

In my earlier post I talked about the seminar I am now leading at the National Humanities Center, and mentioned the various primary (i.e., ancient) texts we're discussing over the course of our three weeks together. These cover a range of books that did not "make it in" to the New Testament: non-canonical Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses. Terrific and terrifically interesting books, even if they never did become Scripture in the long run (many of them were in fact considered to be Scripture by one group or another during the early years of the church; that is one of the issues we are discussing in the seminar.)

For part of each seminar we are talking about the meaning and interpretation of these texts: how does one understand the giant Jesus in the Gospel of Peter? The three - or is it four - Christs in the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter? The nature of the sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas (are they best seen as Gnostic?). The view of Jesus in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (is he a supernatural brat? Or a serious foreshadowing of the adult Jesus?) etc. etc. etc. - tons of issues of real interest for these various books.

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