

He is Risen | Resurrection

Being Human - Week Eight
Christ the King Adult Education
April 8, 2018

Being Human

A Course in Biblical Anthropology, or Christian Ethics as Good News



What the Boy Did, Shankar Shiv (2007, Indian)

Being Human

A Course in Biblical Anthropology, or Christian Ethics as Good News

1. *Mysterium Trinitatis*: The Trinity

- **Covenantal Relationship and Seeking the Face of God**

2. *Ecce Homo*: Incarnation

- **The meaning of embodied existence**

3. *Creatio Ex Nihilo*: The Meaning of Creation

- **Gratitude, Boredom, and Technology**

4. *Homo Adorans*: The Chief End of Man

- **Beauty and Desire**

Being Human

A Course in Biblical Anthropology, or Christian Ethics as Good News

5. *Imago Dei* 1: Humanity as *Representative* of God

- **Vocation, Work, and Rest**

6. *Imago Dei* 2: Humanity as *Representational* of God

- **Sex, Marriage, and Friendship**

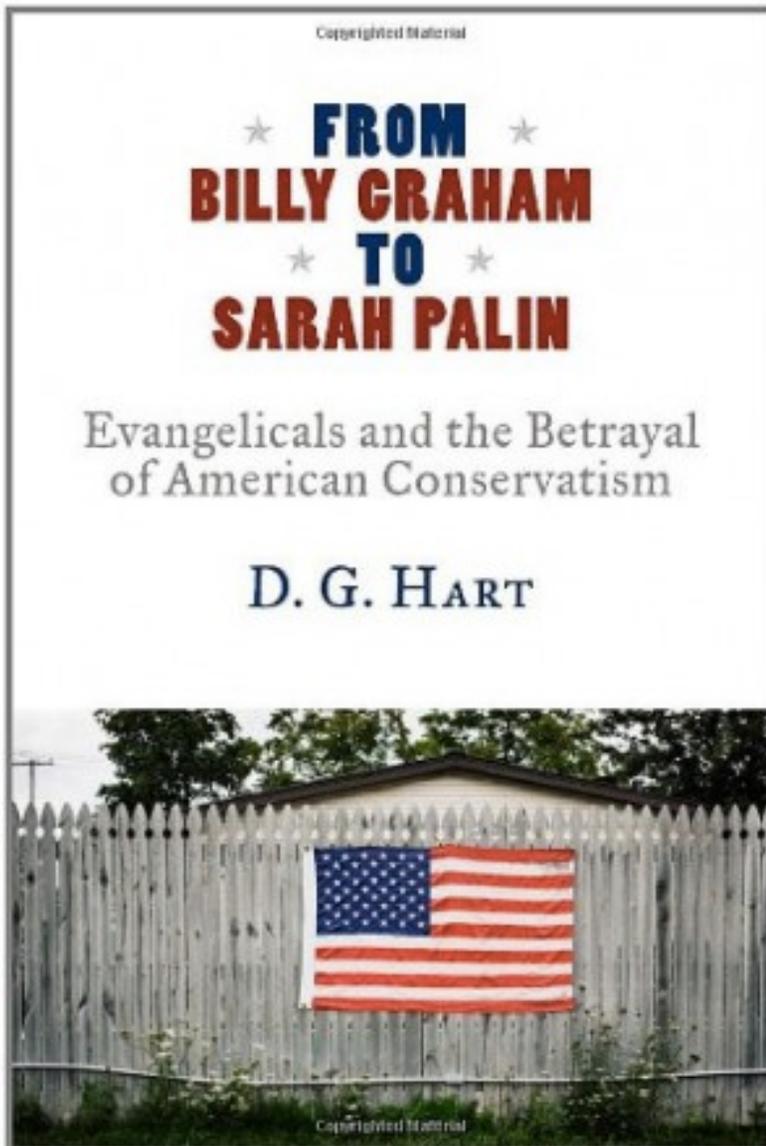
7. Resurrection

- **Politics, Cultural Engagement, and Loving the City**

8. The Church

- **Service and Authority**

Resurrection and Politics



- Today isn't going to be about who to vote for (good luck with that...)
- We'll be more concerned with questions of hope, fear, and what it means to love the city where God has put us

