

## WHO IS THE CHRIST WE ENCOUNTER IN THE SCRIPTURES?

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### Sequence

- Images
- Aspects
- Resources
- Approaches

### Aspects

- Albert Schweitzer
- Raymond Brown
- Extremes
- Reductions
- Faith in Jesus

*He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.*

*The Colossians hymn professes that Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God—God's Son in whom all things were created, in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through whom all things were reconciled to God.*

*Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.*

### Resources

- The Synoptic Gospels
- The Fourth Gospel
- The (7 uncontested) Letters of St Paul
- Ephesians and Colossians
- The Letter to the Hebrews
- The Book of the Apocalypse

70 years				40 years				
Jesus 6bc – 30 ad		Paul 6bc / 35, 64 ad		Mark 70		Matthew 85-90	John 95-100	Luke 110-115
Galilee, Judea		Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy		Syria? Rome?		Syria	Syria, Asia Minor	Rome?
Augustus	Tiberius	Caligula Claudius	Nero	Vespasian	Titus	Domitian	Nerva, Trajan	Trajan,
31-14	14-37	37-41 41-54	54- 68	69-79	79- 81	81-96	96-98, 98-117	98-117

## Resources

- There is a time “gap”
- Change of culture and language
- Change of interests and concerns
- Religious DNA of each document is different

## Approaches

- Digging
- DNA

## Digging

- What is your experience of the document(s)?
- Did the writers use sources?
- Can we say what Jesus said and did?

## DNA

- Bearing in mind the archaeology:
- What is being claimed about Jesus?
- Why did it matter?
- Does it still matter today?

## DNA of each Gospel

- Mark: c. 69 / crisis / mixed / tragic messiah
- Matthew: c. 85 to 90 / Jewish Christian / rabbi
- John: c. 95 to 100 / mixed / Word made Flesh
- Luke: c. 110-115 / Gentiles / Prophet martyr

## So, who was Jesus?

- Galilean Jewish peasant
- Follower of John the Baptist
- Prophet in his own right
- Called God “Abba”
- Proclaimed the Kingdom of God
- Accepted his role in the coming kingdom
- His faithfulness discloses God’s faithfulness
- Crucified and raised from the dead

## Reading

- José Pagola “Jesus. An Historical Approximation”
- Frank Matera “New Testament Christology”
- Eugene Boring “Introduction to the New Testament”

## Does this matter?

- So good, it can’t be true
- So good, it must be true
- If...
- God’s love is shockingly, astonishingly involved in the human tragedy and God’s faithfulness is the very word we need to hear.

*I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realise that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms.*

## Conversation