

John Dominic Crossan
Questions for Lecture One:
Justice and World: What is the Character of Your God?



Chapter 1: Introduction

The four primary questions:
What is the character of your God?
What is the content of your faith?
What is the purpose of your prayer?
What is the function of your church?

Chapter 2 : The Roman empire

1. Define the two types of empire: Tributary and Territorial
2. What are the four strands of Social Power? Describe each (Military, Economic, Political, Ideological)

Chapter 3: The Roman Empire (“strands of power” continued)

Chapter 4: Roman Imperial Theology

1. What was the point of the role of Consul?
2. How are the ideas of Republic, Empire, and Democracy different?
3. “Roman Imperial Theology” referred to Octavian (Augustus) as Son of God, Divine, God, God from God, Redeemer, Liberator, Lord, Savior of the World. Why?
4. The four elements of Roman Imperial Theology are Piety, War, Victory, Peace (first Victory, then Peace). How did such a perspective shape Roman culture?
5. What does Crossan mean by “Civilization has *always* been imperial”? Why is it important to “unlearn it”?
6. How is it that Jesus or Paul’s opposition to Rome was “opposition to civilization itself”?

Chapter 5: The Radicality of God

1. What’s the difference between the “Word” of God and the “words” of God?
2. What does Crossan mean when he says, “The Bible is the radicality of God struggling hard with the normalcy of civilization”?
3. What is the difference between “retributive” justice and “distributive” justice?
4. What does a “theology of creation” have to do with justice?
5. Give an example of the normalcy of civilization striving to beat the radicality of God.

Chapter 6: Justice and God

1. What significance to the idea of “justice” is Israel’s geographical location to the various contending Empires?
2. What is the definition of the term “eschatology”?
3. How is understanding the term “eschatology” as “Great Divine Cleanup” similar to or different from your previous understanding?

Chapter 7: Battle or Feast?

1. What are God’s options in dealing with the Gentiles?
2. What are we to do with the options that are available (violence or non-violence)? How do we choose?
3. What is the significance of Jesus being the “norm of the book”?

WRAP-UP QUESTIONS:

1. What do you find most helpful so far from the material? Least helpful?
2. What implications does this material have for our culture? The wider Church? For your local fellowship? For you personally?