

Inside This Issue:

Page 2

Matched Donations

A Shared Table

Weekly Zoom
HeartGroup

Page 3

Thank You!

Advent of Us

Page 4

RHM's Recommended
Reading for December

Page 5

Social Jesus blog

Page 6

Just Talking with
Herb and Todd

Page 7

RHM's Socials

Budget Thermometer

Page 8

RHM's Free Resources

Upcoming Events

Social Jesus Podcast

RENEWED HEART MINISTRIES
P.O. Box 1211, Lewisburg, WV 24901

Phone: 304.520.0030

Email: info@renewedheartministries.com

Follow RHM!

 Renewed Heart Ministries

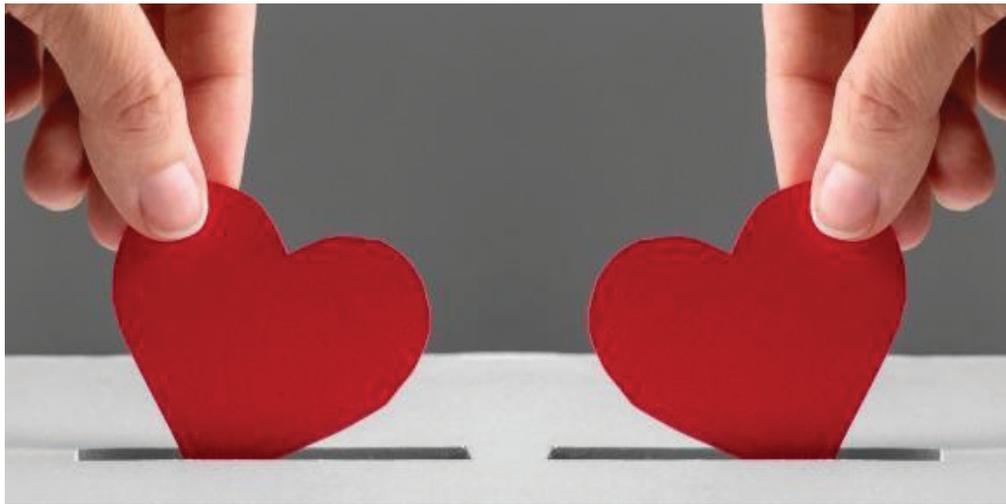
 renewedheartministries

 herbandtoddjusttalking

 renewedheartministries/

 RenewedHeartMin

 renewedheartministries.com



Matching Donations Till the End of the Year

As we are seeking to reach our ministry budget goals here at the end of 2024, we are excited to share that all donations to Renewed Heart Ministries for the remainder of year will be matched! Every dollar you give will have twice the impact, helping us further expand the work of Renewed Heart Ministries in 2025. And we need your support at this moment more than ever. Join us in making a difference—together, we can maximize our work for positive change, compassion, love, inclusion, and justice.



We are excited to announce the return of our annual Shared Table event! This year, we invite you to become one of our monthly sustaining partners for 2025. By selecting the “Check this box to make it a monthly recurring donation” option when you donate online, you’ll receive a special thank-you gift: a handmade *Renewed Heart Ministries Shared Table Pottery Bowl* crafted by Crystal and Herb.

Becoming a monthly sustaining partner helps RHM plan and budget for our ministry projects throughout the year. To sign up, simply **visit**

renewedheartministries.com/donate and choose an **automated recurring monthly donation** of any amount. If you prefer using **PayPal**, you can also select the **“Make this a monthly donation”** option.

As a token of our appreciation, we’ll be sending out these beautiful pottery bowls to our all of monthly partners at the start of the new year. Our hope is that these bowls, whether displayed or used, will serve as a reminder of Jesus’ message of love, care, and shared table fellowship. They also make wonderful gifts or conversation starters!



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 *Social Jesus* podcast published each Friday.

Each Zoom session will be held on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Pacific/10:00 p.m. Eastern.

To receive the link for the Zoom meeting, email us at: info@renewedheartministries.com



If you’re already a sustaining partner for 2024 and you would like to continue your support for 2025, we deeply appreciate your ongoing support and you will also receive one of our Shared Table Pottery Bowls as a thank-you gift, as well.

Regardless of how you choose to support Renewed Heart Ministries at the end of this year, we are profoundly grateful for your partnership in furthering Jesus’ vision of a world rooted in compassion, love, and mutual care. Together, we strive to create a safer, more compassionate, and just world for today and for eternity.



