

# Tour 0 Themes

## Tour 0 Themes & Further Study

### Introduction

It's not without reason that this Tour has been left unnumbered. Dr. Tackett wants it to serve as a prelude to everything that follows. For group leaders, this is a chance to talk through preliminaries and give participants a clear idea of where they're headed; to weigh the costs, implications, and potential risks of the journey on which we're about to embark. It's the kind of frank discussion that any good Tour Guide has with potential clients before even letting them on the bus. And it's not without its fair share of solemn admonitions and warnings. As a matter of fact, this Tour includes an opportunity for each traveler to sign a waiver declaring that he or she understands exactly what lies ahead.

### Themes

This is not an academic exercise. In the course of this Tour participants will set out on a marvelous quest. Using the material provided in The Truth Project as a springboard – thirteen weeks' worth of detailed information on the importance of biblical Truth as the indispensable foundation of a solid Christian worldview – we will push ahead and attempt to draw even nearer to our Lord. Our purpose is to grasp the larger outlines of God's Meta-Narrative – the story of history and its deeper meaning as He has articulated it – and to figure out where we live within that overarching scheme and how we fit into the plan. Our goal will be to seek His face and gaze upon the Crown Jewel of His nature, which is love.

The Truth Project began with a simple question: "Why did Jesus come into the world?" The answer, of course, was "To testify to the truth" (John 18:37). This series of Tours will be informed by three new Guiding Questions, each of which can be stated in a couple of different ways: 1) First, "Why did Jesus leave?" Or, as a corollary, "Who are we in light of His departure?" 2) Second, "Why does God send?" This has a direct bearing on the related question, "Why are we still here?" 3) Finally, "What is God's end-game?" – which is just another way of asking, "What is our purpose in this world?" As we search for answers to each of these questions, we will discover exactly what it is that our King wants us to do in the service of His kingdom. If we can find the courage to carry out His Order, we ourselves and the world we inhabit will be changed for good.

### Points to Watch For

Central to this discussion is the concept of the Divine Meta-Narrative: God's own authoritative interpretation or explanation of the meaning of history. Within that Meta-Narrative, says Dr. Tackett, we can discern five major "epochs": Creation, Fall, Redemption, Engagement, and Restoration. As Christ's followers on earth, we inhabit the fourth of these. Our task within this context is to engage our culture as agents of His will. In carrying out this assignment we are called to fill the role of a Faithful Remnant. We are to become a beacon of Hope in a world which has rejected the Lord's truth and which, in consequence, is spiraling out of control into a dark abyss of meaninglessness, despair, and relentless pain.

Dr. Tackett describes this world, and Western culture in particular, as “The Land of Nought:” a place where there is no such thing as an “Ought,” and where men and women have actually grown fearful of endorsing objective truth in any form. God sends us into this “Land of Nought” directly out of the matrix of our own transformational encounter with His Truth. This life-changing encounter compels us to conduct ourselves as living representatives of the Savior’s love in the midst of a people who have no idea who they are or what their lives are all about. We are to pursue this mission with wisdom, perceptivity, and sensitivity, like the Sons of Issachar who “understood (Hebrew yodea’ binah, “possessed deep discernment”) the times in which they lived and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chronicles 12:33).

## **Here are additional notes on the tour:**

- 1. At this initial stage in the journey is it possible to hazard a guess as to the contents of the scroll labeled “The King’s Order”? Why does the recipient say, “This can’t be! It’s too simple. It’s too hard ... It’s brilliant!”** (While the answer isn’t spelled out at this point – the content of the scroll will be unpacked in subsequent episodes – we nevertheless get plenty of hints in this first Tour. Some key words to watch for are “send,” “engage,” “understand,” “discern,” and “do.”)
- 2. How does Dr. Tackett’s trip down the Grand Canyon shed light on the journey we’re about to undertake? Why does he ask participants to “sign a waiver” before moving ahead? What does he mean when he says, “There is danger here”?** (Like a tour of the Grand Canyon, our attempts to “gaze upon the Crown Jewel in the nature of God” will bring us into contact with both great beauties and great risks. We will discover that while God is infinitely good, He isn’t necessarily safe. We may find ourselves faced with hard truths about ourselves and the culture in which we live. We may be asked to step out and do things that make us uncomfortable. As a result, we may be tempted to run away. It’s important to understand all of this – and prepare for it – before the Tour begins.)
- 3. How does an encounter with the Living God impact us and change us? How does it affect the way we interact with other people? Why did Isaiah exclaim “Woe is me!” when He saw the Lord revealed in the Temple?** (A genuine encounter with God impacts us in three ways: it exposes us; it exposes the culture around us; and it calls us to engage and act. In the light of God’s glory, goodness, and perfect love, Isaiah was brought face to face with his own shortcomings and compelled to confess His need for forgiveness and grace. In the process, he was radically changed. The same thing will happen to us if we dare to approach His presence.)
- 4. Why would God send finite, imperfect, self-centered creatures to do something that He could do much better Himself? What is He really after?** (This will become clearer as we move into Tour 1 and begin to talk about God’s desire to promote the fruitfulness of His creatures. For now it might be sufficient to dwell on the idea that community, fellowship, participation, and growth are all part of God’s triune nature, and that as a result He wants to give us a place in His plan to engage the people of this world.)
- 5. Spend some time thinking about the video featuring students at the University of Washington. Why do they seem so unwilling to concede the obvious truth of what they can see with their own eyes? Why do you think people today are afraid to make definitive “truth claims”? And why is it so hard to live in “A Land of Nought”?** (So unpopular has the concept of “absolute truth” become in contemporary culture that definitive statements of any kind are almost certain to draw harsh criticism. George Orwell said, *“In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act,”* and we are discovering this to be true in our own day. This is one of the reasons it’s so hard to live in “A Land of Nought.” Another is the profound price we pay for our rejection of Truth: daily suffering, pain, and agony on an almost universal scale.)