

Single Vision

John 1:32-42



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FOCAL Read Responsively (John 1:32-51 KJV)

"And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. {33} **And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. {34} And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. {35}** Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; {36} And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! {37} And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. {38} **Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? {39}** He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. {40} **One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. {41} He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. {42}** And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

There was a time when a woman would go to the hospital, have a baby, and remain in that place, being waited on by nurses and doctors, for at least three days - and many times for a week or so. There was a time when a person would go into the hospital for open heart

surgery and, following that surgery, would *stay* in the hospital for weeks at a time. Those days are passed! We live in an age where the mother has her child one day and goes home the next. Where the person has his heart bypassed, and who then goes home if not the next day. then the day after. We are conditioned to *speed*. Our news comes over the television as it happens. We often know what is going on in Baghdad before the soldier *who is there* knows. This type of speed has conditioned our minds to look for speed in all things. But this is not the Way of God!

Though a soul may be saved from eternal punishment in a moment by "...confess[ing] with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believ[ing] in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."¹, it takes *more than a moment* to learn to live as a Christian should live. If Christianity were a *claim it then forget it* faith then we wouldn't have this Big Book to study! It takes only a *moment* to be saved - but a lifetime of *single vision on Christ* to live your life for Jesus your Lord and Savior.

1. The Book of John Itself Is A "Single Vision" Book

The Gospel of John is *unique in its focus on Christ*. It begins by describing Jesus Christ as *the Eternal Word of God*, the God-Man Who came to die for our sins. The Gospel *ends* by comparing the *inadequacy of our words in describing Jesus Christ*. The *beginning* of the Gospel tells us **Jesus Christ is Eternal God - and He is all sufficient**. At the *end* of the Gospel John tells us:

John 21:25 (HCSB)² "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written."

This is the message of the Book: Christ the Word of God is sufficient, our logic, our words, our reasonings are insufficient. The late **Dr. J. Vernon McGee** said³:

"There are no parables in the fourth Gospel. The word 'parable' occurs one time (John 10:6), but is not the regular Greek word *parabole* but *paroimia*. The story of the Good Shepherd is not a parable but a discourse. The record of the lost sheep in Luke 15 is a parable. In John, the figures that Jesus used are in the nature of metaphors."

This is *very important* when studying this Gospel! In **Matthew 13:10-13** the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke in so many **parables**. Jesus told them **"To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted (NAS)⁴"**. The *parable* existed to *hide certain truths* from those who should not know them. The Gospel of John contains *no parables*, no hidden meanings - but it exists to give the reader a *single vision* of Jesus Christ. It exists to *focus* our entire attention on the Savior and to learn more of Him.

1 **Romans 10:9-10** (New International Version)

2 Holman Christian Standard Bible Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003 by Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville Tennessee. All rights reserved.

3 J. Vernon McGee, Through The Bible *Notes and Outlines*, freely available at <http://thruthebible.ca/>, an authorized TTB ministry

4 New American Standard Version

2. John The Baptist Had Single Vision: He Looked For Jesus

We read:

FOCAL (John 1:32-34 KJV) "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. {33} And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. {34} And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. "

One of the most *interesting truths* in the Scripture (at least, I find it interesting) is that Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were *cousins in the flesh*⁵ - but John had *no idea* that Jesus was the Messiah! This is fascinating on several levels. First, as cousins, they possibly grew up together. Maybe not, but if their families were like ours, there's a good possibility that they met, had family reunions, and played together. Yet John the Baptist *did not know Jesus was the Messiah* until he baptized our Lord! He says in **verse 33** "...I knew him not". What *did* John know? The Bible says:

FOCAL (John 1:33 KJV) "... I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending,

⁵ They were *cousins* because Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, were cousins. (Luke 1:36 KJV) "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren."

and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

John the Baptist *did not* know Who the Messiah was, but he *did know* what God the Father told him to do. God told John to do two things:

- 1) First, to **baptize with water**. John was to be obediently focused on the job that God had given him. John was called by God to be a *Nazarite*, a child dedicated to serving the Creator. This was his focus - to do what God told him to do. And,
- 2) Second, to **see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him**. John was to keep himself focused on *watching and waiting* for the Savior. God told John the Baptist

"thou shalt see the Spirit descending"

This is a *very important phrase*, dearly Beloved! That word **see** in the original text⁶ is in a *mood* that *allows for failure*. The **subjunctive mood is the mood of possibility and potentiality. The action described may or may not occur, depending upon circumstances.**⁷ What God said to John was, in essence, **"You shall see the Spirit of God descend on the Messiah when you are baptizing Him - but you need to pay attention John! You need to *focus* on what you're doing, and look for the Spirit of God in that moment!"**

