Opinion
Guest Voices



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On this week's episode of "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I speak with Scripture scholar Wes Howard-Brook, author of several great books, including his commentary on the Gospel of John, *Becoming Children of God*. Howard-Brook also has a free YouTube commentary called "Radical Bible," and a study of the Bible called *"Come Out My People!": God's Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond*. He just published a smaller, more accessible version of the study: *Creation or Empire: A Choice of Religions in the Bible and Beyond*.

"Most Christians treat the Bible like someone who's been on a one-week tourist trip with a bad tour guide, which is to say they've gotten a superficial overview and had it interpreted wrongly, and then concluded, 'Why would I want to go there again?' " Howard-Brook said. "The heart of my work is trying to reestablish a passion for biblical literacy, because as all Indigenous cultures know, as a people, you are the stories that carry you forward."

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"The Bible is a set of narratives, poems, proverbs and other texts that were written by our Israelite and Judean ancestors to get their children to grapple with one central question: What kind of people does God intend us to be?" he said.

"The Bible proposes two choices: the religion of creation and the religion of empire. Jesus enters into that 2,000-year-old argument among his people: Are we to be a powerful empire in the name of God, centered in Jerusalem, to which all the nations will stream and bow down to us and our God? Or is creation the temple? Do we find the Creator in the creation, and every created being is part of that? Jesus plainly and explicitly sides with the religion of creation and resists empire."

Listen to the full episode here.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. View the full series.