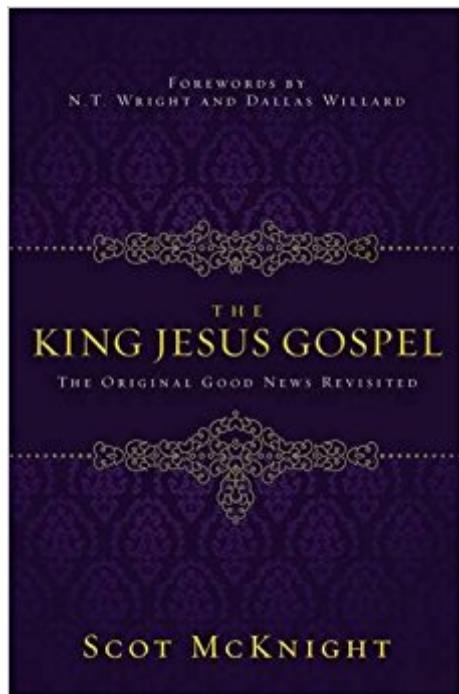


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The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited



Synopsis

Contemporary evangelicals have built a "salvation culture" but not a "gospel culture." Evangelicals have reduced the gospel to the message of personal salvation. This book makes a plea for us to recover the old gospel as that which is still new and still fresh. The book stands on four arguments: that the gospel is defined by the apostles in 1 Corinthians 15 as the completion of the Story of Israel in the saving Story of Jesus; that the gospel is found in the Four Gospels; that the gospel was preached by Jesus; and that the sermons in the Book of Acts are the best example of gospeling in the New Testament. The King Jesus Gospel ends with practical suggestions about evangelism and about building a gospel culture.

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Customer Reviews

Scot McKnight (PhD, Nottingham) is the Julius R. Mantey Professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Illinois. He is the author of more than fifty books, including the award-winning The Jesus Creed as well as The King Jesus Gospel, A Fellowship of Differents, One.Life, The Blue Parakeet, and A Kingdom Conspiracy. A

There are indeed some of the connecting points between the story of Israel, the Gospel message of Christ, the implications of personal salvation, and the method of persuasion of others of that salvation that even well-read Christians struggle with. This book attempts to identify the distinction between each of these four categories and properly explain how they relate to each other. I do find it to be incredibly important that we not consider a person reached and to simply move on to the next

person once they pray the sinner's prayer and accept Jesus. It is very important that they understand the larger Bible and how it all comes together. Some of the emails he includes in the book that he has received prove the need for some education as to the framework of the Biblical message and sadly reflect some of the questions I've been asked as well. If your people don't know what Jesus being the Messiah has to do with us being saved, or if they're asking if Jesus preached Paul's message, you would do well to spend more time teaching the actual content of the Bible rather than messages that build upon Biblical concepts your congregation isn't familiar with in the first place. The author understandably spends quite a bit of time trying to reassure the reader that he is not speaking against personal salvation or the evangelism process, he is simply trying to get us to stop and spend some more time developing an understanding of the actual life and story of Jesus, and the rest of the Bible that is a very important part of the context and why we need a salvation in the first place. He also spends some time highlighting that we are not done once we are saved and that there is a reason we are still here. Our behavior, actions, motivations, and routes through which we do evangelize and disciple others should be in keeping with what we know about Jesus. We are to live for Him in light of what He showed us. There is a lot more growth as a Christian that takes place after that conversion moment and too often Christians are allowed and even encouraged to sit in stagnation after that moment. If we really understood the Bible, it would not be the everyday car payments and such that take up 99% of our conscious awareness day in and day out.

Another way of putting it is this: the gospel is the Story of Israel that finds resolution in the saving Story of Jesus, and that story is about God's work in this world in the people of God. The above quote from this very important book summarizes for me what Dr. Scot McKnight is trying to emphasize. I read his book twice because I wanted to make certain I had the answer to this key question. What is the Gospel? The Gospel is a big deal! We must get it right! This book will make certain we get it right. When we get it right, we are properly equipped to do God's work. Before reading this book, my idea of the Gospel was way too small. It now is not. The Gospel is a story that first must be properly understood. Once understood, we will be ready to join and continue this story for future generations. This is a must read!

I have come to this book late; one of my students suggested I read it since it seemed to agree with what had been teaching. To begin with, I think this book is fine (with some caveats) for the gifted lay person or student. It is too general to be helpful at an upper graduate level, but is a good starter for people who are genuinely "walking in a manner pleasing to God." I am in general agreement with

McKnight's argument that we have traded the "gospel" in for a "plan of salvation." Much evangelism is focussed on getting a person to "make a decision" instead of following Jesus as Lord and Messiah. Therefore we have churches filled with people who, at least in regard to the moral life, are not statistically different than the general population. They have been given a "ticket to the show" and show up at church to be entertained. When I was in the Marine Corps, the "story of the Corps" was drilled into recruits' heads every day of boot camp. Why? Because, slowly and surely, they became part of something much bigger than themselves. They realized that they were part of a long line of men and women who sacrificed to defend this country. When it came their time to go out to the fleet, they were conscious of that heritage. The last thing an honorable jarhead would do would be to let those who had gone before or who were to follow, down. How many "new believers" think they are entering "the way"? How many have a sense that they are part of God's great drama of redemption and reconciliation? How many are willing to stick it out on some lonely beach head until relief comes. McKnight tries to show how the Church has fallen so low. When we became concerned about "our" salvation, "our" decision, we lost sight of the fact that we are called into God's kingdom and to follow Christ. Over time, "boots" in the Corps are given the privilege of being called United States Marines. Over time, "disciples" are given the privilege of being transformed in the very image of Jesus Christ (both Paul and Peter say so). C.S. Lewis once said there are two kinds of people: those who say to God, "Thy will be done;" and those to whom God says, "Your will be done." Too many today still want what they want - and that certainly is not a ""Long Obedience In The Same Direction".

McKnight does a wonderful job of working out an idea which has been proposed by several others pastors and scholars. This is the idea that biblical discipleship has all but fallen out of the mindset of the western church as an actual and necessary goal for those who would follow Jesus. This book is critical because it shows that the heart of the Gospel as understood by Jesus, the apostles, and the early church was a gospel which was all encompassing, beckoning the Christian to imitate all of Jesus' life and preach all of the gospel rather than simply to preach the plan of salvation. I value this work greatly as a pastor and as a denominational worker. We should be challenging our churches to embrace the gospel to the fullest extent in every way possible.

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