

The scandalous
message of the cross:
Confronting the
status quo

Rod Thompson





Galatians

- 1:1-5 Opening Theme
- 1:6-2:21 The Gospel of Christ: Justification through Crucifixion
- 3:1-4:31 The Promise of the Father: The Testimony of Scripture
- 5:1-6:10 The Freedom of the Spirit: The Life of Faith and Love
- 6:11-18 Summary and Final Summons

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Euangelion – gospel

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Behold your God!”

Isaiah 40:9

Caesar [Augustus] through his appearance has exceeded the hopes of all former good messages [*euangelia*], surpassing not only his benefactors who came before him, but also leaving no hope that anyone in the future would surpass him, and since for the world the birthday of the god was the beginning of his good messages [*euangelia*] ...

Priene inscription, 9 BC





The Gospel of Christ

Unique – there is no other

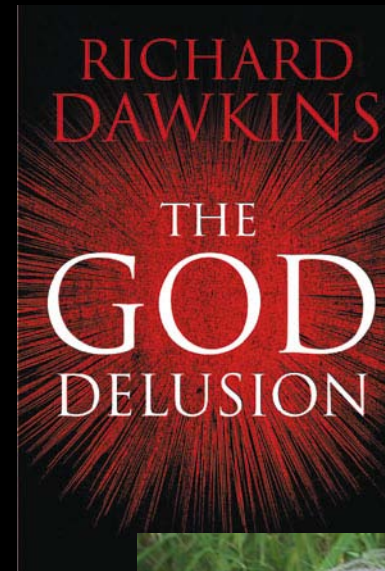
Origin – God

Content – Christ

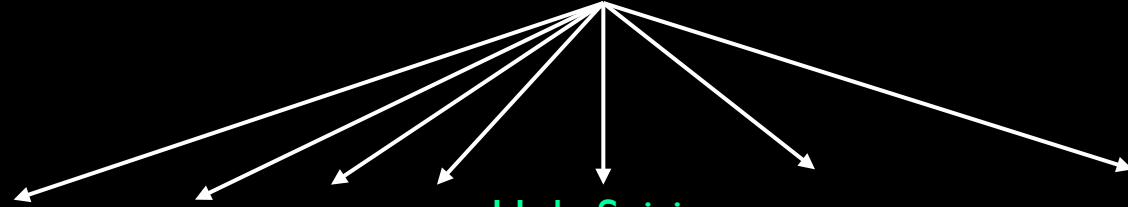
Consequence – freedom

Proclamation – ancient

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all of fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic-cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.



Gospel



Holy Spirit
Enthronement
Ascension
Resurrection
Death
Life
Birth

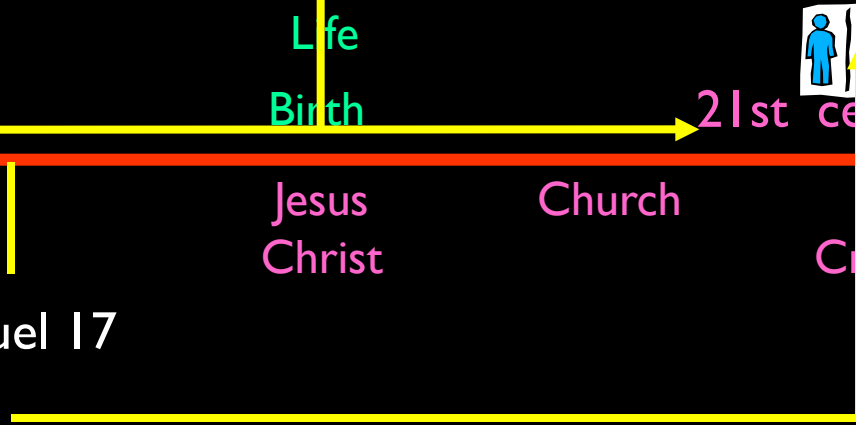


21st century



LORD Creation Fall Israel Jesus Christ Church New Creation

I Samuel 17



The Drop-out technique

- Diminish and distort the text
- By-pass the gospel events
- Individualise our responses/applications
- Move to legalism/duty
- Eliminate or misunderstand the Holy Spirit

- As we read scripture, we initially relate to it from our own life situations in our own times and places. This is inevitable and necessary. From this starting point, we sometimes experience identification with the text and sometimes alienation. Sometimes it seems highly relevant and sometimes quite irrelevant.

- Withhold any final responses until we understand as much as we can about the text in its time and place. Give some space to the text to speak out of its context, out of its initial meaning within the history of creation, Israel, Jesus and church of which it is part. This is the exegetical task to which we must be committed if we are to read and understand ancient texts, such as the Bible, well.

- Explore the place of the text in the story of scripture and particularly in its relationship with the gospel events. We understand that Jesus fulfills the scriptures. This does not mean that we read Jesus back into Samuel or David so much that we read forward to Jesus and from Jesus before we attempt to work out what scripture means for us as “in Christ” people in our times and places.

- In the light of all of the above, re-relate to the text as “in Christ” people in our 21st century times and places. If we had initially felt drawn to the text, if initially it had seemed relevant to us, then we will now have found even fuller meaning. If it had initially seemed irrelevant, then hopefully it has begun to take on meaning and relevance.

A mystery story

... with two narratives

The first is a sprawling, ramshackle narrative that does not seem to be leading any place in particular. It is filled with clues, false leads, imaginative hypotheses, and characters ...

There is a *second* narrative. This narrative is crisp and clear and explains in considerable detail what was really occurring while the larger narrative was unfolding ...

It is important to understand that this second narrative is not a subplot, even though it is short. It is the disclosure of the architectonic structure of the whole story.

David Steinmetz

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:25-27

“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them ...

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Luke 24:44-48

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Luke 24:44-48

What are the Scriptures?

- The scriptures are unified not fragmented
- The scriptures are ancient words of wisdom not modern self-help texts
- The scriptures invite us to embrace mystery not exercise mastery
- The scriptures seek to transform not merely inform

The Bible is not like other books that can be handled – dissected and analyzed and then used for whatever we want them for. ... this “different” kind of writing (revelatory and intimate instead of informational and impersonal) must be met by a different kind of reading (receptive and leisurely instead of standoffish and efficient.)

Eugene Peterson

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