

TRIUMPH OVER EVIL

War Language (or other contests of strength)

In the Bible, concepts of salvation are often expressed in terms of a great victory over the powers of sin and death:

Jesus came to drive out the “prince of this world” (Jn. 12:31).

Jesus came to “destroy the devil’s work” (I Jn. 3:8).

Jesus came so that “he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” (Heb. 2:14-15).

Jesus “disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Col. 2:15).

In a war or other contests of strength, where both parties are expected to give it their all, the last person standing is the victor.

The gospels portray that the powers of sin and death threw all they had at Jesus. Sin and death mustered all its might. An innocent Jesus endured the worst that sin and evil had to offer.

Jesus was betrayed (Mt. 26:14-16), arrested (26:50), deserted (26:56), interrogated (26:62ff), struck in the face repeatedly (26:67), spat upon (26:67), and slapped (26:67). He was traded for a notorious prisoner (27:26), flogged (27:26), he was stripped naked, and a crown of thorns was forced over his head (27:28-29). He was dressed up and mocked (27:29), spat upon again (27:30), and struck with a staff upon his head repeatedly (27:30). He was crucified (27:31) – arguably the worst possible way to kill someone that human beings had ever invented involving ‘excruciating’ pain and public shame. He was mocked and insulted as he hung helpless to die between two criminals. He died.

Every indignity and evil that can be done to a person was done to Jesus. Yet, Jesus never succumbed to this evil. He never struck back, he never fought evil with evil. He only responded in love. And in the end, He was the last man standing. “God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him” (Acts 2:24).

Jesus has conquered; death is done; love has won. And every force keeping us from God has been vanquished, so that we are now liberated and free.