

The Disruptive Messiah

Ken Ruggles

"The Disruptive Messiah is a book for everyone!"
- Dr. Thomas A. Halstead

Jesus Christ came to reconcile man to God, but in that process He also disrupted the lives of those around Him. He challenged the cultural and religious status quo. He taught with authority, and His words were divisive. For centuries, the Jewish people had hoped for a Messiah who would make their circumstances more comfortable. But Jesus Christ didn't come to change circumstances - He came to change hearts.

Today we still hold many of the same misconceptions. We want Jesus to fit into our plans, solve our problems, and make life better. Yet to all who come in contact with Him, Jesus is still *The Disruptive Messiah*, because He wants to remedy the real problem—our alienation from God. Real reconciliation brings real repentance and real repentance brings real change. In this practical and faith-affirming book, Bible teacher Ken Ruggles shows how a decision to follow Jesus Christ is the most revolutionary step we will ever take.

Once you embrace that kind of change, it won't be long before your whole life gets topsy-turvy. Disrupted. If your relationship to Jesus Christ isn't radically altering your thought life, your relationships, and your priorities, Ken Ruggles would like to introduce you to *The Disruptive Messiah*.

For group or individual study, each chapter includes discussion questions and personal application exercises that will expand the reader's view of God's limitless power to turn lives upside down for His glory.



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Ken Ruggles -Canyon Country, CA

Ken Ruggles, a graduate of California State University at Northridge, is a Bible teacher and occasional preacher. As a lay leader in a vibrant church in Santa Clarita, California, Ken has ministered in Adult Bible Fellowships, encouraging and equipping adult ministry leaders over the last 25 years. Through World Impact Ministries, he teaches seminary-level theology to urban church leaders. He is also the chief financial officer for a large manufacturing firm. Ken and his wife, Beckie, have two grown sons.

Connect with Ken Ruggles:

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Endorsements for *The Disruptive Messiah*:

"*The Disruptive Messiah* is a book for everyone, from the young teenager who desires to read a more contemporary account of our Lord, to the adult who has been in church all his life and wants to understand Christ more deeply. It is not a life of Christ book, but it clearly discusses snippets of His life that will encourage and challenge everyone who reads it. Jesus Christ is considered by many in the church today as one who loved people and did miracles. This is true, but He was much more than this; He came to change the world from the inside out, and He has done that by "disrupting our lives." After reading this book you will come away with a healthier perspective of who Jesus really was. I commend the book to you." -**Dr. Thomas A. Halstead, Chairman of the Department of Biblical Studies, The Masters College**

"I like *The Disruptive Messiah*. This is a thinking person's book because the reader is confronted with what it means to follow Jesus in committed discipleship. The book is well focused, gospel-centered, and rooted in the events surrounding Jesus. By centering on specific events of Jesus' life, I was challenged to step out of my comfort zone. Yes, you too might be disrupted by reading this book." -**Cecil Stalnaker, professor emeritus of Intercultural Studies and Practical Ministries, Tyndale Theological Seminary, the Netherlands**

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"In a culture of comfort, disruptions are hardly ever welcomed, but I urge you to meet *The Disruptive Messiah* introduced in these pages. The God of the Bible glows and grows in Ruggles' retelling. I recommend reading it aloud to the whole family." -**Dr. Bob Lay, dean of The Urban Ministry Institute of Los Angeles**

"Most of the time, God's Word calls us to move from comfortable situations in order that we might stretch and grow into a lifestyle that moves us closer to His biblical pattern. We still will encounter turbulent and stressful times, but in those times God gives His comfort and peace to see us through. . . . (*The Disruptive Messiah*) helps us see Christ more clearly so that we can think and love more like Him. By doing that and by sharing practical examples, this book challenges us to share Christ by how we live every day—at church, home, work, and school. . . . I encourage you to read this outstanding book." -**Mike Broyles, executive director of Awana Lifeline, from his Foreword**

Suggested Interview Questions for Ken Ruggles, Author of *The Disruptive Messiah*:

1. I hear that this book all started over Christmas lights. Can you tell me about that?

Yes – I love Christmas. Probably because it is such a great family time, but even more importantly it celebrates one of the two most important events in history for me. So I've always been a little excessive when it comes to Christmas lights and decorating, but one of the main items that we have always put up is a nativity scene. It probably takes me a couple of days just to put everything up, so I always have plenty of time to think. This whole thing really started one evening when I was finishing up the decorating and thinking about a young family's response to the nativity in our front yard.

2. Disruptive? That sounds a little negative. What do you mean by The Disruptive Messiah?

Well, disrupt simply means to disturb, to interrupt or to upset the order of something. It does seem to be a negative word and at first that idea bothered me. However, the more I thought, read and studied about Jesus and His incarnation – I realized that it really was a good definition of Jesus. He disturbed the religious system of the day and impacted the people He interacted with. He disturbed people's thinking about God and the coming Messiah. And when He came in contact with people He often upset the order of their life.

