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Simply Good News: Why The Gospel Is News And What Makes It Good



Synopsis

The bishop, Bible scholar, modern heir to C. S. Lewis, and revered author of *Simply Christian* and *Simply Jesus* offers a fresh look at the Gospel, explaining why Jesus' message is "good news" and why it is more timely and transforming today than we know. The Gospel means good news. But if the message has been around for 2,000 years, what makes it significant today? What's so "good" about stories involving damnation, violence, and a God who sacrifices his only son? Noted Bible scholar N.T. Wright shows us how Christians today have lost sight of what the "good news" of the gospel really is. In *Simply Good News*, he takes us back in time to reveal how the people of the first-century "the gospel's original audience" would have received Jesus' message. He offers a clear and thoughtful analysis of what the "good news" really is, and applies it to our lives today, revealing its power to transform us.

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Customer Reviews

NT Wright is an author that many are excited about and many are frustrated by. There is good reason for both. NT Wright is a serious scholar and he has helped reinvigorate serious scholarship about the New Testament that is focused on orthodox Christianity. The main theological frustration, especially for a particular group of Reformed, is that he has focused on Paul and interpreted Paul as not being primarily focused on Jesus' Penal Substitution. He has not ignored Penal Substitution, or said it is not a real part of Christianity, but he has said the focus of Paul is not on Jesus' penal substitution, but on Jesus as King and restorer. That major focus on Wright's work is front and center

in *Simply Good News*. Wright does fairly well writing either to an academic audience (as his 1700 pages opus on Paul) or a popular audience. *Simply Good News* (like *Simply Jesus*, *Simply Christian* and *Surprised by Hope*) is popularly focused and has few footnotes or academic references. And it is one of Wright's shortest books. NT Wright is in one way imminently readable. He tells stories and builds a case that can be followed. But in another ways Wright is almost always frustrating because he usually seems to complicate even small matters. Nothing by Wright is unrelated to the whole story because the nature of Wright's project pulls together parts of the Christian story which some minimize or over simplify.

Simply Good News opens with a series of illustrations that contrast the gospel as news with the gospel as advice. Wright wants readers to embrace the gospel as news, good news. The modern gospel, Wright suggests, amounts to mere advice - "say a prayer and you'll be saved. You won't go to hell; you'll go to heaven. Here's how to do it"--a truncated (and ultimately misshapen) view of the real gospel. Wright pushes against the all too common practice of abstracting a collection of timeless truths (or advice) about salvation from Scripture and calling it "the gospel." The real gospel, Wright contends, comes as news about Jesus rooted in a history complete with a backstory and heralded as an event with important personal entailments and social implications--some immediate and others forthcoming. Implicit in his distinction between news and advice, Wright wants Christians to rethink how they see (and explain) the gospel. For Wright, reducing the gospel to advice (such as "five steps to salvation") hardly does justice to the robust nature of the news about Jesus's life, death, resurrection and exaltation and borders on misrepresenting the biblical emphasis. "For something to qualify as news," Wright says, "there has to be (1) an announcement of an event that has happened; (2) a larger context, a backstory, within which this makes sense; (3) a sudden unveiling of the new future that lies ahead; and (4) a transformation of the present moment, sitting between the event that has happened and the future event that therefore will happen.

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