JESUS AND THE VICTORY OF GOD

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Category: Reviews

I've just finished reading NT Wrights monumental Jesus and the Victory of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God, Volume 2). At over four hundred pages long, and with every page consisting of dense argument and academic discussion this is not a book to be undertaken lightly (especially as you really should read The New Testament and the People of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God) first of all. However, it is a book that repays the time and effort it takes to read it.

I didn't take notes as I was reading, so I'm not able to give a detailed review, but I'm sure that there are plenty of those out there if you care to look for them. Equally, it's hard to find a snappy quote to illustrate what the book is all about. It really isn't a sound-bite book. For me, this book marks something of a turning point; I don't think I'll ever read the Gospels in quite the same way again. Wright firmly roots Jesus in the world of first century Judaism and in doing so raises huge questions about the way in which I have traditionally read and understood the parables. He also illustrates that Jesus' actions were far more symbolic than I had ever understood them to be.

There are some things about Wright's views on the Gospels that leave me slightly uneasy, but to be honest, I just don't know enough about second temple Judaism to be able to argue with him - but his book has opened up a whole new world of scholarship - sadly I'll never have the time or leisure to get to know it better. For now, I'm eager to start on The Resurrection of the Son of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 3) which (rather worryingly) seems to be as long as the last two books put together.

I realise that most people won't want to sit down and read this series of books (though if you are a Christian and a historian, you have no excuse) but you can profit from some of the material in them by listening to four of Wright's lectures. Sue and I listened to these in one sitting (it was a long sitting) on holiday this year - they are wonderful.

- Jesus and the Kingdom (8.5MB MP3)
- Jesus and the Cross (8.2MB MP3)
- Jesus and God (10.4MB MP3)
- Jesus and the World's True Light (9.8MB MP3)

I also, can't recommend highly enough that everyone read Wright's book on heaven, hell and the last things, Surprised by Hope. If you think that the *Left Behind* series gives an accurate account of biblical eschatology, then you must read Surprised by Hope before you read any other book.