



Contradictions (Part VI): Do the Accounts of Jesus' Life Contradict Themselves?

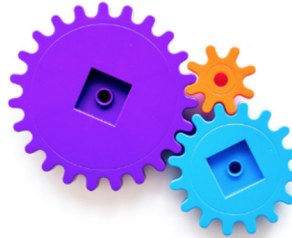
Luke 1:32: (NASB) *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.*



The life of Jesus as a man on earth was filled with wonder, teaching and miracles. His obedience to his Father's will was the centerpiece of his mission as he came to pay the ransom price for Adam. Critics would say Jesus' earthly life was also filled with contradictions. They say that these discrepancies are reasonable cause to doubt the validity of what he did, taught and stood for. They also point to these inconsistencies as proof that the Bible is not the unerring word of God. Once again, we will look at the Scriptures the critics bring up and examine them. Our objective is simple: find out what these several citations actually mean in the light of context, history and common sense.

Contradiction Principles From Our Last Three Episodes:

recap
recap



Deduce when flashback is being used as a literary device.
When things seem out of order, it might be going back to fill in more details.

Purpose - God uses various tools to accomplish His plan.
He can even use confusion and darkness as tools.

Distinguish between temporary emotion and eternal purpose.
Our temporary experiences look bleak, but there is a big picture of God's ultimate compassion and mercy.

Always seek the larger context beyond any single account.
Remember various perspectives enhance true understanding.
This is especially helpful in studying the gospels with various witnesses to events.

Do not read what is not there - DO read what IS there!
We do not want to read into things, but we also cannot omit what IS there due to preconceived conclusions.

When two related accounts seem incomprehensively contradictory, find the connections, details and differences that reveal the harmony.
We might be being shown several different aspects of the same thing.

CONTRADICTION -
or needing a
clear explanation?



Why was Jesus named
Jesus instead of
Immanuel?



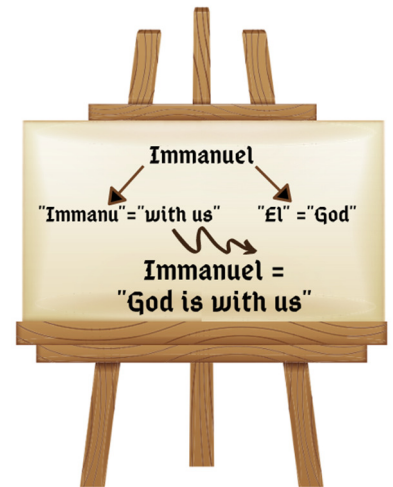
Matthew 1:23: (NASB) *Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call <2564> his name <3686> Immanuel, which translated means, God with us.*

Matthew 1:25: (NASB) *but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called <2753> his name <3686> Jesus.*

Call: Strong's #2564 *kaleo*; properly, aloud, but used in a variety of applications

Online Greek English Lexicon: 2b) to be called i.e. to bear a name or title (among men)

Name: Strong's #3686 *onoma*; a "name" (literally or figuratively) [authority, character]



Prophecy

Ahaz, King of Judah with the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 7:12-14: (NASB) ¹²*But Ahaz said, I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!* ¹³*Then he said, Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?* ¹⁴*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.*

Context of the New Testament application - the dream given to Joseph:

Matthew 1:21-23: (NASB) ²¹*She will bear a son; and you shall call <2753> his name <3686> Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.* ²²*Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:* ²³*Behold the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call <2564> his name <3686> Immanuel, which translated means, God with us.*

Context

Contradiction Principle:



Allow ancient words to have various shades of meaning the way we presently allow such variety in our word usage.

A name is not only a title but a descriptor. The name Immanuel means "God is with us." **John 14:9:** (NIV) *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. The Father's love, mercy, justice and wisdom were all manifest in the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus. In other words, those who became acquainted with Jesus were acquainted with the Father. Jesus never claimed to be the Heavenly Father personally but always taught he was the Son of God. When we meet an employee of a company, they are supposed to represent the principles of their company. Meeting with them is meeting the company. "God with us" is Jesus as "the representative" of the Father.*

John 1 tells us Jesus was *the word*. This also shows Jesus as a representative.

Three examples of "name" not being a formal name but a description:

Isaiah 9:6-7: (NASB) ⁶*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders; and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.* ⁷*There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.*



His name is what he IS. This is very common in the Scriptures.