Resurrection and Politics



The Risen Christ, Simon Cantarini (1644-48, Italian)

- The Meaning of the Resurrection
- The Challenge of the Resurrection
- The implications of the resurrection for our understanding of power and authority
- Biblical models for political engagement grounded on the hope of the resurrection, and free from fear

Ethics and the Logic of Scripture

- Dogmatics tells us what is *certain*; ethics is a matter of reasoning from what is certain to what is not.
- “Obedience is a matter of how our own confession is to harmonize with the testimony of Scripture, and it is concerned to achieve a correspondence between the *whole train of thought* of the text from A to B and the *whole train* of our thought from X to Y.” - Oliver O’Donovan, *Self, World, and Time*
- *Why* Scripture offers the counsel that it offers, *how* it reaches its conclusions, matters as much as the conclusions themselves.
- Example: Scripture on marriage constantly refers back to Genesis 1-2.

“I Will Question You...”

- One Scriptural train of thought seems to be that in the face of a difficult question, a more difficult question is posed - and resolved - without necessarily answering the original question.
 - “Your sins are forgiven,” or “Rise up and walk”?
 - God’s care for you, or for lilies/birds?
 - God’s willingness to give you what you need, or your own willingness to give to your children
- The Resurrection provides an answer to an impossible question, which in the Old Testament seems to be used rhetorically: Can the dead live again?

Can the Dead Live Again?

- This question is often paired with the tension running throughout the Old Testament: how can God be both just and merciful?

If a man dies, shall he live again?

All the days of my service I would wait,
till my renewal should come.

You would call, and I would answer you;
you would long for the work of your hands.
For then you would number my steps;
you would not keep watch over my sin;
my transgression would be sealed up in a bag,
and you would cover over my iniquity.

- Job 14:14-17

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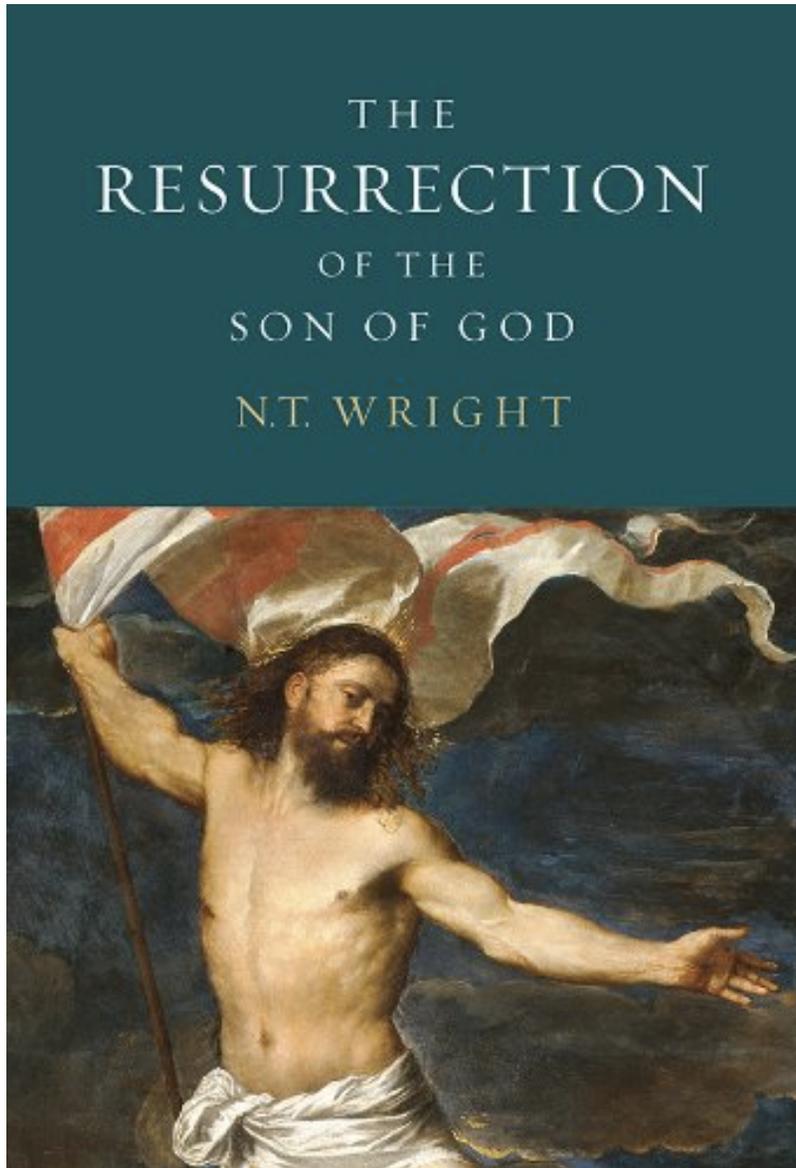
Behold, it was for my welfare
that I had great bitterness;
but in love you have delivered my life
from the pit of destruction,
for you have cast all my sins
behind your back.
For Sheol does not thank you;
death does not praise you;
those who go down to the pit do not hope
for your faithfulness.

