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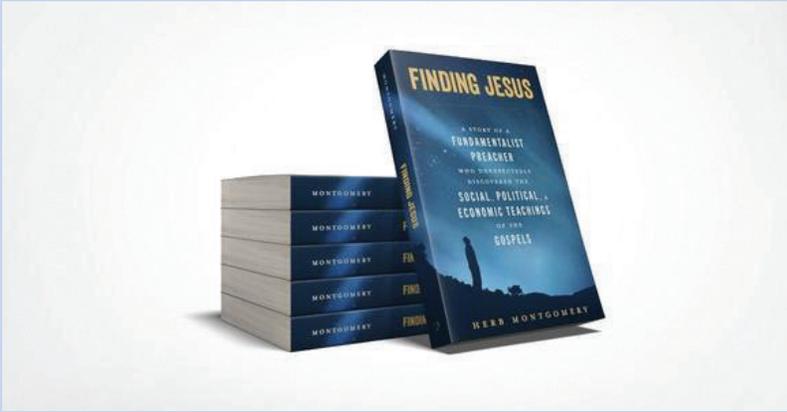
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@HerbMontgomery



Herb Montgomery



## ***Finding Jesus is Here!***

It's here! Herb's new book, *Finding Jesus: A story of a Fundamentalist preacher who unexpectedly discovered the social, political, and economic teachings of the Gospels*, is now available at [renewedheartministries.com](http://renewedheartministries.com)!

Here is what one reader wrote in:

**"Your book is everything that I have been looking for! I need four more copies to share. I have some people I really need to give this to. I want them to read it, too!"**

*Pages: 210; Price: \$14.95 (USD)*

Available now at [renewedheartministries.com](http://renewedheartministries.com)



## **Shared Table Bowls Have Shipped!**

We're happy to announce they are shipped and will be on your doorsteps any day now!.

From all of us here at RHM, we want to thank everyone who participated this year. Thank you for your support of our work.



***New episodes every Friday!***

### **The Jesus For Everyone podcast.**

A weekly podcast where we talk about the intersection of faith and societal justice and what a first-century, Jewish prophet of the poor from Galilee offers us today in our work of compassion, love and justice.

**[renewedheartministries.com/  
Podcasts](http://renewedheartministries.com/Podcasts)**



Photo by Pixabay

*Form functions. Whatever form we use for God and however we choose to characterize Jesus in the scriptures translates into political, economic and social functions that can shape a world that is safe for everyone...those forms can function to marginalize people or center those made most vulnerable."*



## On the Foal of a Donkey

by Herb Montgomery  
*Originally Posted March 31, 2023*

With Palm Sunday approaching, our reading this week is from Matthew:

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the your Sovereign needs them, and he will send them right away."

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

"Say to Daughter Zion,  
'See, your Sovereign comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the don-key and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of your Sovereign!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." (Matthew 21:1-11)

This coming week is Holy Week for many Western Christians, and it begins with Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the Sunday before his execution on the Friday we now call Good Friday. The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in our reading this week is from Matthew but is also found in each of the synoptic Gospels (see Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40).

Matthew's version of the story, adapted from Mark's version, uses two passages from the Hebrew scriptures:

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, 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. (Zechariah 9:9-10)

And

LORD, save us! [Hosanna]

LORD, grant us success! [Hosanna]

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.

From the house of the LORD we bless you.

The LORD is God,

and he has made his light shine on us.

With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession

up to the horns of the altar. (Psalms 118:25-27)

As we read from Matthew this week, I've chosen to use the word "Sovereign" instead of "Lord." Words matter, and too often today when Christians read the word "Lord," they read it as a purely religious term. But when the gospels were written, it was a much more political term. There are political implications in our passage, not simply religious ones.

Jesus was contrasting fidelity to the God of the Torah, the people's Sovereign, with the elites' complicity with the Roman empire and their chasing Caesar as their sovereign. Although this complicity with Roman imperialism brought great benefit to the elites in Jesus' society, it did immeasurable damage to rural agricultural farming families as well as the urban poor and working classes. The benefit to the few and powerful came at the expense of the masses. Jesus offered another way for his society to function, to care

*continued on page 4*

“...Donkey” continued from page 3

for the marginalized and practice a preferential option for those who being most harmed.