Mark 3:17: (NASB) *And James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James to them he gave the **name <3686>** Boanerges, which means, Sons of Thunder.*

Jesus did not actually change the names of James and John, but *Sons of Thunder* was a description of their passion and capacity for God and His work.

Mark 5:8-9: (NASB) *⁸For he had been saying to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit! ⁹And he was asking him, What is your **name <3686>**? And he said to him, my **name <3686>** is Legion (this was a title); for we are many.*

It is like he is saying, "My name is your worst nightmare!"

Mary in her visit by the angel has Jesus described in a "God with us" way:

Luke 1:31-35: (NASB) *³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall **name <3686>** him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be **called <2564>** the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end. ³⁴Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin? ³⁵The angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason, the holy Child shall be **called <2564>** the Son of God.*



Jeremiah 23:5-6: (NASB) *⁵Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And he will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is his name by which he will be called, The Lord our righteousness.*

No one called him *Lord our righteousness* but that is what he was.

1 Corinthians 15:45 - Jesus is called the *last Adam* because he provided satisfaction for original sin.

People refer to us by different names or titles in different settings and at different times.



(Julie) I am called Auntie by my nieces and nephews; my husband calls me Smunchie. That does not mean my name has changed, but these names serve as another way people refer to me.



Why was Jesus named "Jesus" instead of "Immanuel?"



Jesus was his formal name and Immanuel was one of several titles that unmistakably described him as God's representative.



Our CQ Kids video series can be found on our YouTube channel at [ChristianQuestions.com/youtube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvUj0t0t0t0t0t0t0t0t0t0) or on our website. These are great short animated videos for kids, parents, homeschoolers, Bible class teachers or adults who just want to brush up on basic questions. Please see the CQ Kids video - "What Are Some Other Names for Jesus?"



**With Jesus' name and mission in order,
did he start his ministry before or after John finished his?**

To many of us, this question of Jesus beginning his ministry may seem a bit foolish as we figure it all began after his forty-day fasting, praying and temptations experience. However, the critics claim to have found a point of contention, so spiritual integrity requires we conscientiously examine it.

**CONTRADICTION -
or needing a
clear explanation?**



**Did Jesus begin to
preach
before or after
John the Baptist was
imprisoned?**

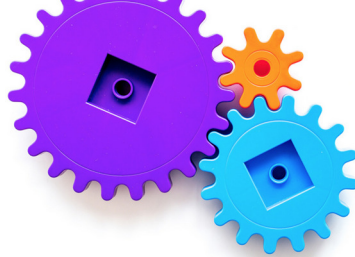
Before:

John 3:22-24: (KJV) ²²After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. ²³And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized. ²⁴For John was not yet cast into prison.

After:

Mark 1:13-14: (KJV) ¹³And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him. ¹⁴Now after that (the word 'that' needs attention) John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

Contradiction Principle:



Seek **the larger context**
beyond any single account.
Various perspectives
enhance true understanding.



Did Jesus begin to preach before or after John the Baptist was imprisoned?



Jesus preached for many months before John was put in prison. Rereading the Mark verses from different translations reveal the FALSE conclusion regarding the word "that."

Reading from the King James Version:

Mark 1:14: (KJV) Now after that John was put in prison...

It sounds like this is referring to the previous verse 13.

Re-reading from the New American Standard Bible:

Mark 1:13-14: (NASB) ¹³And he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to him. (Here begins a new narrative. Many months have gone by.) ¹⁴Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,



These verses, if we understand there was time between verses 13 and 14, exactly agree with the other gospels. The Gospel of John fills in needed details (between verses 13 and 14) from the months after Jesus' temptation experiences and before John was taken to prison.

For more on this topic, please see the Bonus Material.

John fills in the details of what was happening in the months following Jesus' temptation experience in the wilderness but before John was taken to prison.

John 1:19: (NASB) *This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?*

This is likely within a few months of Jesus' wilderness experience, which happened right after he was baptized. John here is looking back on a previous experience while he being interrogated by the priests and Levites.

John 1:32,35-37: (NASB) ³²*John testified saying, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and he remained upon him. ³⁵Again, the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God! ³⁷The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*



Again, the next day - after what? The day after John's TESTIMONY, he was standing with two of his disciples and saw Jesus. He speaks of the experience of seeing the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven way back when he baptized Jesus.

