
Encountering God

Jesus Part 1

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Review... Encountering God – not merely knowing about Him

- Understanding His nature and character is critical to us encountering Him
- **Father**
 - **Exodus 34:6-8**

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." *So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.*

Today – transitioning to the Son, Jesus

... beginning a journey into His Nature and Being

- today is going to lay the foundation for weeks to come...

“I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity... Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. Between Him and whoever else in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and his sentiments, the truth which he announces, his manner of convincing is not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things... One can absolutely find nowhere the imitation or the example of His life. I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or to explain it. Here everything is extraordinary.”¹

~ Napoleon Bonaparte

- **Jesus is** – “*incomparable, astonishing, He overawes, unexplainable, extraordinary,*” Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France 1804-15

**Ideas about Jesus are all over the board –
non-existence, just another philosopher/teacher –
Almighty God in human flesh.**

Our Goal – to reveal the truth of Jesus... so we can encounter Him.

¹ Cynthia Inniss, *Escaping Obscurity Napoleon Encounters Jesus* (Lulu.com, Jul 20, 2014) 150

The I AM Statements of Jesus

...what Jesus said about Himself

The Eight *I Am* Statements of Jesus are:

- **I AM**
- **I am** the Bread of Life
- **I am** the Light of the World
- **I am** the Door/Gate
- **I am** the Good Shepherd
- **I am** the Resurrection and the Life
- **I am** the Way, the Truth, the Life
- **I am** the Vine

It is the **Gospel of John** where the **I am** statements are found. John will take us on a revealing journey to Who Jesus is and what He does!

Jesus is the Word of God

- **John 1:1-3, 14**
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- Word is expression, revelation, voice — Jesus is the Word of God.
- He existed in the beginning, He predates creation, He is everlasting, without beginning of days, He's eternal — He's God!
- He's creator.
- He became flesh, human, and dwelt among us. Incarnation, God becoming man. Jesus is both fully God and fully man. Only-begotten, only-born, only-proceeding from this unique relationship with the Father.

Jesus' Pre-existence and divinity

Question — *Is there any indication in the Old Testament of Jesus' pre-existence and divinity?*

- **Genesis 1:1,26**
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."
 - God created, Jesus created, Jesus is God
 - *God said* — writer uses singular form of word for God

- God speaks in plural — “Let Us, make man, Our image, Our likeness”

**There was a heavenly conversation going on
between Diving Beings who would create man.**

The One God Is a Trinity

- **NOT multiple Gods**
 - **Deuteronomy 6:4**
Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!
- **NOT God talking to angels** because angels don't make or create, and they don't share God's image and likeness.
- other heavenly conversations: **Psalm 40:7-8, Psalm 110:1, Matthew 22:41-46**

Jesus saw Himself as a pre-existent divine person
in conversational fellowship with the Most High God.”²

~ Matthew Bates

Conclusion — the **One** God is a Trinity — **One** God, **Three** consubstantial, co-eternal, co-equal, distinct Persons revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- **NOT Three** separate gods, **NOT One** God becoming **Three** different Persons.
- **Triadic verses** are — all **three** Persons mentioned or seen in single verse, or immediate verses: **Jesus' baptism, Great Commission.**
- **1 Timothy 3:16**
And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.
 - *It is a controversial mystery, head-scratcher.*
- **Isaiah 55:8-9** God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours!

Jesus Clarifies Who He Is

I AM — Jesus is in heated debate with Pharisees, He calls them devils, they call Him a demonized Samaritan bastard — Jesus clarifies Who He is for them!

- **John 8:58-59**
Jesus said to them, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.**” Then they took up stones to throw at Him
- Jesus claims I AM name of God from **Exodus 3:13-14**
 - **Exodus 3:13-14**
Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of

² Matthew Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity* (OUP Oxford, Mar 12, 2015) 52

your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”
And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

- Eternal, Self-existent, God — depends on no one and nothing for His existence!
- **John 10:30-33**
“I and My Father are one.” Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”
- **John 14:8-11**
Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”
- **John 20:28**
And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

Summary

- ❖ Jesus is incomparable, astonishing, He overawes us, unexplainable, extraordinary.
- ❖ Jesus is One with the Father, He is the Word, Revelation, Voice of God to us.
- ❖ He cooperated with what He sensed God the Father was doing in the moment.
- ❖ Every wonderful, miraculous, compassionate deed Jesus did — He did because the Father showed Him to do it.

*Jesus isn't the happy hippy Messiah of the NT
making up for a grumpy grandpa God of the OT—
Father and Son cooperated in a mutual,
unified flow of blessing and power
to bring life, healing and salvation to mankind.*

So, because He is I AM —

He said I am the **Bread** of Life to *feed our souls*,
Light of the world to *deliver us from darkness*,
the **Door** that gives us *access to God*,
the **Good Shepherd** who *gives His life for the sheep*,
Resurrection and Life who *gives eternal life*,
the **Vine** who nourishes us to live *fruitful and full lives*.

**He's more than amazing
more than marvelous
more than miraculous could ever be
He's more than wonderful
that's what Jesus is to me.**

Discussion Questions

1. Read Napoleon Bonaparte's quote out loud. Does seeing Jesus through Bonaparte's eyes give you a different perspective of Jesus?
2. Which of Jesus' "I AM" statements resonate most personally with you?
3. What are "tridic" verses, and why are they important?
4. Read John 8:58-59. What does Jesus mean when He says that He was "before Abraham"?
5. Marvelous, miraculous, mystery, majesty — choose one of these words to talk about who Jesus is.

NOTES