

Simply Good News: Why the Gospel is News and What Makes It Good by N.T. Wright

Chapter 1 “What’s the News?”

1. Wright argues that the idea of seeing the Christian faith as *news* that is *good* is news to many people today—Think about your own understanding of Christianity, would you describe it as news? Why or why not?
2. Wright describes various ways in which we use the term *gospel* in the church and he makes the larger claim that we think we understand the gospel because it seems so familiar—What do you mean by the word gospel?
3. Wright gives us three elements to help us understand the term *good news*:
 - i) the news doesn’t happen out of the blue, it assumes a larger context, it is *a new and unexpected development in a much longer story*.
 - ii) the news is about something that has happened, because of which *everything will now be different*.
 - iii) the news introduces *an intermediate period of waiting*.

“What good news regularly does, then, is to put a new event into an old story, point to a wonderful future hitherto out of reach, and so introduce a new period in which, instead of living a hopeless life, people are now waiting with excitement for what they know is on the way.”¹

How do these three elements fit with your understanding of good news from question #2?

4. Wright describes how the message of our modern day church has shifted from the good news to become good advice; particularly, how to live so as to go to heaven and avoid hell. Wright then claims *that isn’t exactly the good news Jesus and the early church were talking about*—As you have worked through your own understanding of the term good news has this been your larger framework? Are you shocked or bothered over his claim that this wasn’t the news of Jesus or the early church?
5. Wright describes a difference between the modern church and Jesus’ message: we speak of us escaping earth to go to heaven, but Jesus talks about the reality of heaven coming to earth (Matt. 6:10)—how does this shift in understanding change things for us? Why is this an important difference?
6. Wright briefly tells the history of Caesar Augustus and locates Jesus within that world, he says:
“*Jesus of Nazareth was a real man, living and dying at a turbulent moment in real space-time history*. His message, and the message about him that the early Christians called good news, was not about how to escape that world. It was about how the one true God was changing it, radically and forever.”²

How do you feel about Wright’s claim that it’s not about us going to heaven, but about God changing the world?

¹ N. T. Wright, *Simply Good News: Why the Gospel Is News and What Makes It Good* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2015), 4.

² *Simply Good News*, 13.