

The closer we get to God the more problematic it becomes, not only for ourselves but for other people. I'm thinking of mystics such as Margaret Porete and Meister Eckhart, the former burnt for her troubles and the latter narrowly escaping the same fate. And I'm thinking of Paul in his struggle to convince others of his true faith, his adherence to tradition, his apostleship, which leads him to the dramatic assertion that

*it was as though I was born when no one expected it*

or, more literally put, 'as though aborted'. And I am thinking of Thomas and Philip in their struggle to understand just who this man Jesus is and what it is that he is asking them to become. Disciples, surely, but able to perform even greater works than he does and works that not only imply that Jesus is in the Father and the Father in Jesus but that they too will share in this exalted status. And I'm, lastly, thinking of the scandal this causes, not only to ourselves as followers of Jesus, but to the Jews in general and people of other faiths, too. In short, it's an introduction into God as mystery not, one may add, into *understanding* God as mystery – for that would be an obvious contradiction – but simply to God as mystery unknown to us as such, or better, perhaps, as impossible for us to capture in words. At which point I stop.

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