

GOD LOVES THEM

Jesus and the Advocate God

“Metanoesein kai pistos emoi geneses-thai.” - The Life Of Flavius Josephus, (Thackery 110)

Pyramid Social Structures

1Corinthians 5.3—For though absent in body, I am present in spirit;

Colossians 2.5—For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit,

“He who fights monsters should see to it that he himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.”
— Friedrich Nietzsche

Mark 1.14.15— Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

Luke 4.18—The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,

Matthew 10.7—As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’

Matthew 5.1-3—When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5.4—Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5.5—Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Matthew 5.6—Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be filled.

Matthew 5.7—Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Matthew 5.8—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Matthew 5.9—Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5.10—Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice’s sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5.11-12—Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6.20-26—Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are

That the world might be healed . . . — John 3.17

*All texts quoted from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

When the gospel says, “The last will be first, and the first will be last,” despite the fact it is counterintuitive to our cultural presuppositions, it is invariably good news to those who are last, and at least problematic news to those who see themselves as first.”— Peter Gomes, *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: What’s So Good about the Good News?*

“Good news to some will almost inevitably be bad news to others. In order that the gospel in the New Testament might be made as palatable as possible to as many people as possible, its rough edges have been shorn off and the radical edge of Jesus’ preaching as been replaced by a respectable middle, of which “niceness” is now God. When Jesus came preaching, it was to proclaim the ends of things as they are and the breaking in of things that are to be: the status quo is not to be criticized; it is to be destroyed.” - Peter Gomes

God was not on the side of Caiaphas, Pilate, or Herod. God was in the One suspended shamefully on Roman Cross.

The Messiah and the hope of the Hebrew People
The Gospel - Jesus is Lord

Pyramids of Privilege and Oppression

Advocate God / Advocate People

People who believe in God are 73% less likely to politically and socially confront injustice in this life.

you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Mark 10.21—Jesus, looking at him, **LOVED HIM** and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

Why Was Jesus Crucified?

Acts 2.22-36—You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, given to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, 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 . . . This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses . . . Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both **LORD** and **MESSIAH**, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Luke 23.43—He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in **PARADISE**. [Paradeiso]”

Ezekiel 28.13—You were in **Eden**, the **PARADISE** of God;

Isaiah 51.3—For the **LORD** will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like **Eden**, her desert like the **PARADISE** of the **LORD**; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

John 19.30—When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “**IT IS FINISHED.**” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

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Gospel of the Oppressors

The gospel is first and foremost that “God loves Me” (Me meaning those in a position of privilege).

The gospel is about post-mortem assurance about things like getting to heaven or escaping hell, keeping those who suffer oppression passive looking forward to “bliss” in the afterlife.

Focuses on proving the historicity of story details within the Jesus story.

A private, personal relationship with God that is inwardly focused

Hierarchical authority structures

Justice is punitive and was satisfied by Jesus on the cross.

Has an aversion to justice and focuses on mercy, grace, and forgiveness instead

Justice is seen as standing in opposition to mercy and love.

Mercy, grace, and forgiveness are things that we receive from God and that give us post-mortem assurance.

Eschatological focus on the destruction of the world and being a part of an elite, special, privileged group that escapes.

“Fire” is punitive and retributive

Gospel of the Oppressed

The gospel is the entire Jesus story, which climaxes in the revelation that “this Jesus, whom the oppressors crucified, God has raised back to life, and this Jesus is Lord.”

The gospel is about Jesus’ egalitarian kingdom being restored on earth here and now, healing the world, putting all injustice, oppression, and violence to right (Matthew 6.10).

Focuses on demonstrating the intrinsic value of the ethical teachings of Jesus.

An ever deepening encounter with God that focuses one outside oneself toward the present restoration

Mutual egalitarian community

Justice is restorative and was initiated, begun, started, commenced, instituted, launched, set in motion, established, founded, brought in, ushered in, introduced once again, and inaugurated on earth by Jesus through the power of his death and resurrection over against the powers of injustice, violence, and oppression.

Deeply focused on justice, the restoration of which is promised for the oppressed

Justice is the natural expression of mercy and love.

Mercy, grace, and forgiveness come from God but are what we are called to show our fellow humans who are oppressing us.

Eschatologically focused on a renewed and restored heaven reunited with a renewed and restored earth.

“Fire” is restorative.

Evangelism focuses on the threat of hell, the reward of heaven, and the love of God in saving humanity from God's imposed punishment.

Focused on enemies getting their due (vengeance)

Violence is an acceptable means of maintaining and preserving a position of privilege.

Salvation means being allowed into heaven by ontological certitude (being certain of what exists and is true and what doesn't and is not).

Human suffering is a huge philosophical problem for a God who is in control.

A God who desires sacrifice rooted in sociological scapegoating

God is love (means something very different for the oppressors)

Evangelism focuses on putting on display the beauty of what the world changed by Jesus and his teachings actually looks like, recognizing and honoring this beauty already at work in some, while endeavoring to inspire those in whom this beauty is not present to join the revolution.

Focused on enemies being won and restored along with the restoration of justice to the oppressed.

Nonviolent direct action rooted in enemy love is the means of saving even our oppressors from systemic injustice.

Salvation is seen as the healing and restoration of this world, which all are invited to participate in.

Human suffering is a tangible and formidable enemy that God is at work bringing to an end.

A God who never desired or required sacrifice but desires us to follow the way of mercy instead (Mathew 9.13; 12.7)

God is love (means something very different for the oppressed)