

Simply Good News

Chapter 4: "Distorted and Competing Gospels"

1. Wright explains how history works in distinction from scientific proof. He then goes on to note a distinction about Jesus' historical ministry, "when Jesus himself was telling the good news as he saw it, there were plenty of people who found it so different from what they expected that they couldn't see it" (60 italics removed).
 - **How do people's expectations today result in them not being able to see the good news?**
2. Moving from reliability about the Gospels, Wright goes on to consider the difficulty of using the language of kingdom. He asserts, "The reason Jesus went on talking about *kingdom*, despite the obvious risks of misunderstanding in his own day, was because he wanted to replace the ordinary sort of kingdom with a quite different sort" (63 italics removed, emphasis original).
 - **Is it difficult for us to use the language of kingdom in our context? If so, why? Why might it be important, even essential, to use that language in spite of the difficulties?**
3. Wright makes the claim that, "[m]ost people in the Western world think of Christianity as a system: a religious system, a system of salvation, or a system of morality" (65).
 - **Would you agree with him (here and as he fleshes it out)? Why does he say this is problematic?**
4. Wright gives an extended illustration of setting a historical piece within a whole and the way that shapes meaning. He then notes that the Bible's proper setting for understanding "Jesus taking our punishment," is within the themes of creation and covenant (69).
 - **As you have heard the 'popular' form of gospel throughout your life has it been fit within creation and covenant? Allowing it to be set within those two pieces, how does it reshape your understanding?**
5. **How do you feel about Wright describing what many have embraced as Christianity as pagan? Can you see why people have been 'turned off' by this distortion of God and gospel? Do you understand why some are concerned about those who readily embrace it? (74)**
6. **Can you see in our world today how we still think about God and the world in 'split level' terms? Do you agree that much of Christianity has been reduced to, "[p]rivate piety in the present, heaven in the future" (77).**
7. **Discuss how you see Rationalism and Romanticism still impacting our world today (80).**
8. **How are the events of Jesus the centre of history rather than the enlightenment of the eighteenth century? (85 forward)**