Jesus starts meeting those who would soon be his disciples:

John 1:43: (NASB) *The next day he (Jesus) purposed to go into Galilee, and he found Philip. And Jesus said to him, Follow me (an invitation).*

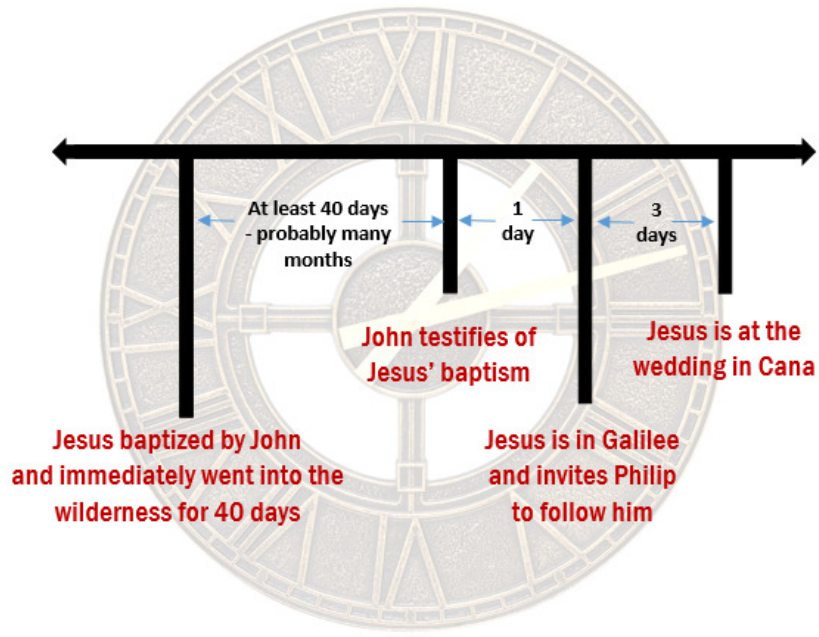
John 2:1: (NASB) *On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.*

On the third day - meaning after John gave his testimony to the priests and Levites. This does NOT mean the third day after Jesus' baptism. We will revisit this in our next segment.

John 2:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹*This beginning of his signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. ¹²After this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brothers and his disciples; and they stayed there a few days.*

It is important to remember there were miles between these cities, and it took time for Jesus to walk from city to city.

The passing of time between accounts reminds us of our podcast last week when we discussed several contradictions about creation. The creative days took years, but they were described in only one page in the Bible. For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episode #1090: Contradictions (Part V): What Profound Secret Does Creation Reveal?



The first three chapters of John all fit chronologically between Mark 1:13-14.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Mark — **JOHN** — Mark
1:13 — 1, 2, 3 — 1:14

Mark just glossed over the whole beginning of Jesus' ministry. Mark is the shortest of the gospels. He left out a lot of the details but showed important high points. Each of the writers of the gospel had a different mission.

There is a time gap here. We do not know how long Jesus stayed in Galilee or how soon before Passover he went to Jerusalem:

John 2:13: (NASB) *The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

John 3:1: (NASB) *Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*

John 3:23-24: (NASB) ²³*John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized* ²⁴*for John had not yet been thrown into prison.*

All these events happened and John was still not yet in prison.

John 4:1-3: (KJV) ¹*When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,* ²*Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,* ³*He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

(Source: Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary) "Departed into Galilee" — by which time John had been cast into prison (Mark 1:14).



Did Jesus begin to preach before or after John the Baptist was imprisoned?



Jesus preached months before John was put into prison.

This particular question reveals the necessity of realizing how the Scriptures were written. As in so many other cases, the strict chronology of events is not always of the same importance as what happened and why.

Sometimes our obsession with details can cloud our simple and logical judgment. Let's watch out for this.

Our next conflict is regarding Jesus' time in the wilderness after his baptism. How long was he there?

The obvious answer is simple - Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days to fast, pray and be tested by Satan. With this being obvious (at least to us), we need to address the critics' conclusions that say the gospels are divided on this, so let's again look carefully and see what we find.



Yes:

Matthew 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he then became hungry.

Mark and Luke agree with Matthew:

Mark 1:12-13: (NASB) ¹²Immediately the Spirit impelled him to go out into the wilderness. ¹³And he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan.

Luke 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil...