- Isaiah 38:17-18

Can the Dead Live Again?

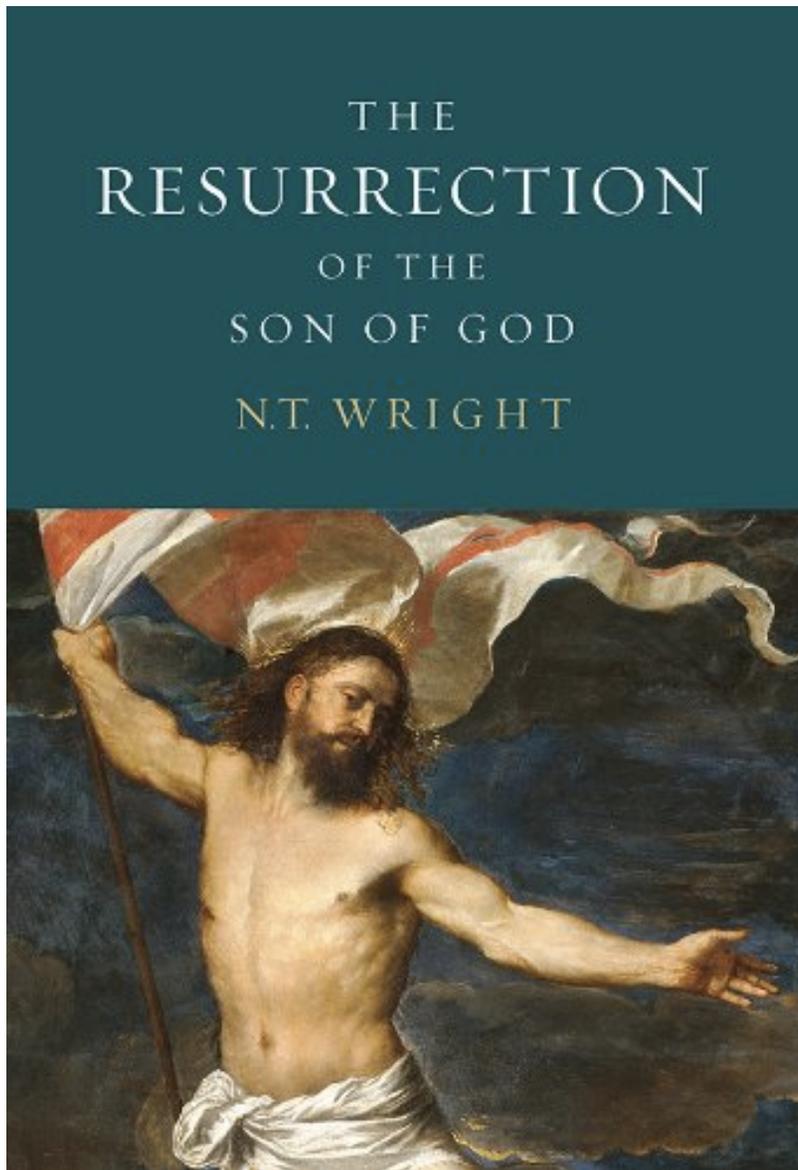
- Ezekiel 36-37
- Pss. 6, 30, 88, 115 all connect the hope of resurrection to the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord.
- Creation and redemption are not severed (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17-9, Rom 4:16-17, 25).
- Oliver O'Donovan argues that the fact that there is ethics at all depends on the resurrection, because it is God's vindication *of the created order* - not just the material, but the coherences and relations, the ends and purposes - and so of our created life within which ethics is pursued.
- The death and resurrection of Christ is God's final answer as to how he can be both "just and justifier" (Romans 3:26)

