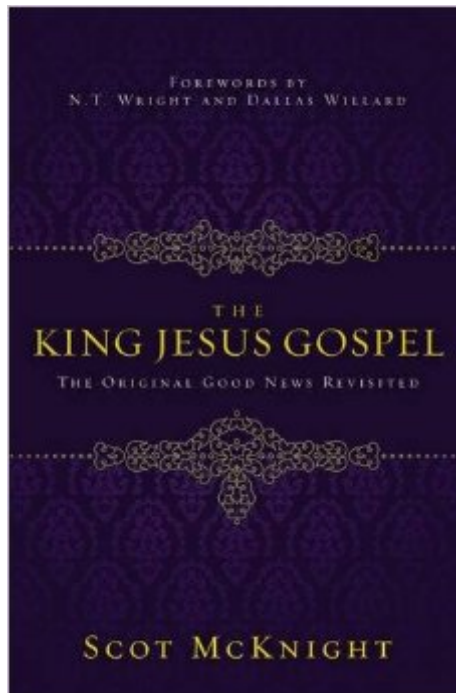


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The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited



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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Some books just give words to those ideas that have been floating around in your brain and suddenly you have a way to express what you were not previously able to express. The King Jesus Gospel is one of those books. Over the past months, I have been struggling through understanding scripture and the church and the gospel and how it all relates. Of course, not all of my questions are answered and of course, I am not sure about all of McKnight's answers, but his basic thesis, that we need to re-orient the way we talk about the gospel I am convinced is one of the most important messages I have heard. Early in the book McKnight summarized his thesis (which he does a number of times throughout the book). "Perhaps the most important thing I can say about what this book will argue boils down to these points: A salvation culture and a gospel culture are not the same. In thinking our salvation culture is identical to a gospel culture, we betray a profound lack of awareness

of what gospel means and what a gospel culture might mean for our world today. We are in need of going back to the Bible to discover the gospel culture all over again and making that gospel culture the center of the church." McKnight is quite provocative in this book. He clearly knows what he is trying to say, but he also knows that he will likely be misunderstood, and bends over backward to try and clarify to minimize any confusion. Frankly, my main complaint is probably that he spends too much time refocusing, repeating his point and clarifying that he is in complete support of personal salvation. The repetition is probably important to maintain the antagonistic reader, but for friendly reader it can be a bit draining.

Scot McKnight likes to stir the pot. I appreciate his willingness to say hard things with good reasons for saying those hard things. He has recently published *The King Jesus Gospel* in order to address a central issue for Evangelicals: the gospel. He wants to contend that "we evangelicals (as a whole) are not really 'evangelical' in the sense of the apostolic gospel, but instead we are soterians...we evangelicals (mistakenly) equate the word gospel with the word salvation" (29). He wants to argue that the gospel is more than a plan of salvation. The problem with a myopic, soterian church culture is that it creates "The Decided" (McKnight's term) rather than "The Discipled". This is not a problem of church programs or structures, it's an inherent problem with a soterian culture (30-31). After laying the groundwork McKnight moves on to consider how the gospel moved from the message of God's meta-narrative (story of all stories) to a plea for a decision. He contends that evangelical soterians have proclaimed the plan of salvation divorced from the story of God. This results in an immature and declining church. He then focuses on the gospel message as contained in the gospels and in Peter's epistles. Finally, he considers how his emphasis on the narrative of the gospel affects evangelism and ways to return to a gospel culture from our soterian culture. There are many parts of McKnight's book with which I wholeheartedly agree. Yet, there were as many others with which I disagreed or had concerns. Areas of Disagreement First, much of McKnight's argument felt like boxing a ghost.. Having been raised an evangelical, attended an evangelical Bible college and now attending an evangelical seminary, I am well acquainted with our strengths and weaknesses.

Every time I read a new book by Scot McKnight, my wife tells me I say the same thing, "I think this is the most important book he's written." After finishing his newest book, *"The King Jesus Gospel"*, I really believe that to be true for this book. His argument is essentially that we've replaced the Biblical Gospel with instead a Plan of Salvation, and while the Gospel will indeed lead to salvation, it is far bigger than just that. McKnight defines the Gospel this way, "It is the Story of Israel that comes to

completion in the saving Story of Jesus, who is Messiah of Israel, Lord over all, and the Davidic Savior."For the past few years, I have tried to understand how the methodology of the church has created a culture of consumerism and shallowness. What Scot does with this book is develops theologically how we have gotten to that place - simply by replacing the Gospel with the Plan of Salvation. This is the first theological book in a long time that I've had a hard time putting down. I found myself reading passages out loud to Allison regularly, scribbling notes and at times just wanting to shout, "yes" as I was reading it. I'd be willing to say that anyone who teaches or preaches the Bible regularly needs to read it. It's that important. Here's a few of the quotes I underlined: "Most of evangelism today is obsessed with getting someone to make a decision; the apostles, however, were obsessed with making disciples" "...the gospel itself, strictly speaking, is the narrative proclamation of King Jesus" "...in those early apostolic sermons, we see the whole life of Jesus. In fact, if they gave an emphasis to one dimension of the life of Jesus, it was the resurrection.

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