No, he was in Galilee three days later:

John 1:32-33: (NASB) ³²John testified saying, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and he remained upon him. ³³I did not recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water said to me, He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

John 1:43: (NASB) The next day he purposed to go into Galilee, and he found Philip. And Jesus said to him, Follow me.

John 2:1: (NASB) On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

The contradiction: Immediately following his baptism, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness resisting the devil. But John says, one day after his baptism he was in Galilee, not the wilderness, and three days later he was at a wedding in Cana. Where was Jesus after he was baptized?

Contradiction Principle:



Seek **the larger context**
beyond any single account.
Various perspectives
enhance true understanding.



Did Jesus really spend forty days in the wilderness?



Jesus absolutely, positively and unequivocally did spend forty days in the wilderness. Do not confuse the actual baptism with John testifying what he saw at that baptism months later.

Once again, to understand Scripture we need to pay close attention to how it is written. Because we have Matthew, Mark and Luke in complete agreement on the forty-day experience, we need to examine the timing of John.

This is likely within a few months of Jesus' forty-day experience:

John 1:19: (NASB) *This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you?*

John answers by saying, "I am the one who was sent because of Jesus. He is the one you need to pay attention to."

These next verses are not Jesus' actual baptism. John is recalling it for the Pharisees:

John 1:32-33: (NASB) ³²*John testified saying, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and he remained upon him. ³³I did not recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water said to me, He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.*

John had many followers by now and was an important person. But the minute Jesus comes on the scene, what did he do? He pointed everyone in Jesus' direction. He took the "spotlight" and shined it right at Jesus instead of himself.



Starting around verse 29, John sees Jesus and tells the crowd, "Look! (Spotlight) Here is the one I was telling you about! Back when I baptized him, I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and resting on him." The next day Jesus started gathering his disciples - Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael. In other words, the NEXT DAY AFTER JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THIS - NOT the next day after that actual baptizing event occurred.

Sometime after John's testimony to the Pharisees and the three days of activities listed, we read:

John 2:13: (NASB) *The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

Jesus would have been baptized in the autumn, on or right after his 30th birthday. We know he went into the wilderness for forty days right after that. John 1 and 2 all take place between a six-month period of time between Jesus'



return from the wilderness and going to Jerusalem before Passover, which is in spring.



If you were to ask my parents, "Where is Julie?" My mom says, "Oh, she went to the store." My dad says, "Oh, she went to lunch." If I actually went to lunch in the food court in the mall, they were both right. Both testimonies would be reliable. They were just different descriptions of the same event. Similarly, with the gospel writers and their testimonies, we need to fill in all the blanks, and they all harmonize.

Let's be sure that we do not create issues where they simply do not exist. The Bible is profoundly harmonious.

Our next issue sure seems suspicious. What do we do with the order of Jesus' three wilderness tests?

Now we look at what some call a contradiction that actually has legs to stand on. We will look at two gospel accounts of the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness. What we will see is the reporting is actually different. This is not a translation or subtlety issue; the accounts do show a different order.

**CONTRADICTION -
or needing a
clear explanation?**



**Which temptation
experience
happened first?
The Mountain top
or
Pinnacle of the Temple?**

Both accounts agree that turning stones to bread was the first temptation. What came next?

TEMPTATIONS IN THE WILDERNESS

MATTHEW	LUKE
1. Bread	1. Bread
2. Pinnacle of the Temple	2. Mountain top - worship Satan
3. Mountain top - worship Satan	3. Pinnacle of the Temple

Pinnacle of the Temple - cast yourself down:

Matthew 4:5: (NASB) *Then the devil took him into the holy city and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,*

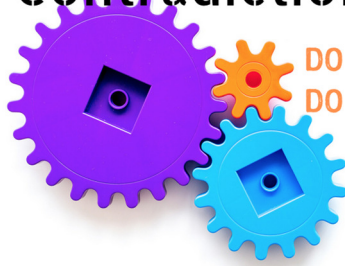
Mountain top - worship Satan:

Luke 4:5-6: (NASB) *⁵And he led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said to him, I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.*



Thought question before answering: How much does the answer to this really matter? The order does not matter as much as what happened.

Contradiction Principle:



DO NOT read what IS NOT there.
DO read what IS there.



What was the order of the temptations in the wilderness?