A Shocking Resolution



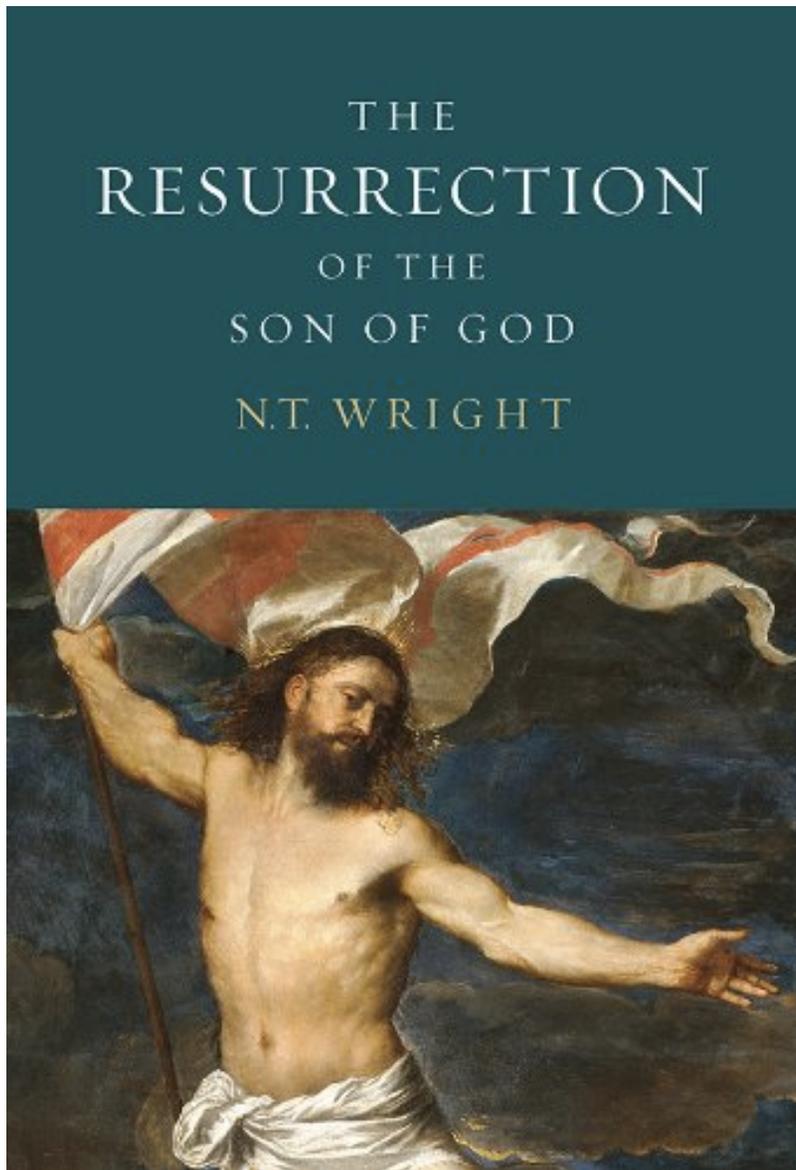
- Just how hard a question was it?
- Resurrection was completely outside of what Jesus' disciples could have hoped for.
- The problem with the theory that the disciples spread a lie isn't simply that they wouldn't have died for that lie.
- The problem is: that lie could not have come from those minds.

