

A THEOLOGY OF THE GOSPEL: REASSEMBLING HUMPTY DUMPTY

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Introduction

In the most simplistic terms, the gospel of the Scriptures represents the full-orbed story of God restoring humanity into his image. Yet many argue God's holistic story of good news was toppled from the wall of the Reformation and only the decision-based plan of salvation has since been embraced.¹ In other words, intellectual assent to the Cross and resurrection has become the primary gospel message, leaving the rich creedal formulas of the Old Testament and the New Testament embodiments of living "in Christ" as neglected pieces of the story.² Therefore, in an attempt to put "Humpty Dumpty" back together again, this paper will survey Old and New Testament texts and ideas that support a well-informed understanding of the full gospel story of Scripture—the story about God and his love for his world. The major elements of a synthesized gospel presentation will then be developed as a means of communicating the gospel story in interpersonal contexts. Finally, this writer will delineate the effects of the theology of the gospel resurrected in this course of study on his life and ministry.

¹ For a brief look at this historical shift, see Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 70.

² For example, N. T. Wright has variously proposed that the gospel message far transcends the "individualistic message of 'how to be saved' which the word 'gospel' has come to denote in much contemporary western Christian expression" (N. T. Wright, "Part III: Paul's Theology," in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 916). Kevin Vanhoozer goes so far as to paint the decision-based message as a message of coercion. Vanhoozer writes, "In [New Testament] times, the passion for truth takes the form of evangelism, with a goal to conversion. During the history of the church, however, this admirable aim was not always admirably carried out. Conversion often took the form of coercion: your confession or your life" (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Exploring the World; Following the Word: The Credibility of Evangelical Theology in an Incredulous Age," *Trinity Journal* 16, no. 1 (1995): 24).

Defining the Gospel

The gospel of Scripture begins with eternity past and progresses to the restoration of all things to God. The development of this gospel story is examined in the sections that follow.

The Gospel in the Old Testament

The Old Testament portion of the gospel story begins with the creation of Adam and Eve, who were placed in the Garden to serve as mediators of God's presence by ruling over "every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:28 NASB). Scot McKnight suggests the created world represented God's "cosmic temple" and Adam and Eve his temporal priests.³ Alas, they usurped their roles and tried to elevate themselves to deity, to God's role. The result was banishment from the Garden and spiritual death, a severed spiritual relationship with God. Yet, the promise of redemption began with God's curse on the serpent: "[The woman's seed] will bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15 NASB). Gordon Wenham rightly concludes that the serpent symbolizes "sin, death, and the power of evil," with the curse representing "a long struggle between good and evil, with mankind eventually triumphing."⁴ Of this gospel of redemption, Franz Delitzsch once wrote, "This first prophecy of redemption is not only the most general and most indefinite; it is also, when regarded in the light of its fulfillment, the most comprehensive and the most profound."⁵

The Old Testament gospel story pivots on God's call of Abraham to form "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6), the nation of Israel. God then uses Moses to carry on the

³ McKnight, 137.

⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, vol. 1, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Inc., 1987), 80. Wenham draws on God's promised victory to Cain if he resists evil in Gen. 4:7 to reinforce the redemptive promise of Gen. 3:15.

⁵ Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888), 164.

assignment to rule and mediate the earth and to lead the nation of Israel out of bondage to Egypt, ultimately arriving in the Promised Land. Even though the task to rule and mediate is then passed on through a man after God's own heart, David, the nation of Israel continued to usurp God's authority and his laws. McKnight writes, "This kingly and priestly Story of Israel is one long set of maybes and almoses and you-did-well, but in the end Israel's failure leads to God's sending the one true representative Israelite, Jesus."⁶ Simply put, the Old Testament makes sense of what the Israelite Jesus would come to do—to become King Jesus, the perfect image-bearer of God and ruler and mediator of creation.