So John began his ministry, began to baptize in the

⁶ oida {pronounced oy'-da}, Aorist Active Subjunctive

⁷ Online Bible lexicon

wilderness - and he watched with *singleness of vision*. Oh Beloved, if we would only watch so carefully and heed God so carefully, how much more would we be blessed today? Think on the blessings that came to those who *watched* and trusted God no matter what. Think on **Elisha**, who asked to receive a *double portion* of Elijah's power (**2 Kings 2:9**). Elijah told Elisha that if he would *focus with singleness of mind on him* then, when God took him in a chariot of fire, if Elisha *caught his mantle* he would receive as he asked. When that chariot of fire from God came and Elijah was snatched up he caught that mantle⁸. If **King David** had taken his eyes off of God, and took it upon himself to kill **Saul** - would David have ever ruled Israel?⁹ David refused to kill Saul, one of God's anointed, lest he bring the judgment of God on himself. His eyes were focused on the Lord - no where else. Could **Abraham**, for that matter, have been a *friend of God* and yet ignored God's leading from his homeland?¹⁰ But Abraham *believed God*, and kept his spiritual eyes on God, going where the Lord led. Because he kept a *single vision* on God he is today known as the *father of faith* (**Romans 4:11; 4:16**).

These are the *stories of blessing* - affirmations from Scripture that the eyes focused on God is the eye that is

⁸ (2 Kings 2:14 KJV) "And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over."

⁹ (1 Samuel 24:10 KJV) "Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed."

¹⁰ (James 2:23 KJV) "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

blessed. I do not have time to speak of them all, but I would like to give you just a few *negative* examples. Think on this, My Beloved:

- x Would the **first generation of Israel** have *perished wandering in the wilderness* if they had kept their eye on God, and not on the inhabitants of the land? Had they not cried saying (**Numbers 13:33 KJV**) "... **there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight**", would their corpses have littered the desert?
- x If **Moses** had kept his vision on God and not on the *rebels in Israel* then he would have never offended God as he did in **Numbers 20:10** - an action that would cause him - that dear saint - to die with his eyes on the Promised Land.
- x If **David** had kept his eyes on Christ and not on Bathsheba his firstborn child would have grown up to be a man (**2 Samuel 12:15**). More than that, David would not have stained his hands with innocent blood by killing Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, in an attempt to hide his terrible sin.

When our eyes have *single vision* to God then we open the doorway to blessing. But when our eyes are on other things we open the doorway to cursing. **John the Baptist** kept his eyes open, and every person he baptized he looked at carefully to see if the Spirit of God would descend on Him. He looked for Jesus though he had no idea Who the Master was. He looked for Jesus moment by moment, knowing he would lose a great blessing if he let the moment slip by unheeded. Then one day his wait

was rewarded. **John H. Jowett** said¹¹:

"That is faith, to do God's will here and now, quietly leaving the results to Him. Faith is not concerned with the entire chain; its devoted attention is fixed upon the immediate link. Faith is not knowledge of a moral process; it is fidelity in a moral act. Faith leaves something to the Lord; it obeys His immediate commandment, and leaves to Him the direction and destiny."

This is exactly what John did. The Lord did not give him the details on Christ's coming - He just told that dear man to baptize and *keep watching*. John did that - and was rewarded for his faithfulness and singleness of vision. John was faithful, which is why he could say:

FOCAL (John 1:34 KJV) **"..... I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. "**

3. Andrew Had Singleness of Vision

FOCAL (John 1:35-39 KJV) **"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; {36} And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! {37} And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. {38} Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? {39} He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him**

¹¹ in *Springs of Living Water*, page 1, on Hebrews 11:6

that day: for it was about the tenth hour. "

We read:

"Again the next day after John stood¹², and two of his disciples .."

The word **stood** here is a *very strong word* in the original language which means *to stand and expectantly await for something*. The previous day John the Baptist saw Jesus for the first time revealed as the Messiah. As he baptized in the river Jordan he *expectantly waited* for Jesus to come back.

John the Baptist had two disciples who were standing with him when Jesus returned. John immediately pointed to Christ and said **"Behold (look!) the Lamb of God"**. We only know for sure that one of these disciples was Andrew - the other is not mentioned¹³. When Jesus Christ came on the scene it is important to note that John the Baptist *immediately endorsed Him, encouraging his disciples to follow the Master*. That great commentator **Matthew Henry** writes:

"[John the Baptist] was willing to turn them over to Christ, for to this end he bore witness to Christ in their hearing that they might leave all to follow him, even that they might leave him. He did not reckon

¹² histēmi {pronounced his'-tay-mee}, *Robertson's Word Pictures* "Past perfect of histēmi, intransitive, and used as imperfect in sense.", *Vine's Word Studies* "more correctly, was standing, since the imperfect tense denotes something in progress. Here, therefore, with the idea of waiting; was standing in expectation."

