

## 352 *Fake or Fortune 2*

I've had three email responses – really encouraging, thanks! First, a misunderstanding about what I'm 'rejecting'. My friend had read, 'The frame is: Genesis to Revelation...', and wanted to know what I was going to replace it with! Sorry, the reject 'frame' was the *whole* of that paragraph, the 'going to heaven' thing.<sup>[351]</sup>

In fact, my faith now depends more than ever on the Old Testament; and also on 'what will happen at the end'. Thanks to Tom Wright, I see eschatology as essential to this glorious artwork of the cross, resurrection and ascension of King Jesus. Previously, heaven was just a great place for the future.

The second email was from a friend who found it very encouraging. For several months he had felt very discouraged by 'the church', and he wondered what sort of 'message' we might have for the man on his street, whose wife had died very suddenly. I guess that if God's overall 'plan' – my 'frame' – is to bring blessing to everyone on earth, then what this man needs just now is reassurance of God's love; certainly not 'believe in Jesus, and you'll go to heaven'.

The third was really helpful for my own journey. The email started, 'I imagine we'd all be comfortable with your broad outline' (my 'frame', in blue). He could see no actual errors in it, although he did insist that, when I talked of Jesus defeating evil on the cross, it was 'fundamentally through PSA' (penal substitutionary atonement).

That's where my seven-year writing journey began: I decided that PSA was simply wrong. I could see how unhelpful it was to many people's appreciation of God's love, so I argued against it. I was making the same mistake as I had in the previous 50 years!

I applied 'true/false' tags to everything and then tried to convince other people that I was right (my group was right). Maybe I'm overstating it, but I was setting myself up as arbiter of 'what the Bible teaches'.

'Fake or Fortune?' is a simple binary question, albeit sometimes with huge financial implications. Thankfully, that's not what art is about – hopefully not, anyway! Does the painting speak to you? Does it stir you? Are you a different person, having related to it?

So this 'frame' is a way of looking at (thinking about) the good news, one that helps me to appreciate just how wonderful it is. It's not, 'Are those blue statements true or false?' but 'Does that way of looking (thinking) enable the Good News to change me?' It does!

Tom Wright says that Paul's writings don't just tell us *what* to think, they tell us *how* to think. Should we be using Scripture just as a way to judge what's right and wrong? I now think we should look at it as God's amazing plan to bring blessing to the world now and in the (final) future, with the glorious Good News as the central element, and let all that change how we live now.

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