Your name*—what is the name? The reply: What do you mean? Excuse me—how can you hallow something when you don't know what it is? The reply: Well, I don't know what it is, nobody knows the name. Really? So we're commanded to do something we can't do? *We can* do it. It says so here:

3 repeated) *Let them praise Your great and awesome name—He is holy.*

4) *The King's strength also loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.*

5) *Exalt [Yehovah] the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool—*

The Ark was actually God's footstool. It wasn't the throne, He was above the Ark—between the cherubim and His presence.

5 repeated) *And worship at His footstool—He is holy.*

6) *Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name; they called upon [Yehovah] the LORD, and He answered them.*

7) *He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar; they kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.*

8) *You answered them, O [Yehovah] LORD our God; You were to them God-Who-Forgives,*

Is Jesus Christ the God-Who-Forgives here? No, this is referring to God the Father.

8 continued) *Though You took vengeance on their deeds.*

9) *Exalt [Yehovah] the LORD our God, and worship at His holy hill; for [Yehovah] the LORD our God is holy. (NKJV)*

When you get back to the New Testament then you see these references: He spoke in a cloudy pillar; He's the God who hides Himself; He's the invisible God; a voice comes out of a cloud at the transfiguration. And Jesus Christ is not in the cloud, He is on the ground with the disciples who are with Him. Wouldn't the natural assumption be, where it says, *this is my beloved Son*, He's speaking from a cloud being hidden—and that's what has happened throughout scripture, dozens of times on the record—wouldn't the assumption be that that is the same Being? (The usual reply: No, no, that's not it.) This has to be the first time in the history of the Bible that an angel spoke, hidden in a cloud, because he didn't want to be seen. I don't think so. That's not how the scriptures work.

Again, I do wish life were simpler, where we could just believe what the Bible actually says. The God who hides Himself spoke to Moses face to face. I've addressed that but I want to go now to Exodus again. There's an additional element here. It says, Moses saw the form of Yehovah. It says that, so let's go look at that. Exodus 25, starting in verse 21.

Exodus 25:21 *You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you.*

22) *And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel. (NKJV)*

God the Father, the Most High God, dwells in the Most Holy Place. There is no other Most High God. Excuse me for explaining it so simply. So then go to Exodus 33, moving over to verse 7.

Exodus 33:7 *Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp,*

The tabernacle hasn't been built yet; this is Moses's tent. He took his tent, pitched it outside the camp,

7 continued) *far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought [Yehovah] the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp.*

8) *So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle.*

9) *And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.* [That's in italics but it's in the context, so the translators have added that in.]

10) *All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door.*

11) *So [Yehovah] the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.* (NKJV)

So this is Exodus 33 at the beginning of the chapter. I understand chapter breaks were added, but at the beginning of this passage—and God spoke to Moses face to face—that means He was actually there, present. You know what? God spoke to Israel face to face but they never saw Him—He was in the cloud and the fire, but they heard Him. So Moses was in the same boat. God is right there, present, and He's in the cloud, the pillar—it says so. Same as all the other accounts, they're all consistent. And He spoke and He was there present but Moses didn't see Him openly and clearly. So later in the same passage, in the same context, we go to Exodus 33:17. So we've moved about ten verses. We're not moving to a completely different part of the galactic universe to see what takes place somewhere else. So Yehovah said to Moses, verse 17 (Moses makes a request of Him in terms of God's presence):

Exodus 33:17 *So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."*
18) *And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."* (NKJV)

He had already spoken to God face to face when God was hidden in the cloud. But now he says, I want to see You in Your glory; I want to see You openly and clearly in Your majesty.

19) *Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of [Yehovah] the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*
20) *But He said, "You cannot see My face;*

Seeing God's face is not the same as God being there face to face—it's in the same passage. You can't define them in any other way reasonably.

20 continued) *for no man shall see Me, and live."* (NKJV)

Moses asked to see God's glory, not Him hidden in the cloud. God said, no, you can't see me that way; you won't make it, you won't live.

- 21) *And [Yehovah] the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me [okay, I’m going to do something for you], and you shall stand on the rock.*
 22) *So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.*
 23) *Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.” (NKJV)*

He allowed Moses to see some part of His form or image. Wherever that was, God said so, but it’s not God in His full glory, the fullness that would have destroyed Moses, but it just says He allowed for that. “No man has seen God at any time! No man has seen God at any time!” Well, excuse me, do we believe this or do we not? You know what? It’s just like the other passages. If Jesus is the Son of the Living God, if New Jerusalem is the city of the Living God, well then the Living God is Jesus Christ, right? No, you can’t simply change from scripture over to a doctrinal statement based on the commandments of men. The reference here is God the Father; He is working with Moses and allows him to see some part of His form but not in His glory. There was something that Moses got to see that man was not allowed and neither was Israel. So let’s just take that a little further then. Let’s go to Numbers 7. Moses didn’t see God openly, clearly. God didn’t sit down and have, again, a hamburger with him. It says,

Numbers 7:89 *Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him... (NKJV)*

All right? So again we’re not confused about the passage. This is Numbers 7, let’s go to Numbers 12. The story doesn’t change from one place to another. Verse 1, Numbers 12. It says,

- Numbers 12:1** *Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.*
 2) *So they said, “Has [Yehovah] the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” And [Yehovah] the LORD heard it.*
 3) *(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)*
 4) *Suddenly [Yehovah] the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!” So the three came out.*
 5) *Then [Yehovah] the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud ...*

Which is what He does over and over and over—it’s why He is the hidden God, the God who hides Himself—the invisible God, all right?