I believe that using the term sovereign in our passage highlights the contrasts between the politics of Jesus and the politics of Rome. The synoptic gospels called people to make a choice between whom they'd embrace as their Sovereign: the God of the Torah as Jesus presented Him, or Caesar.

Today we could make similar comparisons, but it's worth a word of caution here. It's not enough to simply say something like “Jesus versus America.” That language is very popular among some Christians but it doesn't go far enough and risks making both America and Jesus in our own image. If your Jesus is compassionate and just, that might not seem too bad. But simply trying to affirm your own prejudices and bigotries isn't enough.

Today we could make similar comparisons, but it's worth a word of caution here. It's not enough to simply say something like “Jesus versus America.” That language is very popular among some Christians but it doesn't go far enough and risks making both America and Jesus in our own image. If your Jesus is compassionate and just, that might not seem too bad. But simply trying to affirm your own prejudices and bigotries isn't enough.

We need to contrast the ethics and values we read in the Jesus story with the political, social and economic

options we have before us today. Our work must then go deeper. We must compare Jesus' ethics of compassion, resource-sharing, wealth redistribution, egalitarianism, non-violence, universal love, and more with the rule of the wealthy and privileged, authoritarianism, and the economics of capitalism, socialism, democratic socialism, and others prevalent in our world.

I also find current interpretations of Psalm 118 and Jesus' death at the end of Holy Week problematic. In its original context, Psalms 118 is a triumphal psalm that speaks of obtaining victory over the surrounding nations:

All the nations surrounded me,  
but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

They surrounded me on every side,  
but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

They swarmed around me like bees,  
but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns;

in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

I was pushed back and about to fall,  
but the LORD helped me.

The LORD is my strength and my defense;

he has become my salvation.

Shouts of joy and victory  
resound in the tents of the righteous:

“The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!

The LORD's right hand is lifted high;  
I will not die but live,  
and will proclaim what the LORD has done. (Psalms 118:10-17)

Why is this psalm in the gospels? First, Jesus doesn't enter Jerusalem as a warrior returning from a military victory. Second, there's that last phrase, “I will not die but live.” This doesn't seem to be the way Jesus' week ended. Jesus doesn't gain the victory over Rome, but instead ends up on a Roman cross. By the end of the week Rome wins.

This is why, for me, the resurrection is such an important story element. The resurrection tells us that the crucifixion of Jesus on Roman cross was not the Divine intention. It was Rome's doing, an act of state violence intended to silence and stop Jesus. Yet this unjust execution ends up, three days later, being a mere interruption. It fails to stop Jesus. The resurrection undoes, reverses, and triumphs over everything accomplished through Jesus' death and causes Jesus' teachings to live on in the lives of his followers. This is why for me, the resurrection is much more saving than Jesus' dying. Jesus didn't simply come to die: he came to show us how to live. And even though he was murdered and his modeling and demonstration ignored, life still triumphs over death, love triumphs over hatred, sharing triumphs over greed, and inclusion triumphs over fear of differences.

Rather than associating Jesus with the psalmist's words, “I will not die but live,” we could imagine Jesus, upon his triumphal entry, saying instead, “At their hands I may die, but nonetheless, I will live.”

Scholars are divided on whether the historical Jesus actually did the things in this weeks' story or whether Mark created a narrative that Matthew and Luke copied later.

Personally, I find a lot of life in imagining a Jesus who, taking his own cue from Zachariah 9, uses Zechariah's form (a donkey) to protest Roman imperial rule for his own entry into

## Weekly HeartGroup on Zoom Every Wednesday Night!

Each Wednesday evening, Glendale City Church hosts a Zoom HeartGroup led by Herb Montgomery. Our discussion each week will focus on the content in Renewed Heart Ministries weekly eSight articles and the *Jesus For Everyone* podcast published each Friday.

Each Zoom session will be on Wednesdays at 7pm Pacific/10pm Eastern.

To receive the link for the Zoom meeting, email us at [info@renewedheartministries.com](mailto:info@renewedheartministries.com).



