

The Cross as Conquest

Scripture Reading — 2 Timothy 1:7-10

*Jesus ... has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
2 Timothy 1:10 —*

As we have been discovering, the imagery of the Bible is often beautiful.

But some of it is also violent—so violent that not even movies or cable TV can match its intensity.

The Bible often describes God as a divine warrior who meets the enemy in a great cosmic battle. This imagery climaxes in the work of Jesus, whose death and resurrection destroys death. No high-tech spy thrillers or science fiction blockbusters or even true-to-life war epics, with all their dramatic special effects, can top a message like that. Jesus conquers death.

The point of this image is not to glorify violence. Precisely the opposite. The point is to clarify that God's opposition to sin and violence is so strong that God will do anything to achieve a complete victory. (In fact, God will even choose the unlikely strategy of suffering violence to end violence!)

The point of the image is to assure us that God's work on the cross is complete and sufficient. We do not need to fear that death will simply come back in a sequel.

True, the complete experience of Jesus' victory is not yet ours. Evil still has a grip on the world. But the days of evil are numbered. Its ultimate power has been conquered. That is the message of the Christian hope we proclaim.

Prayer

Almighty, loving God, when evil tempts us to be afraid, may the sheer strength of your victory comfort and assure us. With all your people, help us sing, “Our God reigns!” Amen.

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