

“Is the Bible from God?” (Psalm 119: Part 5)

Verses to Remember: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep your word” (Psalm 119:67).

Have some seen God (Ex 33:11) or is it impossible to see God (1 Tim 6:16)?

- The phrase “Face to face” in Ex. 33:11 indicates the relational closeness of God to Moses. We see this in the immediate context of the verse – “as a man speaks to his friend.” This conveys close communication and that God spoke directly to him as opposed to through indirect avenues like dreams. But it does not mean that Moses saw the face of God in the sense of the fulness of the glory of God. Moses understood this and so begs in Ex. 33:18 “Please, show me Your glory!” And God says “you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.” So God can be seen in the sense of having a relationship with him but not in the sense of experiencing the fulness of his glory, since he “dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim 6:16).

Are all sinners (Rom 3:23; 1 John 1:8-9) or are some without sin (cf. Job 1:1; 1 John 3:6)?

- Does Job 1:1 contradict Rom 3:23? Was Job sinless? No, he, like everyone else has fallen short of God’s perfection. The purpose of Job 1:1 is not to say that Job was of sinless perfection, but rather to show us from the start that his suffering was not because of him doing bad things. He was following God, but he was not perfect. When God shows up at the end, notice that Job himself acknowledges his imperfection (Job 42:5).

- Regarding the apparent contradiction in 1 John, “sins” in 1 John 3:6 is in the present tense and implies unrepentantly and habitually practicing sin. We all sin, but believers are not to live in sin in an unrepentant manner. In fact, acknowledging and confessing our sin (1 John 1:9) is a part of not continuing in unrepentant sin. So, we are all sinners, but once believers, we are freed from slavery to sin and are to turn from sin (cf. Rom 6:1-2).

Are we saved by faith (Rom 3:28) or faith plus works (cf. James 2:24)?

- We are saved by faith. In Rom 3:28, ‘justified’ means declared righteous based on the righteousness of Christ (cf. Rom 3:23-24; Phil 3:8-9 Gen 15:6).

- In James 2:24, ‘justified’ means shown to be righteous (cf. Luke 7:29; James 2:18). So, a person is shown to be righteous (i.e. saved) through their actions and not just what they say they believe (cf. 2:14, 19).

- We are saved if we have true faith (Rom 3:28), and if we have true faith, we will show forth that we’ve been saved through our actions (James 2:24 cf. 2 Cor 13:5).