5 continued) *... and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward.*

- 6) *Then He said, "Hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, [Yehovah] the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.*
- 7) *Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house.*
- 8) *I speak with him face to face [I am there present when I speak; Exodus 33], even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD... (NKJV)*

Moses saw the form of the LORD in some limited way; it is simply the record of scripture and it is true. Exodus 33 again. He sees the form of the LORD. Numbers 14. Does it mean he sees God clearly and openly? God the Father has never in scripture appeared to anyone, openly, as a man. That's not in the record. That's not there. No one has ever seen Him like that. Nobody has ever seen Him openly and clearly. Moses sees some small portion of God's form, which was allowed to him, and that is indeed the record of scripture. Numbers 14:11. Israel refused to enter Canaan. Moses is now interceding on their behalf because God is about to destroy all of them.

Numbers 14:11 *Then [Yehovah] the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me?"*

Wow! How long will God's people refuse to accept Him in His own record of scripture? How long will they refuse to accept Him as the One, of the commandment, that is our first and highest focus. How long?

11 continued) *And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?*

12) *I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."*

13) *And Moses said to [Yehovah] the LORD: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them,*

14) *and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, [Yehovah] LORD, are among these people; that You, [Yehovah] LORD, are seen face to face ...*

Face to face doesn't mean openly and clearly seen. It means He is there, present. We've gone through that in other passages.

14 continued) *and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.*

15) *Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,*

16) *'Because [Yehovah] the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.'*

17) *And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying,*

18) *'The LORD [Yehovah] is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression;*

One did not go to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament for forgiveness, one went to the Father. There is no other way. There is no other way.

18 continued) *but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'*

19) *Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."*

The record is constantly the same. It is always there. So let's go then to a few scriptures in the New Testament. The people who translated the Bible were trinitarians. So you can't exactly have one Supreme Being and then a lesser Being and then another that isn't a Being in that way, all right? It doesn't work out. So you know, if instead of the God, which is the Greek, you just take the "the" and put it away, and then you make Christ Lord everywhere possible, you just use the word "Lord". The problem with that is if you just take the New Testament, find every single place you can, in which God and Christ are prophesied together from the Old Testament, what you'll find is that one hundred percent of the time Yehovah is God the Father and Jesus Christ is there with Him. Every time—one hundred percent of the time. I asked somebody about that one time and he said, well, what I heard was that when they're together then God is Yehovah—the Father is Yehovah, when they're together. Well, I guess Christ can only be Yehovah when they're apart. Come on! Where do you get this? How do you even come up with some of these things? It says,

1 Timothy 1:12 *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,*

13) *although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

If you don't know any better, and you did it ignorantly and in unbelief, then God shows mercy. That's the record. If you know better, you'd better shudder if you're walking the other way.

14) *And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*

15) *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

16) *However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.*

17) *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible,*

Who is the invisible God? Who is the God who hides Himself? This is God the Father.

17 continued) *to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (NKJV)*

So the reference is talking about Jesus Christ, but it is not saying Jesus Christ is the king who is eternal, immortal and invisible, because that's not what scripture says. All kinds of people saw Jesus Christ. He was seen before, during and after. No one has ever seen God the Father. Moses got to see His form in some indistinct way—God knows. But he didn't get to just openly see God. So let's go to 1 Timothy 6 and verse 11. Again, this is just how the record is made. Verse 11.

1 Timothy 6:11 *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.*

12) *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

13) *I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things,*

Who are we talking about? God the Father.

13 continued) *and before Christ Jesus [so the distinction is very clear] who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,*

14) *that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,*

15) *which He will manifest [Who's the "He" in this passage? God the Father, who will manifest] in His own time, He [the Father] who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,*

16) *who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light,*

The invisible God. Sometimes I have to circle the word "God", then I have to go to the word "He" and draw an arrow, because Christ—Jesus—is in the text, and Protestant theology basically interprets the Bible so that Christ is the one who always appears in the text. He's always the Lord, He's always the God. But it's not true. It's just simply not true.

16 repeated) *who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see,*

They saw Jesus Christ. Everybody who was around saw Jesus Christ.

16 continued) *to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.*

Okay, 1 John 2. Very close to finish. Since we haven't hooked up our timer yet in the back, I can't see where I am, but being as I'm normally short-winded anyway, this won't matter. 1 John 2:28. It transitions on into chapter 3.

1 John 2:28 *And now, little children, abide in Him,*

Well, there we go again, who's the *Him*?

28 continued) *that when He appears,*

Well that's interesting; He's going to appear.

28 continued) *we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*

Protestant theology—Jesus Christ. This is God the Father. Just keep reading.

29) *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

Are we born of Jesus Christ? No, we're not. We're born into God's family. We're born of God the Father. The "Him", the "He" who appears at His coming, is God the Father. God the Father is coming. We know that. It doesn't matter if someone doesn't know that. Here are the scriptures; here is what the record is. Keep going.

1 John 3:1 *Behold what manner of love the Father [the subject here] has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*

We're not children of Jesus Christ. The record is always consistent.

1 continued) *Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*
2) *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

Because no one has ever seen Him. No man has ever seen Him. Jesus Christ has obviously seen Him, the angels have seen Him. When He is revealed, when He is coming at His coming, the "Him", when He appears, is God the Father. When He is revealed, we will be like Him, we'll see Him—God the Father—as He is.

Revelation 22, the very end of the record. It says the same thing. It's always been here; it never has changed.

Revelation 22:1 *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. [No question there—no question.]*

2) *In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

3) *And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*

- 4) *They shall see His face* [Whose? The Lamb's face? No, God the Father's face], *and His name* [God the Father's name] *shall be on their foreheads.*
- 5) *There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.* (NKJV)

The invisible God, the God who hides Himself, the God whom no man has ever seen, is God the Father. And that record goes from Exodus all the way through to Revelation, consistently. And you know what? That's what the Bible says. You can take it to the bank; it is true.