

Our Encounters with God



All the encounters with God we find in scripture are given to encourage us to prepare ourselves for those moments when God breaks into our lives and speaks to us.

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world draws each of us into a miraculous moment when he forgives us and sets us free.

“Take heart, Child, your sins are forgiven.”

But that encounter is only the beginning. Our walk with God is sustained by a daily encounter all the way to the end of the journey. Then comes the Eternal Encounter.

Our initial encounter

It might begin when we meet a stranger....

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emma'us, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Luke 24

Our first encounter is always with the risen Lord.

The risen Lord can be wherever he chooses, assume whatever form he wishes. Jesus decides when it will happen, how he will speak to us.

At a moment of his choice the risen Lord “breaks through” to us and begins to speak.

At that moment Jesus is no longer separated from us by centuries and miles.

He’s right here!

He knows us by name.

He “understands our thoughts afar off.”

He takes us as we are and begins to guide us.



The fact that you are reading these words could mean that this has already happened to you, or that it soon will.

Our Daily Encounter

It is impossible to live a life of faith on the strength of that first encounter with the Lord.

Without daily renewal, actually a daily encounter with the Lord, our faith soon fades.

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.

Isaiah 50

Our Lord himself, in his days of flesh and blood, would rise “a great while before dawn” and go out to a solitary place to pray.

He teaches us to “*go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father in secret.*” i.e. Get alone with God.

And who should come to help us but the Lord Jesus himself!

“I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you.”

Our job is to simply make the time to be alone with God daily, cut off from all distractions.

When we do this, the Lord, through the Spirit, comes to us and guides us.

He helps us to pray. For we “do not know how to pray as we ought” (Romans 8)

He “opens to us the scriptures” as he did for those men on the road to Emmaus.

He speaks to us by whatever means he chooses, enlightening our minds, unlocking mysteries in the Psalms and the Prophets---and especially the gospels.

He refreshes us with the same Living Water he gave to the woman at the well.

The Lord can only do this if we take the time to be alone with him each day. So that he can open our ears “*to hear as those who are taught.*”



Our Eternal Encounter

Does it happen after we die?

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

I Corinthians 13

My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

Philippians 1

If we die before the Lord returns, we will certainly encounter him with a clarity far beyond anything we experience now.

And yet, until the resurrection we will still be “incomplete”.

Will we be in that “great multitude which no man can number”?

"These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 7

This vision puts those who have poured out their lives for the Lord together in a magnificent joyful unity before the throne of glory.

What else can this be but an encounter with the Master that belongs to eternal world?

Will we encounter the Master at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?



Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure" --for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Revelation 19

At last the Body of Christ will be “without spot or wrinkle”.

Refined by fire, these believers are feasting with the Master, who is once again drinking “the fruit of the vine” with them.

God grant that we may be at that table!

Then comes the resurrection.

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.”

John 5

There will be two final encounters: one joyful, the other terrifying. The joyful encounter will be based on what we did with the light we were given by God.

God’s light is mercy.

Did we receive it and walk in it?

If we did, the Lord who is our King will welcome us into his joy.



When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25)

Sometimes we feel that we're "on the outside looking in". But the Kingdom of God never leaves its citizens on the outside looking in.

Sooner or later every living soul is drawn into the presence of the living God and offered the gift of eternal life.

Eternal life begins the moment we encounter God's love, open our hearts and allow love to rule.

Eternal life continues with a daily encounter which sustains us.

Eternal life culminates in an Encounter with God that never ends.



Thy Kingdom come!

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Holy Lord, we want to encounter you again and again. What life, what joy could be ours if we would just open ourselves up to encounter you. Break through to us, become alive and real to us. Free us from whatever it is that keeps us from seeking you daily. And yes Lord, morning by morning may we awaken our ears to hear as ones who are taught, as ones who willingly take the cup you offer us, who take your mercy...revel in it and walk in it. Morning by morning sustain us, lift us from our weariness. May these daily encounters prepare us for our eternal encounter with you... as part of the great multitude, as those who are invited to feast with you, and as those who are called into an eternal encounter with you in your perfect Kingdom.

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