

Emergent pastor Brian McLaren feels about the end times.

“The phrase “the Second Coming of Christ” never actually appears in the Bible. Whether or not the doctrine to which the phrase refers deserves rethinking, a popular abuse of it certainly needs to be named and rejected. If we believe that Jesus came in peace the first time, but that wasn’t his “real” and decisive coming – it was just a kind of warm-up for the real thing – then we leave the door to envisioning a second coming that will be characterized by violence, killing, domination, and eternal torture. This vision reflects a *deconversion*, a return to trust in the power of Pilate, not the unarmed truth that stood before Pilate, refusing to fight. This eschatological understanding of a violent second coming leads us to believe (as we’ve said before) that in the end, even God finds it impossible to fix the world apart from violence and coercion; no one should be surprised when those shaped by this theology behave accordingly.

If we remain charmed by this kind of eschatology, we will be forced to see the nonviolence of the Jesus of the Gospels as a kind of strategic fake – out, like a feigned retreat in war, to be followed up by crushing a blow of so – called redemptive violence in the end. The gentle Jesus of the first coming becomes a kind of trick Jesus, a fake – me – out Messiah, to be replaced by the true jihadist Jesus of a violent second coming.

“This is why I believe that many of our current eschatologies, intoxicated by dubious interpretations of John’s Apocalypse, are not only ignorant and wrong, but dangerous and immoral.” Brian McLaren

“In this light, a god who mandates an intentional supernatural disaster leading to unparalleled genocide is hardly worthy of belief, much less worship. How can you ask your children...to honor a deity so uncreative, over reactive, and utterly capricious regarding life?” Brian McLaren

The Bible is very clear that Jesus will in fact return to judge the world. Jesus himself even claimed he would return again to judge the world. The fact that Brian McLaren denies the second coming and calls Jesus a Jihadi Jesus is shocking.