A Shocking Resolution



- Greco-Roman culture generally saw the body as something to leave behind and escape - one wouldn't have *wanted* a physical resurrection.
- “Those who followed Plato or Cicero did not want a body again; those who followed Homer knew they would not get one. ... The ancient world was thus divided into those who said that resurrection couldn't happen, though they might have wanted it to, and those who said they didn't want it to happen, knowing that it couldn't anyway.” - N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, pp. 60, 82

A Shocking Resolution



- Judaism was unique in hoping for a resurrection - but the hope was for the resurrection of *all* of God's people, at the *end* of history.
- “If someone had said to any first-century Jew, ‘So-and-so has been resurrected from the dead!’ the response would be, ‘Are you crazy? How could that be? Has disease and death ended? Is true justice established in the world? Has the wolf lain down with the lamb?’” - Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*
- No one expected - or would have *wanted* - the resurrection of one man in the middle of history

A Shocking Resolution



The Three Marys at the Tomb Resurrection Morning, Henry Ossawa Tanner (1910, American)

“...[T]hese stories have the puzzled air of someone saying, ‘I didn’t understand it at the time, and I’m not sure I do now, but this is more or less how it was.’” - N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, p. 611

This Changes Everything

- What are the implications of the resurrection for questions of power, authority, politics?
- Peter Leithart, “It Really Happened”: Because of the resurrection:
 - The power of tyrants - which is death - is shattered.
 - Jesus has been declared to be who he said he was - the Son of God, in power
 - We have seen the first fruits of what the end will be: not disembodiment, but the restoration of creation
 - Hope, and not fear, can drive our public life

All Authority on Heaven and Earth...



The Resurrection, Hendrick Goltzius (1596, Dutch)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me...
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

- John Donne

The Gift of Power (or Authority)

- Christians have a somewhat fraught relationship with power
- We have tended to one of two extremes: dominate or withdraw
- Power is yet another of God's good gifts, created and given before the fall (the use of power is implicit in "guard and keep," "dominion")
- Abe Cho defines power as the "capacity of an agent (spiritual being, human person, group, institution) to act in the world and to influence the social environment around them"
- Andy Crouch adopts a similar definition for power/authority.

All Authority on Heaven and Earth...

- Jesus refuses to worship power, but nevertheless exercises great authority (John 6, 10)
- “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” - Colossians 2:15
- The faith of a centurion: “For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. ... When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.” - Matthew 8:9-10
 - Not only one who exercises authority, but who is *under* authority
 - It matters whose authority one is under - and under whose authority one is *not* under (law, sin, death)

Do Not Be Afraid...

- What sort of politics is consistent with the Lordship of Christ, and with his ultimate exercise of authority over sin and death?



- A first observation from Marilynne Robinson:
 - “[M]y thesis... is very simply stated, though it has two parts: first, contemporary America is full of fear. And second, fear is not a Christian habit of mind.”
- Marilynne Robinson, “Fear”

