

132, so then this brings up the question (which I'm relatively sure he will answer) as to why believers would *want* the resurrection to be a touchstone and foundation of their belief system. A plane of difference would be one potential reason—Judaism doesn't play on this line

132-133, a very useful way of framing his discussion

133, truly irreverent thought. Why has no one made a movie called "zombie Jesus" yet! (I spoke much too soon and out of turn---there appear to be three shorts with that title and, even better, a TV episode of some series is coming called "Zombie Jesus, Vampire Hunter")

134, some might say it is the mark of the core of a story that it did happen if there are so many different accounts of it

134, bottom, I haven't looked at this, but did Christianity split denominationally along gospel lines? i.e. followers of one particular gospel?

134-135, we come back to the Logos idea perhaps. You see, I will tell you something from the outside observer's perspective. In every Sunday church service I've ever attended, whatever is being read *that day* is followed with varying degrees of fervour as "the word of the Lord". Perhaps this is the ultimate triumph of faith over logic.

135, really? Why not? I actually think it would be quite a good exercise to pull together from the gospels the story that is most meaningful to you. This might be the point of the book so far that I have the most trouble with

135, middle. So, 2 things (more Spong "infection"). First, how do we know that one author wrote each gospel? How do we know where the final "edited" version might have differed from the original. Second, isn't one explanation that the gospels represented different subsets of the new religion that were trying to gain adherents and ascendancy. For me, possibly *the* most fascinating aspect of your religion is that it did coalesce and bring together all FOUR of these disparate and inconsistent documents into the codex of one religion. If it was Paul who was the progenitor of this synthesis, then perhaps that has to stand as his greatest accomplishment?

That said....are we looking at history repeating itself? I daresay that if I decided to have a word-by-word look at the various prophetic books, I would find some precise similar themes and "stories" that are told differently.

Do we know *where* each gospel was written? That might be important---he answers on the next page.

And a postscript from last chapter's thoughts---why did Judas only betray Jesus and not the rest of the disciples?

139, top, this view of particular language as important signposts is one that I can get onboard with. Many of my bible teachers have emphasized to us this kind of importance in writing when we see a phrase in the Torah that is used nowhere else—usually means added emphasis is to be ascribed

139, bottom, this raises a *really* interesting line of thought for me, an almost parallel track to the goat sin-offering. Why was Jesus not resurrected that same night? Did he have to stay dead three days in order to fully absorb and “flush out” our sins? Or his own? So that he could be resurrected as the avatar of the pure?

140, I've talked before about our tradition that the soul stays in the body for 3 days before ascending

146, a very, er, “judicial” and legal approach

147, bottom, all right---I'll play along with him for now

151, one questions or wonders whether the Romans would have permitted anyone to decently bury a crucified enemy of the state. Yes, we have the gospel record, but... (indeed at 157 etc)

154, also, let's not discount the strong tradition of playwriting and the recognition and glory that could come with it. Prose was possibly more powerful than fact at the time

156, a sort of ugly conclusion in its way—the transference of guilt from a powerful entity which a group did not wish to challenge to a subjugated one which could act as scapegoat.

162, I remind you that Josephus' sometimes-revisionist history should be taken with its half-pound of salt too. Both sides were currying favour with the powers-that-were

163, probably accurate, else why would he have been banished, relatively-speaking, to this mid-to-backwater realm...relatively speaking. We're not talking about a glamour post like Greece or Egypt or Europe, with valuable resources

164 top, but it's possible, no? 1) Jerusalem was apparently not the Roman seat---it was Caeseria. Pilate would likely have gone back there as soon after he saw the decree done as possible. 2) nothing says that sympathetic (or inattentive) guards (if any) at the crucifixes didn't allow a sortie during the night to take Jesus down and spirit him off elsewhere

164, middle, I won't swear by this, but in my understanding of my own personal faith, there is tacit permission to sin if it is the only way to do greater good.

165, middle. Wow. Maybe *I* should have written this book! (grin)

167, he walks in the same path as Bishop Spong here.

168-69, it is interesting that an equally cogent 'miracle' that another body could have appeared in the tomb and Jesus was still physically raised, is not even considered. But I will leave that alone in favour of tracking on the interesting journey he's clearly about to take us on