

Tour 2 Themes

Tour 2 Themes & Further Study

Introduction

Tour #2 takes participants on a journey through the second of the five epochs of God's Meta-Narrative: the epoch of the *Fall*. This promises to be a difficult and discouraging trip. As we move down this road we will leave behind the glories and marvels of *Creation*, the first epoch, and travel to a place where everything has taken a drastic turn for the worse. We will pass the "tipping point" beyond which the natural flow from *life to life*, which was inherent to God's original design, suddenly turns back on itself and becomes an irresistible current of *death leading to death*. At this point the positive "gravity" that once drew everything in the direction of greater fruitfulness and abundance is replaced by a new "default" – the default of ruin, decay, frustration, groaning, and bondage. In this new degenerative state, the world and everything in it is pulled inexorably towards isolation and fruitlessness. As a result, God's beautiful River of Life is transformed into a toxic River of Death.

Why has this come about? What has happened to overturn the Creator's perfect primeval plan? Answer: a *villain* has stepped into the arena, bringing with him a narrative that runs directly counter to the Meta-Narrative of God. This *Satan*, the Accuser of the Brethren, is not only a liar and the father of lies, but "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). His entrance marks the starting point of the "Cosmic Battle" described in *The Truth Project*. He spins his lies with a single object in view: to kill and destroy (John 10:10). His endgame is *death*: the disruption of the downstream flow that once led from *life to life* and its replacement with a river of *downstream death* that puts an end to the fruitfulness of God's creation.

Themes

Once upon a time, says Dr. Tackett, everything moved naturally and effortlessly in the direction of abundant life and ever-increasing fruit. Because of human sin and the fall, the world has now shifted course. So strong is the negative counter-flow that we are no longer free to "float" through life as in the early days of man's innocence. We must resist the current or be swept into death and destruction.

Death and destruction: these are the results when we lose sight of God's Meta-Narrative and embrace the false promise that significance comes from living inside our own story and fulfilling our personal "script." To make matters worse, it's not easy to stand up against this pernicious lie. It's particularly challenging for those of us who live in the postmodern era, an era characterized by incredulity toward *any* meta-narrative of *any* description.

There are three major consequences to the loss of God's Meta-Narrative. First, it makes us vulnerable to "the Death Star lie" – the belief that everything is "all about me." Like a deadly tractor beam, this "Death Star lie" sucks us in and convinces us that peace and happiness are to be found by living according to one's own script. As a matter of fact, the exact opposite is true. The more we put Self at the center of the universe, the more we will be thwarted in our attempts to find ultimate

meaning. The result is the *bad fruit of anger, disappointment, impatience, bitterness, victimization, despair*, and a host of other negative attitudes and emotions that squelch the work of the Holy Spirit and prevent us from producing the good fruit of righteousness, love, and selfless investment in the lives of others.

The second consequence is *isolation and loss of relationships*. This is manifested primarily in a *loss of trust*. Believing that life is “all about me” and the fulfillment of *my* “script,” I naturally assume that you approach life in the same way. I become convinced that you are out to manipulate me in order to promote your own agenda. Together we fall prey to the idea that “everyone is a salesman.” This destroys interpersonal relationships and creates a world of lonely, alienated people. Eventually we reach the place where we can’t even trust God. We *fear* His overarching plan for our lives and reject His offer to bless us with *shalom* by making us everything *He* wants us to be.

The third consequence of losing the Meta-Narrative is *dependency as opposed to true freedom*. The God of love and life-giving relationships wants to *equip, empower, and send* us into the world that we might cultivate life and “provoke” the fruitfulness of creation. He desires to pour out his *shalom* upon us so that even the smallest and lowest creature can flourish abundantly. This is what real *freedom* is all about. The enemy wants to destroy this freedom by *consolidating* power and authority and enslaving God’s creatures under his totalitarian control. He does this by stirring up an attitude of incredulity towards the message of the Meta-Narrative. The end product is loss of meaning, loss of incentive, loss of purpose, and death.