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## SOCIAL JESUS

*A Blog Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Societal Justice*



## Last month's "Social Jesus" Blog on Patheos



### ***Politics of Palm Sunday, Part 1 of On the Foal of a Donkey***

"Words matter. Often today when Christians read this word they read it as a purely religious term. In the gospels, it was a much more political term."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/part1-on-the-foal-of-a-donkey/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/part1-on-the-foal-of-a-donkey/)

### ***Palm Sunday Ethics, Part 2 of On the Foal of a Donkey***

"As we read from Matthew this week for Palm Sunday, our work must then go deeper. We must compare the ethical options we have before us today."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/3/part2-on-the-foal-of-a-donkey/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/3/part2-on-the-foal-of-a-donkey/)

### ***Palm Sunday and a Contrast of Values, Part 3 of On the Foal of a Donkey***

"This Palm Sunday, we are reminded that life still triumphs over death, love triumphs over hatred, sharing triumphs over greed, and inclusion triumphs over fear of differences."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/part3-on-the-foal-of-a-donkey/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/part3-on-the-foal-of-a-donkey/)



### ***Lazarus' Resurrection, Part 1 of Lazarus and Choosing Love Over Injustice Series***

"One the biggest differences in John is the story of Lazarus as the reason Jesus was arrested and executed."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/lazarus-choosing-love-over-injustice-part1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/lazarus-choosing-love-over-injustice-part1/)

### ***Apocalypticism and John's Jesus, Part 2 of Lazarus and Choosing Love Over Injustice Series***

"Jewish apocalyptic teaching included the belief that at some future point, all injustice, violence, and oppression would be put right."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/lazarus-choosing-love-over-injustice-part2/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/lazarus-choosing-love-over-injustice-part2/)

### ***A Story of Hope, Part 3 of Lazarus and Choosing Love Over Injustice***

"This is an ancient story of hope. Today, we still need hope that our best inclinations as human beings can win over our worst inclinations."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/3/lazarus-choosing-love-over-injustice-part3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/3/lazarus-choosing-love-over-injustice-part3/)



### ***John Chapter 9 and Our Need To Tell A Better Story (Part 1 of 3)***

"In John Chapter 9, some things are different from later Gnosticism, and there are many things in common."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/john-chapter-9-part1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/john-chapter-9-part1/)

### ***John Chapter 9 and Our Need To Tell A Better Story (Part 2 of 3)***

"This is important because of the atrocities by Christians against the Jewish community that can be traced back to stories like these."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/john-chapter-9-part2/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/john-chapter-9-part2/)

### ***John Chapter 9 and Our Need To Tell A Better Story (Part 3 of 3)***

"All in all, John chapter 9 is a reminder to me that today, we need to tell the Jesus story in better ways than this chapter does."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/john-chapter-9-part3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/john-chapter-9-part3/)



### ***A World That Is Safe for Everyone (Part 1 of 3)***

"As we consider a world that is safe for everyone, our reading explains why this community included women seen as less than within patriarchal societies."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/world-safe-for-everyone-part1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/world-safe-for-everyone-part1/)

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*"Social Jesus" continued from page 5*

### ***A World That Is Safe for Everyone (Part 2 of 3)***

"A world that is safe for everyone means including those presently marginalized, a theme that Jesus followers today could learn a lot from."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/a-world-that-is-safe-for-everyone-part-2-of-3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/a-world-that-is-safe-for-everyone-part-2-of-3/)

### ***A World That Is Safe for Everyone (Part 3 of 3)***

"The path we are set on assists us in transforming our world into a just, safe, compassionate world large enough to hold all our differences."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/world-safe-for-everyone-part3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/world-safe-for-everyone-part3/)



### ***A Spiritual Awakening that Establishes Justice (Part 1 of 3)***

"This week's reading points to a spiritual awakening that establishes justice, within an artfully combined narrative."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/spiritual-awakening-that-establishes-justice-part1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/spiritual-awakening-that-establishes-justice-part1/)

### ***A Spiritual Awakening that Establishes Justice (Part 2 of 3)***

"This way of understanding our world has not historically birthed good fruit. It tends to create less regard for people's bodily experiences."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/spiritual-awakening-that-establishes-justice-part2/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/spiritual-awakening-that-establishes-justice-part2/)

### ***A Spiritual Awakening that Establishes Justice (Part 3 of 3)***

"This binary contrast quickly becomes an opiate for our world's injustice and does not inspire us to get to work creating change."