Thank You!

We want to take a moment to extend our deepest gratitude to all of our supporters for your invaluable contributions to the Renewed Heart Ministry community and your unwavering dedication to our mission of fostering love, justice, compassion, and healing. **Your support is the foundation of our work and empowers us to continue what we do.** During a time when ministries like ours are being called to achieve more with limited resources, your commitment is especially significant, and we simply want to say thank you. In our broader society and within local faith communities, Renewed Heart Ministries remains steadfast in advocating for change, striving for a world that is inclusive, just, and safe for all, and serving as a source of love and hope. From all of us at Renewed Heart Ministries, thank you for your generous support. **We deeply appreciate each and every one of you.**

If you'd like to join them in supporting our work, please go to: renewedheartministries.com and click on "Donate" or you can mail your support to:
Renewed Heart Ministries
PO Box 1211
Lewisburg, WV 24901



Advent of Us

by Herb Montgomery

Our reading this first weekend of Advent this year is from the gospel of Luke:

"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:25-26)

Advent is about the arrival of a looked-for event or person. Our reading this week typically looks forward to the two-millennia old hope of Jesus' someday return. I believe the passage in our reading from the gospels this first Advent weekend can offer us some hope for our context as well.

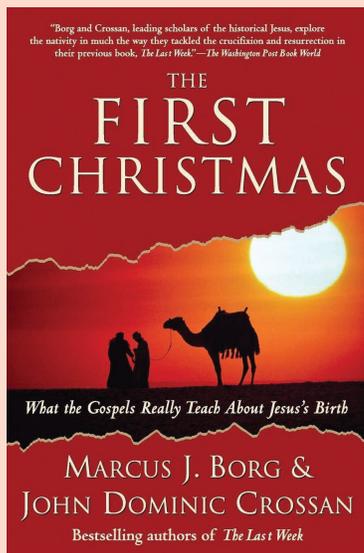
First, this passage was written after the Romans had destroyed Jerusalem's temple in their backlash to the liberation movement of the Jewish-Roman war of 66-69 C.E. While the preceding verses speak directly of the destruction of Jerusalem, the verses in our reading refer to a passage from the Hebrew scriptures that encouraged the Jewish people then undergoing persecution and predicted the earthly oppressors would be replaced by the eternal kingdom of God. That ancient passage was intended to offer a vision for the advent of liberation, to inspire hope when the people had very little to hope for.

A Passage of Liberation

Our reading this week references apocalyptic imagery that would have been familiar to Luke's gospel's Jewish community. It states that even in the wake of disappointment and devastation, when their world had been turned upside down, the community could still look forward to a time of liberation: "At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

This language from the book of Daniel

continued on page 4



December's Recommended Reading

The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth

by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan

"Who could argue with the message the authors draw from the Bible's Christmas stories? Light in the darkest time of the year, hope in a period of creeping despair—these are powerful and universal themes that can give everyone a stake in Christmas." —USA Today

In *The First Christmas* Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan—top Jesus scholars and authors of *The Last Week*—help us see the real Christmas story buried in the familiar Bible accounts. Basing their interpretations on the two nativity narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Borg and Crossan focus on the literal story—the inner truth rather than the historical facts—to offer a clear and uplifting message of hope and peace. With *The First Christmas* readers get a fresh, deep, and new understanding of the nativity story, enabling us to better appreciate the powerful message of the Gospels.

Advent of Us continued from page 3

was written to inspire the Jewish people suffering under the Seleucid empire. The gospels use this imagery to inspire their own people to hold on to hope despite suffering under the Roman Empire. This works because Daniel 7's themes are of liberation from imperial oppression by foreign empires. Daniel refers to the one who will bring an end to imperial reign, violence, and injustice as the "Son of man."

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)

The son of man coming on the clouds to the Ancient of Days was given an

everlasting kingdom where in the favor of the people suffering under oppression the power and dominance of the oppressors would be taken away:

The Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. (Daniel 7:22)

The court will sit, and [their] power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' (Daniel 7:26-27)

In our reading, Luke takes this image and looks forward to future liberation and restoration for a people who had also experienced suffering at the hands of unjust, imperial oppressors.