1. Bread, 2. Pinnacle of the Temple, 3. Mountain top - worship Satan. While the order is not nearly as significant as the content of the experience, we believe that the Matthew account intentionally has things in *sequence* while Luke is simply *reporting events*.



There are two different perspectives of the reporting of events - which do not contradict each other - even though the order is not the same.

Please see the CQ Kids video - "Did Jesus Ever Do Anything Wrong?" It walks through the three temptations in the wilderness.

Why isn't the inspired word of God not antiseptically perfect? Shouldn't it be clear, understandable and with all witnesses reporting exactly the same? No, this is not how God's inspiration works. God works through humanity, recording sins, shortcomings and mistakes. He allows us to see events through the eyes of imperfect people. The reporting of the wilderness experience, for example, gives us a different (but not contradicting) order of detail.

How do we know the Matthew account has the correct order of events? Observe Luke's introductions to each temptation next to Matthew's introductions. There are marked differences in how they approach the subject.

First Temptation

Stones to bread:

Luke 4:3: (NASB) *And the devil said to him, If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread. (A general statement of fact with no timing element.)*

Matthew 4:3: (NASB) *And the tempter **came** <4334> (meaning "to approach") and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. (A clear beginning of the experience.)*



Matthew is telling us Satan approached Jesus. Matthew is purposely putting a timestamp on the experience.

Second Temptation

Pinnacle of the Temple:

Luke 4:9: (NASB) *And he led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here.*

And he led him to Jerusalem - Luke does not give us a sense of order. It is a generic reporting of the event with no time markers indicated.



Matthew 4:5: (NASB) *Then <5119> (meaning "at that time") the devil took him into the holy city and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple.*

Then - showing us something comes next. Matthew was very specific regarding the sequence following the first temptation.

Third Temptation

Mountain top:

Luke 4:5: (NASB) *And he led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. (Once again, no regard for sequence.)*

Matthew 4:8: (NASB) *Again <3825> (meaning "once more"), the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. (Following what had already followed.)*

Please see the Bonus Material for a comparison chart of the events of the three temptations recorded by Matthew and Luke.

It is clear Matthew is paying close attention to timing, but Luke is not concerned with putting the events in order - he is focused on reporting on the temptations themselves.

To finish the reasoning, here is how the exchange ends in Luke and then Matthew:

Luke 4:13: (NASB) *When the devil had finished every temptation, he left him until an opportune time.*

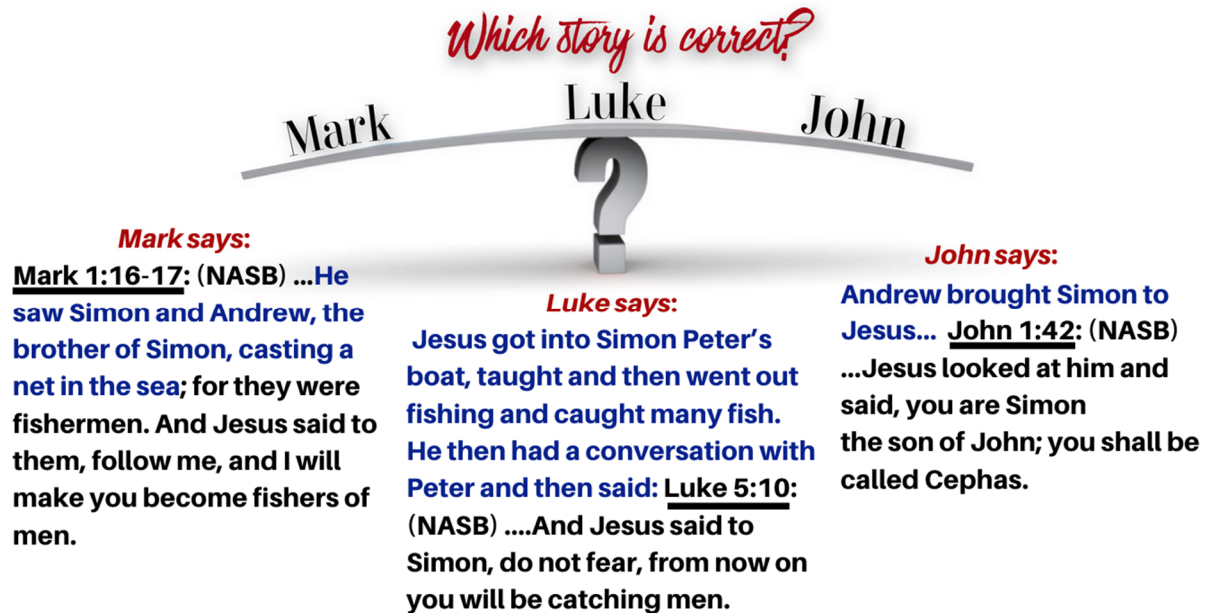
Matthew 4:9-11: (NASB) *⁹and he said to him, All these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, Go Satan! For it is written You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only. ¹¹Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and began to minister to him.*