What connects the gospel story of the Old Testament can be described as three pulses or creeds that move throughout the written narrative and represent the core values of Old Testament theology. First, a narrative creed confesses the redemptive action of God (cf. Exod. 20:2). This redemptive action is characterized, in part, by God bringing ancient Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. Such a redemptive act is completed by way of miracles to give the land as a gift to the nation of Israel by God's grace. The second pulse, a character creed, confesses the redemptive character of God (cf. Exod. 34:6-7). This creed expresses the core of God's character, and what emanates from this confession is God's mercy, grace, slowness of anger, and abounding steadfast love—his covenant love (*hesed*) for his people. Finally, a relational creed confesses the relational aspect of God's Character. This creed is expressed in the relational identity statement: "I am God (Father), and you are people (son)."⁷ Such statements signify a reciprocal relationship between two relational partners most often demonstrated in the Abrahamic, Sinaitic, priestly, and Davidic covenants.

⁶ McKnight, 139.

⁷ Mark J. Boda, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 95.

The Gospel in the New Testament

All three of the Old Testament creeds, the narrative, character, and relational creeds, thematically bridge directly into the New Testament. Considering Acts 4:32, Mark Boda observes the thematic, covenantal connections and remarks, “The resurrection of Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s promise to bless the nations, it provides the means that God’s people can faithfully walk with him through the gift of his Spirit, and it means that the King God promised that would live and dwell on the throne of Israel forever has now come.”⁸ The narrative creed is evident in Acts 2:11 (“the mighty deeds of God” NASB) with an apparent reference to Deuteronomy 11:2 (“His greatness, His mighty hand and His outstretched arm” NASB) that recounts God’s deliverance of the nation of Israel from Egypt and into the Promised Land.⁹ The character creed is revealed by God expressing himself in and through Jesus and his Spirit’s indwelling among his people.”¹⁰ Moreover, the glory of Christ in John 1:14-18 can be connected with the glory of God in Exodus 33 and 34.

The relational creed is reflected in Christ’s renewal of four Old Testament covenants (Abrahamic, Sinaitic/Mosaic, Davidic, and priestly) in the inauguration of the New Covenant, and in the church, which receives all these covenants into their experience. The Abrahamic covenant is fulfilled through Christ and the Spirit, as portrayed in Galatians 3:8: “All the nations

⁸ Mark J. Boda, “The Heart of the Old Testament: Lecture 2 - the Redemptive Pulse of Old Testament Theology” 2013 Hayward Lectures (Video), 2013, accessed July 1, 2020, <https://youtu.be/Y1qsu71bobo>.

⁹ In the context of salvation (i.e., redemption) and deliverance, Allen Ross cautions, “There are differences between the Testaments in the ways the words are used; [Old Testament] words for salvation or deliverance can refer to deliverance from oppressors (Judg. 2:16), victories in wars (Psa. 20:6), deliverance from drowning (Jonah 2:9), healing from sickness (Psa. 6:4), or salvation from any other misfortune of life. And finally, throughout the [Old Testament] the salvation or deliverance Israel sought or enjoyed seems mostly concerned with the promises of the covenant as they related to life in this world as the people of God” (Allen P. Ross, “The Biblical Method of Salvation: A Case for Discontinuity,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments: Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.*, ed. S. Lewis Johnson and John S. Feinberg (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1988), 163).

¹⁰ Boda, “The Heart of the Old Testament: Lecture 2 - the Redemptive Pulse of Old Testament Theology.”

will be blessed in you” (NASB), and the Mosaic covenant is renewed in Matthew 22:37-39. The Davidic covenant is communalized in 2 Cor. 6:16-18 where the relational statement “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (NASB) is renewed and expanded into “I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me” (NASB). Finally, the priestly covenant is portrayed as renewed and fulfilled in 1 Peter 2:9 and Hebrews 13:10-12. Gregory Goswell concludes, “Covenants are needed in a world where people often fail to keep their promises or live up to their obligations. The biblical covenants reassure God’s people that God will fulfill his promises and they remind them of what they are obligated to do as people in a relationship with God.”¹¹