We Are The Ones We've Been Waiting For

Also in our reading this week is more hyperbolic and metaphorical language from the Hebrew prophets about when empires who oppressed the people would be brought down. Typically, writers disguised or hid language about earth-disrupting events such as the destruction of empires that the people hoped for in the language of heavenly disruption and upheaval. The people knew what was being referred to while also having plausible deniability for the authorities to which they answered but hoped would one day be ended. Here are a few examples:

The stars of heaven and their constellations

will not show their light.

The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. (Isaiah 13:10)

When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens

and darken their stars;

I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. (Ezekiel 32:7)

Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. (Joel 2:10)

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. (Joel 2:31)

The followers of Jesus then used this same rhetoric to speak of the hope-for downfall of Rome:

I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the LORD. (Acts 2:19-20)

What can we take away from all of this in our present moment?

continued on page 6

SOCIAL JESUS

A Blog Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Societal Justice



Recent “Social Jesus” Blog on Patheos



Advent of Us, Part 1

That ancient passage was intended to offer a vision for the advent of liberation, to inspire hope when the people had very little to hope for.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/advent-of-us-part1/



A Passage of Liberation

(Part 2 of *The Advent of Us*)

Our passage takes this image and looks forward to liberation and restoration for a people who had also experienced harm.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/passage-of-liberation/



We Are The Ones We’ve Been Waiting For (Part 3 of *The Advent of Us*)

I know what is coming won’t be easy. But this Advent, I’m holding on to the hope that we are the ones we’ve been waiting for.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/advent-we-are-ones-weve-been-waiting/

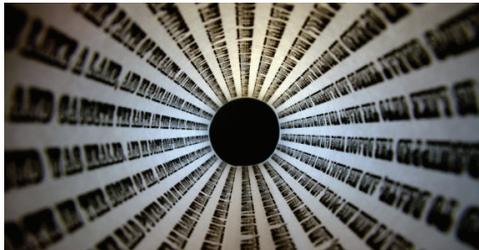


In Our World But Not of It,

(Part 1 of the *Give Us Barabbas* series)

In the wake of recent events, I sincerely wish most Christians today were less involved in our world, not more.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/in-our-world-but-not-of-our-world/



What is Truth?

(Part 2 of the *Give Us Barabbas* series)

It’s one thing to have differing political and economic views about what we as a society should do based on a shared truth. But how can democracy function or even survive when people have no shared reality?

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/what-is-truth/



Give Us Barabbas,

(Part 3 of the *Give Us Barabbas* series)

So much is here in the Barabbas story for us to painfully unpack and explore. So many lessons for our present moment.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/give-us-barabbas/



The Beginning of Birth Pains,

(Part 1 of *The Beginning of Birth Pains*)

This doesn’t have to be the end. There is still hope. This, painful as it may be, can be transformed into the beginning of birth pains.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/beginning-birth-pains-part1/



Navigating Trauma and Deep Loss in Mark 13,

(Part 2 of *The Beginning of Birth Pains*)

We must not underestimate the trauma and loss that this community was enduring and trying to explain at this time.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/navigating-trauma-deep-loss-mark-13/



The Hope that Injustice is Unsustainable,

(Part 3 of *The Beginning of Birth Pains*)

To be clear, our present challenges will be significant. And yet, we don’t have to give up hope of giving birth to something new.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2024/11/hope-injustice-unsustainable/



JUST TALKING

TODD
LEONARD

HERB
MONTGOMERY

LECTIONARY READINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF LOVE, INCLUSION, & SOCIAL JUSTICE

[YOUTUBE.COM/@HERBANDTODDJUSTALKING](https://www.youtube.com/@herbandtoddjustalking)

Weekly YouTube Show!

Just Talking

with Herb and Todd

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 social 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** @**herbandtoddjustalking**.

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!

Advent of Us continued from page 4

Advent is first and foremost a time to hold on to hope in the face of every reason to have no hope. To be honest, I don't feel like I have the energy that the next four years is going to require of us. I'm still in my own stages of grief. My anger is subsiding but it's still there. I've got a long way to go to get to acceptance of what now will be, and not with resignation but with renewed commitments to justice, resistance, working harder to mitigate harms to the vulnerable in our society. I'm not looking forward to the chaos that will put so many in harm's way.

And yet, we aren't the first ones to have to live through times we wish we didn't have to. The people of our passage this week found reasons to keep looking forward to hope as well. They found reasons to keep living in love, to keep choosing compassion, to keep taking action. And we must, too. The difference is that whereas the original audience of our passage was still looking forward to the advent of a hero who would save them, two millennia later, many of us realize that hero worship can be counter productive and even harmful to our justice work. To quote the poet June Jordan, "We are

the ones we've been waiting for."