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/spiritual-awakening-that-establishes-justice-part-3-of-3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/03/spiritual-awakening-that-establishes-justice-part-3-of-3/)

*"...Donkey" continued from page 4*

Jerusalem. His arrival on a donkey signals the way Pilate and others would have ridden into Jerusalem riding a military war horse followed by military forces parading Roman banners.

Jesus' vision in the synoptic gospels for how we organize human society was so different from Rome's. And it was these two ways of shaping a society, whether of domination, exploitation, and control or whether through mutuality, sharing, equality and a distributive justice for all, even those Rome's present system marginalized and made vulnerable.

I've chose to use the term "Sovereign" in this week's reading to contrast the Jesus of Matthew's gospel with other sovereigns like Rome that the Jesus community saw competing for Jesus followers' fidelity. Form functions.

Whatever form we use for God and however we choose to characterize Jesus in the scriptures translates into political, economic and social functions that can shape a world that is safe for everyone whatever their class, gender, gender expression, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Alternatively, those forms can function to politically, economically, and or socially marginalize some people while privileging or empowering others.

Today, what form for Jesus and the Divine could bring the most justice and healing for you?

## **HeartGroup Application**

1. Share something that spoke to you from this week's eSight/Podcast episode with your HeartGroup.
2. What form for Jesus and the Divine could bring the most justice and healing for you? Share with your group.
3. What can you do this week, big or small, to continue setting in motion the work of shaping our world into a safe, compassionate, just home for everyone?

Thanks for checking in with us, today.

You can find Renewed Heart Ministries on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. If you haven't done so already, please

follow us on your chosen social media platforms for our daily posts. Also, if you enjoy listening to the Jesus for Everyone podcast, please like and subscribe to the JFE podcast through the podcast platform you use and consider taking some time to give us a review. This helps others find our podcast as well.

Also I want to share that we are partnering in a new weekly YouTube show called "Just Talking." Each week, Todd Leonard and I will be talking about the gospel lectionary reading for the upcoming weekend. We'll be talking about each reading in the context of love, inclusion, and societal justice. Our hope is that our talking will be just talking (as in justice) and that during our brief conversations each week you'll be inspired to also do more than just talking.

If you teach from the lectionary each week, or if you're just looking for some thoughts on the Jesus story from a more progressive perspective within the context of social justice, check it out, you might like it. You can find **JustTalking** each week on YouTube at [youtube.com/@herbandtoddjusttalking](https://youtube.com/@herbandtoddjusttalking). Please like, subscribe, hit the notification button, and leave us a comment.

And if you'd like to reach us here at Renewed Heart Ministries through email, you can reach us at [info@renewedheartministries.com](mailto:info@renewedheartministries.com).

My new book, *Finding Jesus: A story of a fundamentalist preacher who unexpectedly discovered the social, political, and economic teachings of the Gospels* is now also available at [renewedheartministries.com](https://renewedheartministries.com)

Right where you are, keep living in love, choosing compassion, taking action, and working toward justice.

I love each of you dearly. ■

**RENEWED  
HEART  
MINISTRIES**



The work of helping people find life-giving ways to live out their faith through love, compassion, and justice are needed now more than ever. At Renewed Heart Ministries, we provide resources of faith and healing with the aim of renewing hope and inspiring action as we allow the Jesus story to inform each of us as we work together to shape our world into a compassionate, just and safe home for everyone.

Renewed Heart Ministries is a 501(c)3, grassroots ministry on the margins that prioritizes the needs of marginalized communities, especially those who have been the recipients of misinformed, faith-based harm. Your support enables us to be a life-giving, healing light in our faith communities and continue to be a voice for desperately needed change.

***You get to decide what shape our faith communities take and what voices get to be heard.***

You can support Renewed Heart ministries with a one-time gift or by becoming one of our monthly contributors. Your donation can be made online at [renewedheartministries.com](http://renewedheartministries.com) or by mail at:

Renewed Heart Ministries  
PO Box 1211  
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Please make sure you are receiving all of RHM's free resources by going to our website and clicking "sign up."