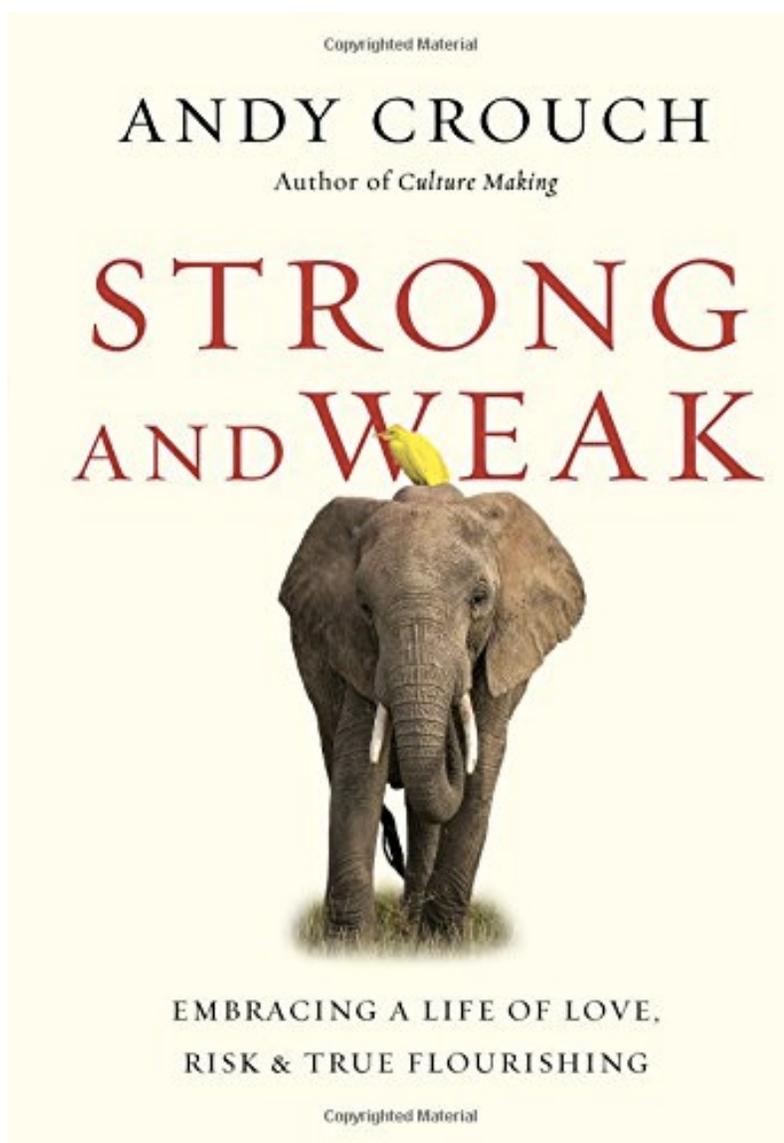
A False Choice

- What sort of politics is consistent with the Lordship of Christ, and with his ultimate exercise of authority over sin and death?
- Neither domination nor withdrawal is fitting.
- So why do we get this wrong, and how might we think about political engagement?



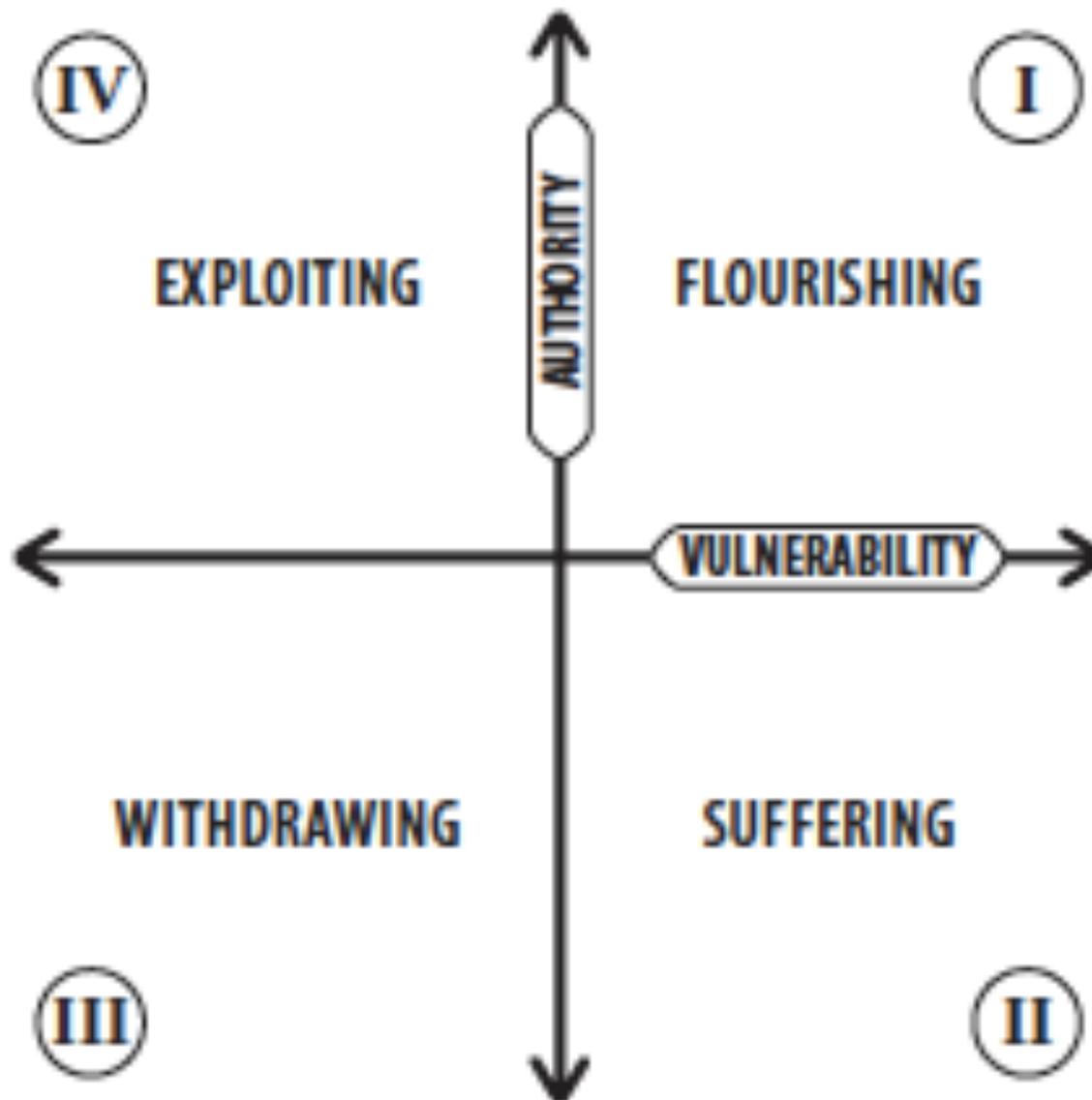
Resurrection, Joan Snyder (1977, American)