3. Can you give me a couple of examples where Jesus was disruptive?

Sure – one example that comes to mind is the disciples themselves. Take James and John, two guys who were involved in the family business. When Jesus called them to be disciples they left everything and followed Him. They gave up the family business – which was probably the only work they had ever known and more than likely a pretty fair living. Think about their dad – it certainly affected his life, business and maybe even his relationship with his sons. Ultimately, history tells us Herod executed James, and John survived heavy persecution – their lives were changed forever when they met Jesus.

4. You say in your book that Jesus didn't come to make things better. What do you mean by that?

Well, I think that quite often most people turn to God when they need help. When things are going poorly in our life – when the job goes away, the husband or wife leaves or there is some kind of trouble in life – that's when we tend to think about God. The real emphasis in Scripture is the glory of God, not the material or physical wellbeing of mankind. If you simply read the Bible it becomes pretty obvious that it really is all about God – not about you or me. Therefore the most important issue should be my relationship with God. AW Tozer said the most important thing about us is what we think about God. That will affect us for eternity. The Bible is all about God dealing with mankind – through Israel, through Jesus Christ and through the apostles and the church. Based on that, we can say that Jesus really came to make a way for us to be reconciled to God. The mission of Jesus Christ was to deal with our real problem – sin and alienation from God. So, it really is all about my relationship to Him, not whether I'm physically or materially better.

5. There are a lot of books written about Jesus' life. What makes your book different from all those other books?

I think there are several ways in which *The Disruptive Messiah* is different. First, all of the chapters take a biblical passage – a snippet of Christ's life. Rather than starting with a subject and using Scripture to back that up, I wanted to really just take Scripture and make it applicable to personal life today. Second, I think when most people read the Bible they do so from a 21st century perspective. We forget the writers of the gospels were not originally writing to you and I sitting in our living rooms. It is important to understand what Jesus was saying to the original listeners as we read God's Word. That leads me to the final way I believe this book is a little different. So many books take our present day situation and try to find how the Bible can help us feel better, succeed or rise above our life situation. I really wanted to look

at Jesus' words first and then see how they fit into our lives. That really brings us back to the premise of the book. Rather than starting with our life situation and trying to fit God into that, I wanted us to start with God first and then see how we need to conform our life to HIM. God wants us to see that He is the one in control and we will never really be happy or fulfilled until we allow Him to be the center of everything.

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6. You talk about reading and studying the Bible in context. What do you mean and why is that so important?

This really has to do with the fact that each book in the Bible was originally written to a specific audience. The gospels were written in the first century to a distinct group of people, so when we read we have to keep that in mind. Since the Bible is God's Word and God doesn't lie or change, we can be confident that one part of Scripture will never contradict another part of Scripture. We need to read each passage with an awareness of how that passage fits into the larger passage around it, the book it is part of and the Bible as a whole. We also need to remember that those readers existed in a very specific cultural, geographical, historical and political environment. As we consider all those factors, we will have a much clearer idea of what that passage of Scripture really meant in its original content and then how it applies to us. As we study the Bible with those guidelines I believe it will revolutionize our understanding of God's Word - and our lives as well.

7. You seem to infer in a couple of places that most of us today are not very good Bible students. Do you really believe that?

Well, I think we live in a very fast paced society. We drive fast, we eat our food fast, we shop fast – we even record our TV programs so we can skip the commercials and watch faster. Our world today emphasizes action – get it done and get it done now. We thrive on accomplishments. That has a tendency to work against the discipline of reading and studying God's Word. That process takes time – it involves reading and re-reading, comparing and contrasting one passage with other Scripture. It means spending time prayerfully meditating on that passage.

It's easy to get discouraged when that process doesn't provide quick results. The normal everyday person hasn't always had the luxury and blessing of being able to read and study God's Word. I'm afraid we just don't appreciate that privilege as much as we should. Part of my goal with this book is to help people think through God's Word and help them see how interesting and stimulating the Bible can be. Instead of relying on what we think it says and reading through as quickly as possible, we need to spend time thinking and meditating on the Word of Life.

8. If I read your book, what are two things you hope that I would learn in the process?

I would hope you might discover a greater depth to the gospel stories. I believe when people read Scripture carefully, thoughtfully and contextually they will find greater meaning and see a whole new world open up. I would also hope you might understand the importance of seeing life situations from God's perspective. We need to see that God uses even our most challenging times to strengthen our faith in Him and confirm the value of our relationship with Him. When we begin to see that it will heighten the anticipation and hope of spending eternity in His presence.