

# Believing in Redemption

**The way Jesus responded to terror is a lesson to all of us •** *By Lisa Sharon Harper*

**JESUS STARED INTO** the faces of people who considered him their enemy, and he turned his other cheek. He allowed himself to be whipped. He allowed a terrorist state to use his death as a horrifying warning to any who dare follow him from this point on: Declaring allegiance to Jesus will be deemed a direct challenge to the deity of Caesar and to the ultimate authority of occupying Rome. Do so upon pain of death.

Why didn't Jesus fight? After all, that's what the people wanted. They had been waiting for a Messiah to overthrow Caesar by force and take back the Promised Land. Why did he choose the route of silent, nonviolent resistance with Pilate, rather than lashing out or arguing his case? Why did Jesus turn the other cheek and exercise meekness, which means disciplined power, in the face of terror?

I believe it was because when he looked into the eyes of the chief priests or their slaves or the Roman soldiers, or even Caesar himself, he saw the image of God. How could Jesus strike down the image of God? He came to redeem and restore the image of God on earth, to set the slaves, and the soldiers, and the priests free from the violent reign of humans. He came that Caesar himself might be brought back to life by the dominion of God—a dominion characterized by disciplined power, servant leadership, truth-telling, just dealing, reconciliation and reparation, and, above all else, love. Jesus did not fight because he believed in redemption. ■