

Encounters with Jesus

Kate Patterson

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Our big question: “What is God like?”

God’s big question: “*What about you? Who do you say I am?*” Matthew 16: 15

Jesus says: “*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*”. John 14:8-9

High Christology v low Christology

The Gospels invite us to encounter Christ

*N.T Wright, “Learn to hear these words addressed to yourself”.*¹

The Foundation Story - YOUR story.

NT Wright: The synoptic gospels *tell the story of Jesus and especially that of his cross, not as a one-off biography of strange doings .. but as the end of a much longer story, the story of Israel, which in turn is the focal point of the story of the creator and the world.*²

How does it change life when this is your foundation story?

To consider

Why is it so important that Jesus was fully human AND God?

Journeys of Understanding - for the person who meets Jesus in the gospel and for us.

The gospels ... *are written in their different ways, to articulate and invite their hearers to share a new world view which carries at its heart a new view of ‘god’, and even a proposal for a new way of saying ‘God’*³

¹ Tom Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 2. ed (London: SPCK, 2004), 6.

² N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God. 1: The New Testament and the People of God*, (London: SPCK, 1997), 475.

³ N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, 372.

The theological journey towards the doctrine of hypostatic union

The union of Christ's divinity and humanity in one substance or existence.

Arianism (3rd century heresy) said that Jesus was created.

The Athanasian creed (6th century): Although God and human, yet Christ is not two, but one.

Why 4 gospels?

John Stott writes, "I find it helpful to detect in the four Evangelists four dimensions of the saving purpose of God: its length, depth, breadth and height. Matthew reveals its length, for he depicts the Christ of Scripture who looks back over long centuries of expectation. Mark emphasizes its depth, for he depicts the Suffering Servant who looks down to the depths of the humiliation he endured. In Luke it is the breadth of God's purpose that emerges, for he depicts the Savior of the world who looks round in mercy to the broadest possible spectrum of human beings. Then John reveals its height, for he depicts the Word made flesh who looks up to the heights from which he came and to which he intends to raise us."⁴

Are you the one? Read Matthew 11:2-5 and Isaiah 61:1-2

John the Baptist's question 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'

Why didn't Jesus just answer the question?

Titles of Jesus. Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, Lord, Saviour.

7 'I am's in John's Gospel

Kingdom Power Encounters – authority over Satan, sickness and nature

Mark 1:21-27 "The kingdom of God has come near."

Richard Bauckham: "Jesus was far from merely a teacher of Torah. He claimed God's authority to enact the arrival of God's kingdom".⁵

Authority to forgive sins Mark 2:2-11 The paralysed man

"Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁴ John Stott, *The Incomparable Christ*, (Leicester:IVP, 2001) 41.

⁵ Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: A Very Short Introduction*, 1. publ, Very Short Introductions 275 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 108.

Boundary-breaking encounters

The Woman at the Well - John 4

How does this encounter bring a change in perceptions?

How does this encounter reveal that Jesus is both fully human and divine?

"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." v10

How do I respond?

Upside down Kingdom Encounters.

Matthew 16:15-23

But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

What does Messiah mean?

V 21-23 How does Jesus redefine our expectations of the Messiah?

A journey of recognition

Every gospel encounter leads the reader on a journey of knowing who Jesus is until:

- The centurion says, "Surely this is the Son of God." (Mark 15:39)
- Doubting Thomas says, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)
- "It is true, the Lord has risen, just as he said". (Luke 24:34)

Why doesn't Jesus make us recognize him?

Jane Williams: The risen Jesus does not come to his enemies and force them to admit they were wrong and kneel before his transcendent aliveness; his risen body is not gleaming and burnished with light that cannot be hidden.⁶

⁶ Jane Williams, *The Merciful Humility of God: The 2019 Lent Book* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), 114.

Two Way Encounters. Jesus is always:

- asking questions, asking for faith, asking us to follow him
- sending us out in the power of His Spirit to do as he does.

John 20:21 *You must follow me..* Matthew 28:20 *Now go...*

To consider:

Have you ever met the living Christ in a gospel story?

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