Go Satan! ...Then the devil left him. Matthew makes it clear the mountain top experience was the last of the three temptations. Jesus dismisses Satan. The whole ordeal was over.

Multiple witnesses give us multiple perspectives. Observing the language one gospel or another uses in any event is a huge step in finding true meaning.

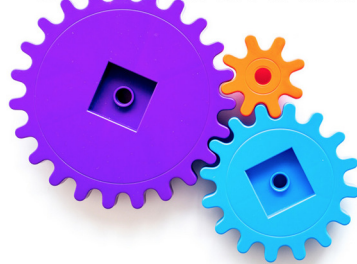
What about Peter becoming a follower?
Why are there three different stories on how he was called?

Peter IS pivotal. He became the spokesman and leader of the twelve Apostles. Here, the critics are right (to a degree), as there are three different stories from three of the Gospels regarding Peter becoming a follower. The key here is being open to the profound lessons of these three stories.



All three are correct. They are, in fact, three different encounters between Jesus and Peter.

Contradiction Principle:



Seek **the larger context** beyond any single account. Various perspectives enhance true understanding.

Simon's (Peter's) first encounter with Jesus:

Sometime after Jesus came back from his forty-day experience:

John 1:35-37,40-42: (NASB) ³⁵Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God! ³⁷The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus... ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, We have found the Messiah. ⁴²He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter).

- Simon's family had a heart for God - his brother Andrew was previously following John the Baptist.

- Jesus’ message to Simon was, “I know who you are and who you can become.” The name Cephas means “small stone.” Jesus knows he will be solid and humble in his service.
- Jesus did not here invite Simon to follow him, he simply “saw” him for what he could be.

Simon’s second recorded interchange with Jesus:

At least six months after Jesus’ baptism:

Mark 1:14-18: (NASB) ¹⁴Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. ¹⁶As he was going along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. ¹⁸Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

- Jesus returns to Galilee - he has no formal following yet in place. The calling process is beginning.
- Here he preaches in earnest the necessary repentance and belief for the kingdom.
For more on this subject, please see the Bonus Material.
- Jesus’ message to Simon, “I know you. Follow me for true satisfaction.” To a fisherman, a good catch would provide satisfaction. Jesus could provide so much more.



Was this the moment when Peter truly follows Jesus? Not quite...Peter followed him but then went back to fishing and his responsibilities.

(Source: Jamieson Fausset Brown Commentary) These calls were all distinct and progressive.

Simon’s third recorded interchange with Jesus:

They are back in Galilee. Jesus sees Peter’s boat, asks to get in, they go offshore and Jesus teaches:

Luke 5:4: (NASB) When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.

In **Luke 5:5-7** Peter complies even though they worked all night and caught nothing. They catch so many fish the nets begin to break, and they get help from their fishing partners.

Next, we see the exchange that finally gets Peter to fully commit to leave all for Jesus:

Luke 5:8-11: (NASB) ⁸But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man! ⁹For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men. ¹¹When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

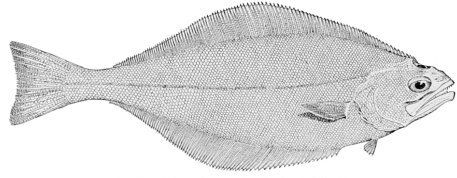


Simon Peter gives up fishing and follows Jesus permanently. There was a process that drew *Simon* to becoming *Peter*.

Some of us are like Andrew who follow immediately, and others take time methodically to be sure they understand the call before they make that commitment to serve the Lord. We are all unique.

When critics say there are three different stories saying three different things, which one is right? The answer is they are all right, and they teach us a tremendous lesson of Jesus slowly drawing the character of Simon Peter to his side.