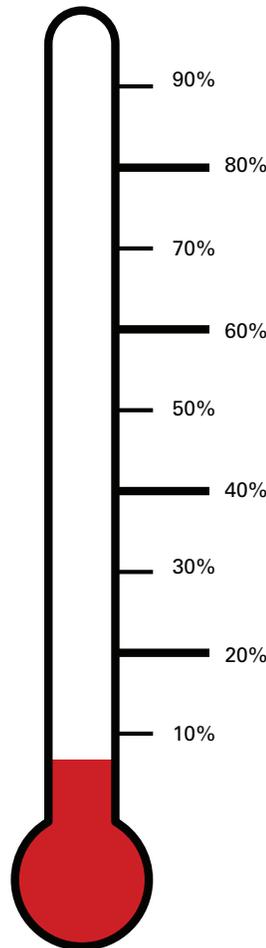
And **THANK YOU** for reading,

listening to, sharing and supporting RHM's work. Thank you for the decisions you make every day to make our world a safer, compassionate, just home for everyone. Thank you for your dedication to engaging our world and the care you demonstrate, and for being such an important part of our community.

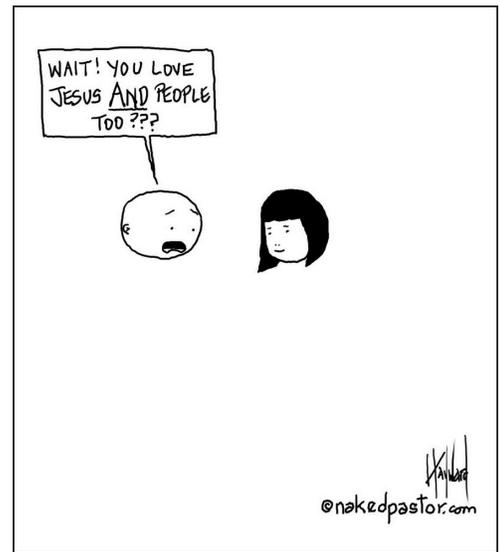
**Together, we are making a difference.**

**2023 Projected Budget  
Goal: \$150,000.00**

**Donations Received  
Thru February 2023:  
\$11,570.64**



**Whether you give \$5 or \$5,000,  
every amount helps us to  
continue our work.**



**Are you receiving  
all of RHM's  
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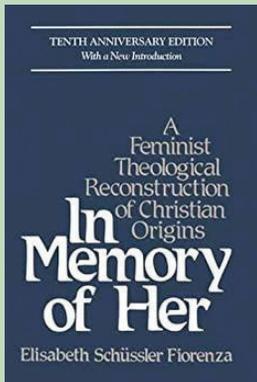
## Upcoming Events

**APRIL 22, 2023**  
**Good News Fellowship**  
(via Zoom)  
Toronto, Ontario Canada  
304.520.0030

## RHM's Recommended Reading for April

*In Memory of Her: Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*

by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza



More than ten years after it was first published, this book is as important and influential as when it first appeared. By way of celebration,

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza has written a new introduction, surveying responses and developments over recent years and the issues which arise from them, and commenting on her own intentions. This gives added value to what is already a classic.

Front cover artwork by Ali Montgomery.

“The gospel is not a matter of the individual soul; it is the communal proclamation of the life-giving power of Spirit-Sophia and God’s vision of an alternative community and world.”

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza  
*In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, p. 750

[renewedheartministries.com](http://renewedheartministries.com)



## New Weekly YouTube Show!

Each week, we’ll be talking about the gospel lectionary reading for the upcoming weekend. We’ll be talking about each reading in the context of love, inclusion, and societal justice. Our hope is that our talking will be *just* talking (as in justice) and that during our brief conversations each week you’ll be inspired to also do more than just talking.

If you teach from the lectionary each week, or if you’re just looking for some thoughts on the Jesus story from a more progressive perspective within the context of social justice, check it out, you might like it.

You can find the latest show on YouTube at: [@herbandtoddjusttalking](https://www.youtube.com/@herbandtoddjusttalking)

Please Like, Subscribe, hit the Notification button, and leave us a comment. All of this will help us get this new YouTube channel off the ground.

Thanks in advance for watching!