

Ankeny UCC

The Meaning of Jesus Study 3/25/15

Jesus will come again in glory?

Remember our principles with both authors. Borg is looking for the story behind the gospel stories of Jesus, trying to understand what might have happened before the developing tradition of Christianity (and Paul's emphasis on the resurrection) modified the narrative.

Borg is looking for a plausible hypothesis that encompasses all of the gospel stories and the available archaeological and contextual evidence.

Jesus will come again in glory

What does this mean? What will this look like, or will it? Where is the evidence in the Bible?

How do we interpret the messages? What does it mean for us?

- I. What does the predicted coming of Jesus mean?
 - a. When?
 - i. Borg: Many think, and have thought, it imminent
 - ii. Wright: Can happen at any time. It is the fulfillment of God's promise of renewal
 - b. Where did the belief come from?
 - i. Borg: Jesus's talk about the coming of the Son of Man, or from the community in the chaos of 1st century Judah that could look like the leadup to the end times
 - ii. Wright: God's promise to renew heaven and earth, Jesus as final judge, Jewish expectation of return of God to Zion, talk of Jesus's presence.
 - c. What does it look like?
 - i. Wright: the merger of heaven and earth. We get glimpses of God's kingdom in Revelation and in Kings (Elijah). On earth, bodily resurrection and a merger of the realms. Revelation is not a picture of the future, but of heavenly realms
 - ii. Borg: well, Jesus won't return to a place, Jesus is already here.
 - d. So, what does all this mean?
 - i. Wright: Christ's return is not from afar. It's from within creation. There's no sense that we are escaping from earth into heaven. We are working towards a merger of earth and heavenly realms. What we have here are the birth pangs of the changing realms. So we work towards righteousness.
 - ii. Borg: Jesus is Lord, Jesus is with us, it is for us to act like it. The conflict of Revelation is between God and Empire. How we act in history matters, we will be judged on how we treat one another. Advent every year is a preparation for the coming of Christ celebrated by a second coming at Christmas of the Christ who is already there. Maybe this is a lesson.