Points to Watch For

Citing 2 Corinthians 2:11, Dr. Tackett makes the point that Satan has equipped himself with a bristling arsenal of schemes, wiles, devices, and destructive weaponry – devices of which we should not be *unaware*. If we want to reverse the flow of the River of Death, we need to educate ourselves about his deadly agenda.

The story of Ralph Maclean, member of the Canadian Royal Rifles and survivor of a World War II Japanese prisoner-of-war camp, is used to illustrate how the death of our own “scripted” dreams can actually become a springboard to engagement with God’s Larger Story and deeper investment in the lives of others. The key verse is John 12:24: “Most assuredly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

Isaiah 46:9-11 reminds us that the Meta-Narrative is real, and that Lord *does* indeed have a Larger Story in mind. If we will trust Him, He will bless us not only with our own peace and welfare but with a genuine zeal for the *shalom* of others: “For I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand ...’”

Scriptures like these confront us with a decision. Like the children of Israel at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (Deuteronomy 27:11-26), we can choose between blessing and cursing, life or death: “Therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Questions for Discussion

1. **In *The Truth Project*, Dr. Tackett emphasizes Satan's role as a "liar and the father of lies." In this episode he introduces a new element by adding that Jesus also calls the devil "a murderer" (John 8:44). How does this idea fit the context of the present Tour?** (In *The Encounter Project*, our focus has shifted from truth to fruit. Tour #1, "Creation," takes a close look at God as the Author of teeming, abundant life. Apropos of this theme, Satan emerges in the present context as the enemy of life and the purveyor of death. The guiding purpose behind his lies is not merely the denial of truth but the reversal of the tide of life. It's in this particular that he is seen to be the worst of murderers – a "Murderer" with a capital "M.")
2. **Why do you think "everything changed" when Adam and Eve made the fatal decision to disobey God by eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Exactly how did it change? How would you describe the current state of creation as compared with God's original plan?** (When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, creation's natural flow – a flow from *life to life* – was reversed. Everything began moving towards death and decay. Ironically, man's ill-advised attempt to "become like God" ended in his being denied access to the Tree of *Life*. As a result, the world now exists in an *abnormal* condition. Everyone understands this almost instinctively. One has only to take a quick cursory glance at creation to realize that something is terribly wrong.)
3. **Dr. Tackett makes the statement that Satan is perfectly content to let us live out our lives as "pretty green fig trees" – fig trees with no fruit. Why does this suit his overall plan so well?** (Satan doesn't need to wage an all-out campaign of "killing and destruction" in order to thwart God's original design for the propagation of flourishing life. All he has to do is prevent God's creatures, one at a time, from "becoming fruitful and multiplying." If he can put a freeze on that process, he has already attained his goal.)
4. **Everybody knows that the world is full of phonies, shysters, con-men, and professional manipulators. It's always wise to be careful when dealing with individuals of this description. This being the case, what's so bad about adopting an attitude that says, "everyone is a salesman?"** (Caution is always appropriate, of course. But the real answer to this question is that we cannot hope to reverse the negative flow of the River of Death without taking some risks. If we truly believe that "*everyone* is a salesman," we will never extend ourselves to anyone in compassion, love, and genuine fellowship. Once we get to that point, the enemy will have us exactly where he wants us.)
5. **While discussing the consequences of losing God's Meta-Narrative, Dr. Tackett makes the claim that dependency is inconsistent with true freedom. Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.** (Dr. Tackett's statement reflects a particular viewpoint which has been carefully developed over the course of the last two Tours. God's design is for each and every creature, from the highest to the lowest, to play an active part in the provocation of fruitfulness and the propagation of life. If a creature can be persuaded that it would be better to leave this work to others "better qualified" for the task – if, for example, rank-and-file Christians allow themselves to become convinced that *ministerial fruitfulness* is the sole job of "professional" ministers and pastors – then the "downstream flow" is, to that extent, cut off and discontinued. This is the kind of "consolidation of power" Dr. Tackett has in mind when he says that *dependency* runs counter to the current of *true freedom*.)
6. **What is God showing you specifically through this tour?**