Jesus' message to Simon was, "I know you. You are willing to follow even as your own sins seem overwhelming and unconquerable. But I say to you, as you follow me and trust in me, you can now do it without fear, for with my strength, you will become fearless fishers of men."



Peter eventually caught billions of fish, and because of his purpose in the gospel and spreading the message - WE are those fish! We have much to learn from Peter, especially from his mistakes. **For more on the life of Peter, please search our archives for Episodes #710, #713 and #718: What Can We Learn From Peter? (Parts I, II and III).**

We do not want to lose sight of the fact that the Bible contains layers and layers of treasures to find. The Bible presents uncanny harmony with God's plan and His attributes of JUSTICE, LOVE, WISDOM and POWER all balanced together. If something does not seem to square up, keep searching with faith and humility.

When we talk about these contradictions, our objective is not to attack those who say the Bible contradicts itself. The inspired word of God all works together. It is meant to be understood by study, prayer and meditation.

***So, do the accounts of Jesus' life contradict themselves?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***



**Join us next week for our podcast on September 23, 2019:
Ep. #1092: How Do You Deal With Toxic People In Your Life?**

Bonus Material!

Honest discussions - even and perhaps especially on topics about which we disagree - can help us resist hypocrisy and arrogance. — David Price



Did Jesus begin to preach before or after John the Baptist was imprisoned?

Context of the Mark account:

Mark 1:9-20: (NASB) ⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Immediately coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him; ¹¹and a voice came out of the heavens: You are My beloved Son, in you I am well-pleased. ¹²Immediately the Spirit impelled him to go out into the wilderness. ¹³And he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to him. (There is an absolute time gap here. Mark is here focusing on the Jesus/John relationship in his Gospel.) ¹⁴Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. ¹⁶As he was going along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. (This is Jesus' second encounter with Simon, the first being in John 1:40-42) ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. ¹⁸Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow him.

Context of the John account:

John 1:19-51: (NASB) ¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? ²⁰And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, I am not the Christ. ²¹They asked him, What then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Are you the Prophet? And he answered, No. ²²Then they said to him, Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself? ²³He said, I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the LORD, as Isaiah the prophet said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, and said to him, Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet? ²⁶John answered them saying, I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. ²⁷It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie. ²⁸These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. ²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is he on behalf of whom I said, After me comes a man who has a higher rank than I, for he existed before me. ³¹I did not recognize him, but so that he might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water. ³²John testified saying, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon him. ³³I did not recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water said to me, he upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. ³⁴I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God. (John the Baptist's testimony to the Pharisees ends here.) ³⁵Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God! ³⁷The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, What do you seek? They said to him, Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are you staying? ³⁹He said to them, Come, and you will see. So, they came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. (What follows in verses 40-42 is Jesus' first encounter with Simon Peter, the second is in Mark 1:16-20) ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ). ⁴²He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter). ⁴³The next day he purposed to go into Galilee, and he found Philip. And Jesus said to him, Follow me. ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—



Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see. ⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit! ⁴⁸Nathanael said to him, How do you know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. ⁴⁹Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel. ⁵⁰Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these. ⁵¹And he said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. (All of the above happened before Mark 1:14-20)

Some may say that Jesus did not preach until John was in prison because of the Matthew account:

Matthew 4:12-17: (NASB) ¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, he withdrew into Galilee; ¹³and leaving Nazareth, he came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ¹⁵The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ¹⁶the people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, and those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned. ¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach and say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

This may seem strange, for we know he preached long before this. There are two additional facts that need to be put in place to understand this:

1. Mark's account adds an important phrase:

Mark 1:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

This indicates that Jesus knew John was being taken off the scene. The call to repentance from John was ending, and Jesus would now be solely responsible for that call and the kingdom message.

2. John the Baptist said the exact words that Matthew records Jesus "beginning" to say:

Matthew 3:1-3: (NASB) ¹Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ²Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ³For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!

Jesus takes up John's work and ties it in with his own kingdom message.

This is borne out by the definition of the word "began" in the online Greek English Lexicon: #756 - 1) to be the first to do (anything), to begin; 2) to be chief, leader, ruler; 3) to begin, make a beginning.



Did Jesus really spend forty days in the wilderness? Mountain top or Pinnacle of the Temple first?

The three Gospel accounts of the wilderness temptation experience:

Matthew 4:1-11: (NASB) ¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he then became hungry.



