



Discussion Guide for “Black Jesus”

Spark Week 3

Religion is far too often nothing but platitudes. How many times have you heard, "God has a plan," or "It is what it is"? No wonder Marx called religion "the opiate of the masses!" But, at least for the prophet Isaiah, religion wasn't meant to pacify. Rather, God's arrival among us is meant to wake us up. No wonder God shows up among the marginalized, those most badly in need of justice! If we're going to find Jesus, we're going to find him among those who are most vulnerable.

Passage for Sacred Reading:

Sacred Reading is a way of reading Scripture with an eye toward transformation, not just information. Get a [step-by-step guide here](#). The passage for this week's sacred reading is Isaiah 9:1-5.

Questions for Discussion

1. What religious platitudes have you heard? Do you have a (least) favorite? Why?
2. Explain Karl Marx' critique of religion as an 'opiate of the masses'. Do you agree or not?
3. Revisit Isaiah 9. Why was Hezekiah's ascension such good news? Does it surprise you that the group singled out as most benefitted are the 'oppressed'?
4. How do identify socially vulnerable persons? What makes a person or group **socially** or **politically** vulnerable?
5. James Cone saw Jesus' crucifixion in the lynching of black bodies. Why did he make that connection?
6. How do we identify the socially and politically vulnerable in our midst? How might God be calling you/us to identify with them?