



April 3, 2022

## “Word Encounter”

John 5:37-47

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### **Do We Encounter God Directly When We Read the Bible?**

It's complicated. Yes and no.

The doctrine of inspiration + the nature of language = yes

The nature of language + problem of subjectivity = no

### **Following the Logic of Jesus**

The Jews failure to recognize God in Jesus: John 5:37-38

Means they have not seen or heard or known God prior

Once you have seen/heard/absorbed God, you will recognize Him anywhere

This explains the failure of the Jews to see the Scriptures pointing to Jesus as Life

*Conclusion one: a prior encounter with God is required to encounter God in the Scriptures*

The Scriptures are not a source of life; they are signposts toward it: John 5:39-40

Life is found in direct connection to God/Jesus/Spirit: John 5:40

Failure to see the Scriptures in this light is failure to believe the Scriptures: John 5:45-47

*Conclusion two: Scriptures point away from themselves*

### **Scriptures Point Away from Themselves as Means to an End**

The Scriptures are not the encounter place; they point to the encounter place

*Hear and do:* Matthew 7:24,26; Joshua 1:8; 2 Tim 3:16; Psalm 119; John 14:15, 21, 23

When assembly instructions come alive

Here is the value of *scientific (analytic)* reading

Making the most careful map possible for the treasure hunting of doing/obedience

Caution: don't let your study get too far ahead of your practice

### **Encountering God in the Scriptures**

A prior work of God is required to find God in the Scriptures

How smells, sights, sounds can “bring you back” to old (even forgotten) experiences

“Recognizing” God in the Scriptures, reinforcing living encounters

Without prior experience, the Scriptures remain closed: see 1 Corinthians 2:12-14

Touch again the God that we have met (or who has met us)

Reading a letter from someone you know vs. reading a book of letters of a famous person

Here is the value of *intuitive (synthetic reading)* reading: seeing God in the moment

Caution: don't let your Bible reading mimic ouija boards or tarot cards