A False Choice



- In *Strong and Weak*, Andy Crouch argues that we have tended to see authority and vulnerability as opposites.
- But the reality is more complicated - they are not mutually exclusive
- Jesus embodies a full measure of both vulnerability and authority

A False Choice



Political Engagement as Christians

- Christian engagement with politics also includes a critique of the disengagement typical of (party) politics as we know them
 - Our political debate is increasingly polarized
 - Living in separate worlds [cf. Charles Murray, *Coming Apart*]
 - Politics = Public?
 - But politics as we interact with them is decreasingly about accomplishing projects as a society and more about defining ourselves and winning and argument
- Jeremiah 29/Daniel 1-3 and 1 Peter 2 encourage Christians toward political engagement

Politics in Exile

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: **Build** houses and live in them; **plant** gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; **multiply there, and do not decrease**. But seek the **welfare** of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its **welfare** you will find your **welfare**. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

“For thus says the LORD: **When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place**. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, **plans for welfare and not for evil**, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.”

Build and Plant

- This is in part a rebuke to the false prophets who said it would be but two years before restoration
- But there is also a message of hope connected to God's ultimate purposes for his people
- Daniel 1-3 gives us a model for "seeking the welfare of the city": Daniel and his friends are in service to the court, but refuse to bow to the gods of Babylon
- 1 Peter 2 follows a very similar dynamic, but now addressed to Christians, scattered within the Empire, and grounded in the hope of the resurrection

Politics as Citizens

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ...

- 1 Peter 2:11-18

Hope for Politics

- But these verses are preceded and followed by soaring theological rhetoric - “living stones,” “a royal priesthood,” Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf.
- How do we explain this dual focus?
- Bruce Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, Ch. 1
 - “Good deeds” in view in 1 Peter 2 (as well as Romans 13) have to do with public benefactions upon which Roman cities were dependent
 - Rather than withdrawing from public support of the city, and by implication the empire, Peter exhorts his readers to uphold their cultural obligation to contribute to public works, to the end that ‘by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.’

Hope for Politics

- Winter argues that this passage must be understood as consistent with and fulfilling Jeremiah 29
- Concern for the present welfare of the city was not in spite of, but was motivated by, Christians' eschatological hope
- This hope means that present or impending suffering cannot be considered an ultimate catastrophe (1 Peter 4:12-3)
- It is thus because and not in spite of the coming reign of Jesus Christ that Christians are free to follow his example and command to love our neighbors and our enemies

Hope for Politics

- Practical lessons from 1 Peter 2
 - Seeking the welfare of the city includes excellence in the work of building and supporting the institutions upon which it depends, even as those institutions are subject to critique
 - This requires engagement: authority and vulnerability (Crouch)
 - We cannot seek the welfare of the city if we do not have the hope of heaven: the liturgy of the City of Man is ultimately disastrous to the created order
- The principle of proximity - for some, national politics is the appropriate arena; most of us are called to invest more locally (even if we are just “passing through”)