This Advent season I'm reminded that Advent is about something finally showing up. We are the ones who, especially at this moment, must show up. We are the ones we are mutually depending on now. Jesus taught about the power of community to survive and transform the world around us even in the most difficult of times, shaping our world into a safe, compassionate, just home for everyone. Jesus taught us not to isolate and rely just on ourselves, but to come together. No matter what the future brought, we could get through it together, knowing we had each other's back. This is what is described in the opening chapter of the books of Acts in the wake of Jesus' crucifixion. And, once again, this is now the time to renew our commitment to making sure everyone is taken care of.

I know from the last time that what is coming won't be easy. But this Advent, I'm choosing to hold on to the hope that resistance and survival is possible as we renew our commitments to each other. We are the one's we've been waiting for.

Discussion Group Questions

1. Share something that spoke to you from this week's eSight/Podcast episode with your discussion group.
2. What does Advent mean for you this year? Share and discuss 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.

I want to say a special thank you to all of our supporters out there. And if you would like to join them in supporting Renewed Heart Ministries' work you can do so by going to **renewedheartministries.com** and clicking **donate**.

My latest book *Finding Jesus: A Fundamentalist Preacher Discovers the Socio-Political and Economic Teachings of the Gospels* is available now on Amazon in paperback, Kindle, and also on Audible in audio book format.

Thank you for listening to *The Social Jesus* Podcast. If you enjoy this podcast please take a moment to like and

subscribe and if the podcast platform you're using offers this option, please leave us a positive review. This helps others find our podcast as well.

And if you'd like to reach us here at Renewed Heart Ministries through email, you can reach us at info@renewedheartministries.com.

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

I love each of you dearly. ■

You can find RHM on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and Meta's new Threads. If you haven't done so already, please follow us on your chosen social media platforms for our daily posts.

-  RenewedHeartMin
-  Renewed Heart Ministries
-  renewedheartministries/
-  renewedheartministries
-  herbandtoddjstalking
-  renewedheartministries.com

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

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."

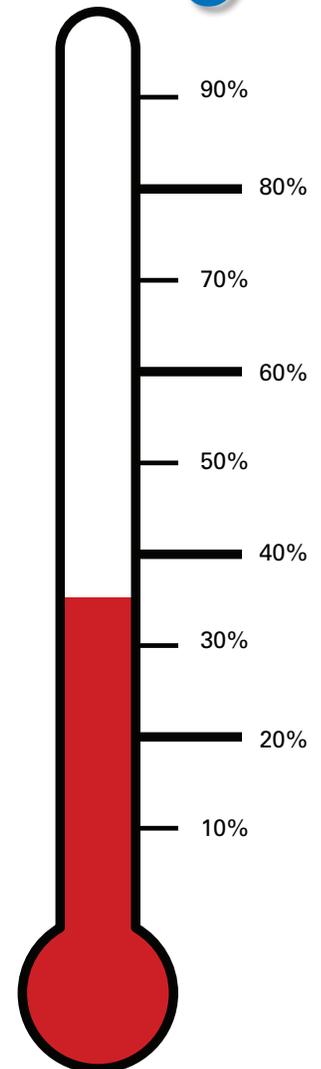
Whether you give \$5 or \$5,000, every amount helps us to continue our work.

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.

**2024 Projected Budget
Goal: \$150,000.00**

**Donations Received
as of end of Nov. 2024:
\$54,503.63**

Thank You!





Are you receiving all of RHM's free resources each week?

You can find Renewed Heart Ministries on X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and Threads for our daily posts. Our JFE podcast can be subscribed to through the podcast platform you use. You can also receive inspiration in your inbox from RHM delivered to you email inbox daily or weekly.

Sign up today so you don't miss a thing!

Go to renewedheartministries.com and click "Sign Up!"



Upcoming Events

DECEMBER 21, 2024
Good News Fellowship
Toronto, Ontario Canada

For more info or the Zoom link, email us at:
info@renewedheartministries.com
or call: 304.520.0030

Front cover artwork by Ali Montgomery.

“This Advent, hold on to the hope that resistance and survival is possible as we renew our commitments to each other. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”



The Social Jesus Podcast

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



Listen & Subscribe