Bread:

³And the tempter came and said to him, *If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.* ⁴But he answered and said, *It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*

Pinnacle of the Temple - cast yourself down:

⁵Then the devil took him into the holy city and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to him, *If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will command His angels concerning you; and on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.* ⁷Jesus said to him, *On the other hand, it is written, You shall not put the LORD your God to the test.*

Mountain top - worship Satan:

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹and he said to him, *All these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me.* ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, *Go, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.* ¹¹Then the devil left him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to him.

Mark 1:12-13: (NASB) ¹²Immediately the Spirit impelled him to go out into the wilderness. ¹³And he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to him.

Luke 4:1-13: (NASB) ¹Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness.

Bread:

²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, he became hungry. ³And the devil said to him, *If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.* ⁴And Jesus answered him, *It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone.*

Mountain top - worship Satan:

⁵And he led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said to him, *I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.* ⁷Therefore if you worship before me, it shall all be yours. ⁸Jesus answered him, *It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.*

Pinnacle of the Temple - cast yourself down:

⁹And he led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, *If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here;* ¹⁰for it is written, *He will command His angels concerning you to guard you,* ¹¹and, *on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.* ¹²And Jesus answered and said to him, *It is said, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.* ¹³When the devil had finished every temptation; he left Him until an opportune time.

Introduction

First Temptation

Second Temptation

Third Temptation

Mark 1:12-13	Matthew 4:1-11	Luke 4:1-13
<i>¹Immediately the Spirit impelled him to go out into the wilderness. ²And he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to him.</i>	<i>¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he then became hungry.</i>	<i>¹Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness. ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, he became hungry.</i>
	<i>³And the tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. ⁴But He answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.</i>	<i>³And the devil said to him, If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread. ⁴And Jesus answered him, It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone.</i>
	<i>⁵Then the devil took him into the holy city and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will command His angels concerning you; and on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said to him, on the other hand, it is written, you shall not put the LORD your God to the test</i>	<i>⁵And he led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said to him, I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷Therefore if you worship before me, it shall all be yours. ⁸Jesus answered him, It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.</i>
	<i>⁹Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ¹⁰and he said to him, All these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me. ¹¹Then Jesus said to him, Go Satan! For it is written You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only. ¹²Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and began to minister to him.</i>	<i>⁹And he led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; ¹⁰for it is written, He will command His angels concerning you to guard you and one their hands they will bear you up so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. ¹¹And Jesus answered and said to him, It is said, you shall not put the LORD your God to the test. When the devil had finished every temptation, he left him until an opportune time.</i>



Further information on the three exchanges between Jesus and Peter.

Jesus beholding Simon at the very beginning:

Behold: Strong's #1689 *emblepo*; to look on, i.e. (relatively) to observe fixedly, or (absolutely) to discern clearly
King James Version - behold, gaze up, look upon, (could) see

Three examples of this word:

John 1:36: (KJV) And **looking upon <1689>** Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

Mark 10:21: (KJV) Then Jesus **beholding <1689>** him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Luke 22:61: And the Lord turned and **looked upon <1689>** Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

After the second interchange with Peter, Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law just a few days later:

Mark 1:30-37: (NASB) ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to Jesus about her. ³¹And he came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them. ³²When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. ³³And the whole city had gathered at the door. ³⁴And he healed many who were ill with various diseases and cast out many demons; and he was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who he was. ³⁵In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there. ³⁶Simon and his companions searched for him; ³⁷they found him, and said to him, Everyone is looking for you.



Observations:

- Previous to this text, Simon and company are witnesses to the casting out of demons.
- Simon is shown Jesus' power firsthand in a very personal way.
- In the evening (after Sabbath) Jesus heals many more, further showing his power.
- Simon and company follow Jesus in the early the morning - wanting to be a part of him.

(Source: Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary) Not their first call, however, recorded in John 1:35-42; nor their second, recorded in Matthew 4:18-22; but their third and last before their appointment to the apostleship. That these calls were all distinct and progressive, seems quite plain. (Similar stages are observable in other eminent servants of Christ.)

Simon's third recorded interchange with Jesus:

Luke 5:1-11: (NRSV) ¹Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, ²he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. ⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch. ⁵Simon answered, Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down



the nets. ⁶When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man! ⁹For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people. ¹¹When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Simon's reaction - a similar reaction by Isaiah upon seeing the glory of God:

Isaiah 6:1-5: (ASV) ¹In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