¹³ However, Robertson, Barnes, Clarke, to name a few commentators, believe that the other disciple was the Apostle John, the writer of this Gospel.

that he lost those disciples who went over from him to Christ, any more than the schoolmaster reckons that scholar lost whom he sends to the university. John gathered disciples, not for himself, but for Christ to prepare them for the Lord."

It is not a popular idea in today's *me first* society, but **Christianity is suppose to be focused on promoting Jesus Christ our Lord.** If Christ is to be promoted, *we must be demoted.* As John told his followers:

John 3:28-30 (HCSB) "You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I've been sent ahead of Him. ' He who has the bride is the groom. But the groom's friend, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the groom's voice. So this joy of mine is complete. He must increase, but I must decrease."

John knew that singleness of vision required that we understand - we all must understand - that **Christ must increase, and we must decrease.** John was not demeaned when the disciples followed Jesus - after all, there is only one Lord and Master, and that is Jesus!

FOCAL (John 1:37-39 KJV) ".. the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. {38} Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? {39} He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. "

I don't know for certain that the second disciple to follow Jesus was the Apostle John, but we do know that one of these disciples was **Andrew** - for the text clearly tells us this. As soon as these disciples saw Jesus they *left their own rabbi, John the Baptist, and followed the Lamb of God.* Jesus asked these two men, "**What do you seek?**". Dr. **Thomas L. Constable**¹⁴ says of this question:

"Jesus' question gave the men the opportunity to express their desire to become His disciples. However, they were not quite ready to make that commitment. They replied by asking where He was staying. This polite response implied that they wanted to have an interview with Him. ... This statement was also highly significant spiritually. Only by coming to Jesus could they really comprehend what they were seeking spiritually. The same thing holds true today. The two men accepted Jesus' invitation and stayed with Him for the rest of that day."

Andrew and, if you'll permit me¹⁵, dear John, were prepared for the coming of the Master. They heard the preaching of Christ from their pastor then they followed Jesus to where He was. These disciples *sought out Jesus* because they heard the preaching of the Gospel. When Jesus said "**What seek ye**" He used a *very strong word*¹⁶. Jesus was saying, **what do you intensely desire?**

The Bible tells us that God designed us all **in His Triune**

¹⁴ soniclight.org notes on the Gospel of John

¹⁵ for I do believe that the other discipl was John the Apostle

¹⁶ zeteo, {pronounced dzay-teh'-o}, Present Active Indicative, *to require, crave, demand something from someone*

image¹⁷. When we fell to sin because of Adam's disobedience we entered *spiritual death*. The Bible says:

Romans 5:14 (NIV) "Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come."

Because **death reigned**, *spiritually as well as physically*, man became a *slave to sin*. It is *not* that there are good men and their are bad men, and that people choose to be good to get to Heaven. No Beloved, the Bible teaches that **death reigned** from Adam to Moses - and even to this day - because sin is in our mortal bodies. If sin were abolished then death would cease. There would be no dying, no suffering, no pain. But death persists because the Bible tells us:

(Romans 6:23a KJV) "For the wages of sin is death..... "

As one preacher put it in a sermon I heard one day, if sin were *blue*, then everything we did prior to Jesus would be a *shade of blue*. For that matter, everything we do now apart from Jesus, apart from the Blood of the **Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world**, everything is a shade of sin, a shade of blue!

Andrew and John knew this. They had been waiting for the Messiah, for the *Christ*, and when John the Baptist

began to preach the *Kingdom of God* and *repentance* these dear men went to him. They heard John the Baptist preach of the Coming Savior. So they, with *single vision*, waited and watched. This is why, as dear **Dr. Constable** said, they were **not quite ready to make that commitment** to Jesus Christ. They had heard John preach, heard the Word that he spoke - but they wanted to go with Jesus and *see where He lived*. Let's read again:

FOCAL (John 1:38-39 KJV) ". Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? {39} He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. "

You see, Andrew and John had, like many in Israel, waited for years for the Savior to come. What was the best way to see if Jesus was the Savior? Though they respected John the Baptist, they knew that the best way to see if Jesus Christ is Messiah, the **Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world** was to go home with Him. To see where He lived, to see His life.

Listen my Beloved: None have ever looked on Jesus who sought God the Savior and have been disappointed. That old devil *Judas Iscariot* looked at Jesus as a possible *military commander*, a *warrior Savior* Who would overthrow the hated Roman. When Jesus turned out to be, as John the Baptist said, the **Lamb of God**, Judas sold Him to Pilate and Herod for thirty pieces of silver

¹⁷ (Genesis 1:26 KJV) "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

(**Matthew 26:15**). And he, poor man, sold his salvation and his birthright, much as Esau did, for a little bowl of porridge. Oh, that he would have trusted the Savior! Oh, that he would have

(**1 Peter 2:3 KJV**) "... tasted that the Lord is gracious."

