

145 History of the world

As the proud owner of an O level grade 9 in history,¹ I will now give you a history of the world: 4000 years in under 500 words. (Please let me know if any of the dates are wrong.)

~2000 BC – Everybody thought that the gods were generally *angry*, needing to be *propitiated* by sacrifices. God knew different; but changing a worldful of minds takes time – thousands of years, in fact. **“I’ll start small”, thought God, but he had big ambitions.** He promised Abraham: *Through you, I’ll bless the whole world...* Abraham *trusted* God, so he was sent on a journey.

God tried to get this one small tribe to *trust* in his love for them. During a famine, God provided food for them in Egypt, but they didn’t *trust* him and so God allowed them to fall into slavery.

~1500 BC – Moses got them to *trust* God, and so he was able to *rescue* them from captivity. But people reverted to thinking that God was more of a *smiter* than a *rescuer*. They wanted God to *smite* their enemies (but they also feared that God would *smite* them if they didn’t do right). So God sent them on a journey, round and round the desert, to teach them to *trust* him.

~1500 BC – They entered the promised land, which God wanted them to take over by *trusting* him to drive the people out, but they did it by *smiting* the inhabitants.²

~1000 BC – The people couldn’t *trust* God to lead them – they wanted a king, like everyone else. So God provided King David – flawed, but at least he *trusted* God.

~600 BC – The people didn’t *trust* God, so he allowed them to be taken into captivity again; when they started to *trust* God, he *rescued* them from exile. But people still thought God was a *smiter*, not a *rescuer*, and this is reflected in all their (OT) writings. So God kept dropping hints about his *loving rescue*; his Spirit inspired the OT writers.

To 0 BC – God had again allowed them to become captives; as they read the OT, they interpreted it as saying that God, the Messiah, would *rescue* them, yes, but by *smiting* the Romans.

~AD 0 – **“I’ll start small”, thought God, but he had big ambitions.** Jesus was born.

AD 30-ish – Jesus spoke out against **religious domination**. He taught, healed and fed people; he asked them to *trust* that his Father God would *rescue* them.

AD 32? – Jesus died, rose again, defeated Satan and brought **real rescue** from the tyranny of sin.

Early centuries AD – **Massive explosion** of God’s love into the world. It spread like wildfire.

So they all lived happily ever after, right? Wrong – see overleaf.

¹ For those not old enough to know, grade 1–6 were passes, 7 was a fail, 8 was “You really failed!” and 9... you get the idea!

² This is Greg Boyd’s thesis in *Cross Vision*. See articles [125–128].

History of the world – Part 2

~AD 300 – Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and the church began to gain more power, leading to *religious domination*, leading eventually to...

~AD 1100 – *Religio-military domination* of the Crusades.

~AD 1100 – Spanish inquisition continued *religious domination*.

~AD 1400 – Wycliffe attempted to release the Bible from *religious domination*.

~AD 1500 – Reformation returned focus to *trusting* in God. But *religious domination* continued.

Up to present – *Religious domination* has continued, always based on my (our group's) interpretation of the Bible.

What's at the heart of this religious domination? I guess power is a factor, but I'm wondering if it's actually more based on fear (lack of *trust*)? Fear can make people do some terrible things.

Jesus taught *against* religious domination, and he gave up his life to combat it.

Jesus came to fulfil the Old Testament, and in doing so he changed people's interpretation of it.

(To be continued...)

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