

# JESUS INTERRUPTED

*The interruption of his death and the reversal of his resurrection*

Two processions entered Jerusalem . . . One was a peasant procession, the other an imperial procession. From the east, Jesus rode a donkey down the Mount of Olives, cheered by his followers. Jesus was from the peasant village of Nazareth, his message was about the kingdom of God, and his followers came from the peasant class. They had journeyed to Jerusalem from Galilee, about a hundred miles to the north, a journey that is the central section and the central dynamic of Mark's gospel. Mark's story of Jesus and the kingdom of God has been aiming for Jerusalem, pointing toward Jerusalem. It has now arrived. On the opposite side of the city, from the west, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, entered Jerusalem at the head of a column of imperial cavalry and soldiers. Jesus's procession proclaimed the kingdom of God; Pilate's proclaimed the power of empire. (Borg, Marcus J.; Crossan, John Dominic; *The Last Week*; Kindle Locations 116-121).

Empire promises peace through violent force. Eschaton promises peace through nonviolent justice. Each requires programs and processes, strategies and tactics, wisdom and patience. If you consider that peace through victory has been a highly successful vision across recorded history, why would you abandon it now? But whether you think it has been successful or not, you should at least know there has always been present an alternative option— peace through justice. (p. 75). (*The First Christmas*; Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan)

The terrible truth is that our world has never established peace through victory. Victory establishes not peace, but lull. Thereafter, violence returns once again, and always worse than before. And it is that escalator violence that then endangers our world. (p. 166). (*The First Christmas*; Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan)

**Zechariah 9.9-10**—Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt [young male horse], the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim **peace** to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth

**Luke 19.41-44**—As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you **peace**—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come on you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.”

**Mark 11.15-17**—On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

**Brown and Parker, For God So Loved the World?**: “The central image of Christ on the cross as the savior of the world communicates the message that suffering is redemptive.” (p. 2)

Salvific Teachings of Jesus

Survival  
Resistance  
Liberation  
Restoration  
Transformation

“To set the oppressed free.” Luke 4:18

All Texts Quoted from the NIV Unless Otherwise Noted

**Acts 2.22-24**—You crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

**Acts 2.32-33**—This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

**Acts 3.12-16**—You handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, but God raised from the dead.

**Acts 4.10-11**— . . . Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead.

**Acts 5.30-32**—The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.

**Acts 10.36-43**—They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day.

**Acts 13.35-38**—Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead . . . And we bring you the **good news** that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus.

The way to life is to take hold of life.

Jesus did not die so you could go to heaven.

Salvific Teachings of Jesus  
Salvation Work was Interrupted by the Cross  
The Resurrection Overturned the Interruption  
Community Lived on Implementing the Teachings in Hope

**Luke 24.1-6**—On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!

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**Elizabeth Bettenhausen, Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse:** “Christian theology has long imposed upon women a norm of imitative self-sacrifice base on the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. Powerlessness is equated with faithfulness. When the cross is also interpreted as the salvific work of an all-powerful paternal deity, women’s well being is as secure as that of a child cowering before an abusive father.” (p. xii; edited by Joanne Carlson Brown & Carole R. Bohn)

**Brown and Parker, For God So Loved the World?:** “The problem with this theology is that it asks people to suffer for the sake of helping evildoers see their evil ways. It puts concern for the evildoers ahead of concern for the victim of evil. It makes victims the servants of the evildoers’ salvation.” (Ibid., p. 20.)

**Delores S. Williams, Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk:** “In this sense Jesus represents the ultimate surrogate figure; he stands in the place of someone else: sinful humankind. Surrogacy, attached to this divine personage, thus takes on an aura of the sacred. It is therefore fitting and proper for black women to ask whether the image of a surrogate-God has salvific power for black women or whether this image supports and reinforces the exploitation that has accompanied their experience with surrogacy.” (p.127)

**Joan Carlson Brown & Rebecca Parker; Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse:** “It is not the acceptance of suffering that gives life; it is commitment to life that gives life. The question, moreover, is not Am I willing to suffer? but Do I desire fully to live? This distinction is subtle and, to some, specious, but in the end it makes a great difference in how people interpret and respond to suffering.” (p.18, edited by Joanne Carlson Brown & Carole R. Bohn)

**Elizabeth Bettenhausen; Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse:** “Several years ago I asked a group of seminarians to choose New Testament stories about Jesus and rewrite them imagining that Jesus had been female. The following recreation of the passion story of Luke 22.54-65 was on woman’s knowing by the heart. ‘They arrested the Christ woman and led her away to the Council for questioning. Some of her followers straggled along to find out what was to become of her. There were seven women and two men followers. (The men followers were there mainly to keep watch over their sisters.) Someone from among the crowd asked a question of a man follower, ‘Haven’t I seen you with this woman? Who is she, and what is your relationship with her?’ He replied defensively, ‘She is a prostitute, she has had many men. I have seen her with many!’ The men who were guarding the Christ [woman] slapped her around and made fun of her. They told her to use magic powers to stop them. They blindfolded her and each them in turn raped her and afterward jeered, ‘Now, prophethess, who was in you? Which one of us? Tell us that!’ Thy continued to insult her. (Kandice Joyce) After this story was read aloud, a science surrounded the class and made us shiver. Ever since, I have wondered Would women ever imagine forming a religion around the rape of a woman? Would we ever conjure gang-rape as a salvific event for other women? What sort of god would such an event reveal?” (p. xi-xii, edited by Joanne Carlson Brown & Carole R. Bohn)

**Delores S. Williams, Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk:** It seems more intelligent and more scriptural to understand that redemption had to do with God, through Jesus, giving humankind new vision to see the resources for positive, abundant relational life. Redemption had to do with God, through the ministerial vision, giving humankind the ethical thought and practice upon which to build positive, productive quality of life. Hence, the kingdom of God theme in the ministerial vision of Jesus does not point to death; it is not something one has to die to reach. Rather, the kingdom of God is a metaphor of hope God gives those attempting to right the relations between self and self, between self and others, between self and God as prescribed in the sermon on the mount, in the golden rule and in the commandment to show love above all else. (pp. 130-131)



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