If Judas would have done as Andrew and John did, and went home with Jesus! How much different things would have been? Oh Beloved, single vision toward God is the only vision that will matter in your lifetime. Do not do as so many have done, and sell your soul for a bowl of porridge! We never did read all of **Romans 6:23** - let's do so now:

(**Romans 6:23 KJV**) "**For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**"

Oh how I love the "buts" in God's Word. The **wages of sin is death, BUT** Praise God, if you like Andrew and John have invited Jesus Christ home - if you have spent but one intimate moment with Him - you will find that He is indeed the Lamb of God. How do you know Him to be the Lamb of God? Is there anyone who has ever been like Him? Have you ever looked at Him and seen sin? When Jesus told those who wanted to condemn the *woman taken in adultery*:

John 8:7 (NIV) "... **If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her ...**"

He made this statement with confidence. He knew that He, alone, was the only person there without sin. He is the **Lamb of God** without spot or blemish of sin. The Bible tells us:

Hebrews 4:15 (HCSB) "**For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.**"

Andrew and John went home with Jesus to see Him *intimately* - and once being with Him in that closest of time they *knew beyond a shadow of a doubt* that He was and will always be the Savior.

4. Why Must I Have Single Vision?

FOCAL (**John 1:40-42 KJV**) "**One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. {41} He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. {42} And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.**"

Once Andrew was *certain* that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, he immediately went and found his brother and fishing partner Simon. Simon came to Jesus and, believing on Him, the Lord gave Simon a new name. He called him *Cephas* in the Gentile tongue, or Peter

(*Petros*). The NET Bible states¹⁸:

Only John among the gospel writers gives the Greek transliteration (CEPHAS) of Simon's new name, Qéphâ (which is Galilean Aramaic). Neither (Petros) in Greek nor Qéphâ in Aramaic is a normal proper name; it is more like a nickname.

Dr. Constable says in his commentary¹⁹:

"Simon as a common Jewish name, probably derived from Simeon. Jesus gave him a nickname that expressed his character, which was not uncommon. It is interesting that Simon Peter originally had the same rash and impulsive character as his ancestor Simeon, the second son of Jacob. Cephas is Aramaic, the common language of Palestine, and means "Rock." Peter is the Greek translation of Cephas. As the record of Peter unfolds in the Gospels, he appears as anything but a rock; he was impulsive, volatile, and unreliable. Yet Jesus named Peter in view of what he would become by the power of God."

Though these are great commentaries, I don't see the name "Peter" or "Cephas" given as a nickname. The Bible teaches that God our Savior gives all *new names*. God told Israel that there was coming a day when they would repent, and that God would give them a *new name* - a name that reflected their saved status:

(Isaiah 62:1-2 KJV) "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,

¹⁸ footnote 104

¹⁹ soniclight.org

until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. {2} And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name."

God further promises the redeemed by faith in Him that they shall receive *new names* in glory, in yonder Heaven:

(Revelation 2:17 KJV) "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

and in,

(Revelation 3:12 KJV) "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

You see, a *name* is indicative of a person's family tree. Once Simon accepted Jesus Christ as Savior the Lord gave him a *new name*. Jesus alone has the power to give a new name, an inheritance in eternity, eternal life itself.

Listen, dear friends! You truly become what you worship. If your vision is divided between the world and

the Lord, you will never reach that place of blessing that God has promised you. If you keep anything but a single vision on Jesus Christ then you will not only harm yourself, but you will hurt your children and your children's children as well.

Only as you focus on Jesus Christ, as you follow Him with single vision, with focus of life and love - only then can you attain the purpose that God has for your life. Some people believe that the joy in Christianity is only attained at its end - when we get to Heaven. I tell you, the joy in Christianity is at its end, but it is also right now in its Christ! He is altogether lovely. Pastor **John Flavel** said²⁰:

"As a theologian long ago said, "There is nothing in him which is not loveable." The excellencies of Jesus Christ are perfectly exclusive of all their opposites; there is nothing of a contrary property or quality found in him to contaminate or devalue his excellency. And in this respect Christ infinitely transcends the most excellent and loveliest of created things. Whatever loveliness is found in them, it is not without a bad aftertaste. The fairest pictures must have their shadows. The rarest and most brilliant gems must have dark backgrounds to set off their beauty; the best creature is but a bitter sweet at best. If there is something pleasing, there is also something sour. if a person has every ability, both innate and acquired, to delight us, yet there is also some natural corruption intermixed with it to put us off. But it is not so in our altogether lovely Christ, his excellencies

are pure and unmixed. He is a sea of sweetness without one drop of gall."

May God touch your hearts with these words, leading you to His side. He alone must catch our eye!