

The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity

Thomas Sheehan

Synopsis:

Thomas Sheehan analyses the historical background of Jesus and his teachings, and finds, amidst variously-conceived messianic expectations among Jews of the time, the probable content of what Jesus taught: a message of God's definitive presence among humankind, with radical implications for social justice and personal ethics. Sheehan argues that Jesus thought of himself not as God or Christ but as God's eschatological prophet proclaiming the arrival of God's kingdom, that the resurrection had nothing to do with Jesus coming back to life, and that the affirmation that Jesus was divine first arose among his followers long after his death.

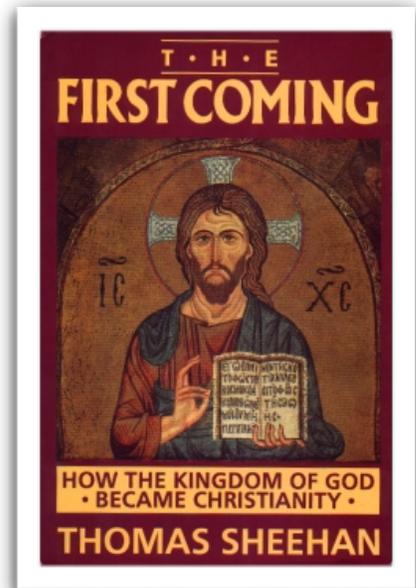
This bold and well-argued theory rescues the message and person of Jesus from the literalist absurdities of contemporary fundamentalism and recovers the social and ethical significance of what Jesus called the "kingdom of God." In making its case, the book leads the reader through the basics of modern Scripture scholarship, as well as the development of christology within first-century Christianity. An excellent bibliography and an abundance of end-notes provide resources for further research on these and related topics.

Edition:

This is an electronic reproduction of the first hard copy edition (now out of print) of Thomas Sheehan's *The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity*, published originally by Random House, New York, in 1986. The present text was scanned and edited by Richard Carrier. The original pagination has been preserved, using visible line breaks to indicate page breaks. The original page number appears above the corresponding material, just beneath the previous page break. In every case where a word was broken between pages, the entire word now appears on the "page" in which it began in the original text. Spelling and punctuation errors found in the original printing have been corrected here. However, new errors may have crept in during the reproduction process. If you notice any mistakes, please notify Richard Carrier so he can correct them at once.

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