Darrell Bock ties all that Jesus accomplished through His death, resurrection, appearance, and proclamation to a restoration of the order that God had initially intended. In other words, Jesus “restored us into a new way [narrative creed], bringing new relationship, new power, and new access to the living God [character and relational creeds].”¹² Bock also draws thematic gospel parallels in Old Testament ritual cleansing and fellowship, with the New Testament practices of the Lord’s Supper and water baptism, a “meal and a washing.”¹³ The Lord’s Supper reminds the church of its Old Testament roots in community and relationships (an intimate meal) and reaffirms its indebtedness to Christ and his finished work on the Cross.¹⁴ The Old Testament ritual cleansing that was required to enter God’s presence in the tabernacle is shaped in the New Testament into a “new life of His Spirit,” “into a new temple of His presence” that “makes us

¹¹ Gregory Goswell, “The Two Testaments as Covenant Documents,” *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 4 (2019): 691.

¹² Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2002), 54.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

alive in him.” As Bock rightly notes, God now comes to us instead of us going to him.¹⁵ This New Testament gospel cleansing is demonstrated in the individual outward profession of faith through water baptism.

Theological bridges that connect the gospel narrative of the Old Testament to the New Testament are also visible in the renewal and fulfillment of Old Testament covenants to ancient Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant forms the first bridge wherein the nations of the world will be blessed through Abraham’s seed (i.e., in Christ; cf. Rom. 4 and Gal. 3).¹⁶ A second bridge is the Mosaic Covenant, where Jesus refocuses works-based adherence to the Law and sacrifice to a new heart-based way of living (cf. Matt. 5).¹⁷ The Davidic Covenant is realized in Christ as the promised heir to the Davidic throne, the heir that Bock rightly acknowledges is “a king who would bring peace and establish righteousness in line with promises God made originally to Abraham.”¹⁸ Finally, the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31ff (cf. Ezek. 36:22ff) is bridged by Christ’s finished work and is expanded to include both Jew and Gentile in the fulfillment of

¹⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010), 37.

¹⁶ On Abraham’s seed in Romans 4, James D. G. Dunn explains that both Jews and Gentiles are counted descendants of Abraham by faith in God’s covenant promise (vv. 16c-17a). Dunn writes, “The promise to Abraham, without reference to any act of covenant loyalty, when he was not yet a father, was an act of complete generosity.” This generosity (i.e., the unfolding gospel story) bridges into the New Testament “so that the promise and its beneficiaries might be expressions of the same grace” (James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 38A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Inc., 1988), 235).

¹⁷ J. C. Ryle captures this bridge to the New Testament portion of the gospel writing, “[Jesus] came to fulfill the *ceremonial law*, by becoming the great sacrifice for sin, to which all the Mosaic offerings had ever pointed. He came to fulfill the *moral law*, by yielding to it a perfect obedience, which we could never have yielded,—and by paying the penalty for our breach of it with His atoning blood, which we could never have paid” (J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: Matthew-Mark*, Second Reprint ed., vol. 1, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1956), 37.). Note also that some scholars have proposed that Jesus’s gospel message, and subsequently Paul’s, was less against works-based righteousness than embracing covenantal obedience. See N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan & Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009). See also, especially chapter 6, A. Chadwick Thornhill, *The Chosen People: Election, Paul, and Second Temple Judaism* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2015).

¹⁸ Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News*, 10.

God's promises (2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:10-13, 9:15). N. T. Wright concludes, "God's way of putting the world right is precisely through his covenant with Israel. . . God's single plan to put the world to rights is his plan to do so through Israel."¹⁹

The Old Testament covenants form a singular metanarrative that serves as the "backbone" of the gospel story. The metanarrative is God's fashioning "a people who themselves are a reflection of God's promise and blessing living in a world filled with need."²⁰ The need is forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God, two things that culminate "in and through the actions of Jesus Christ [as Messiah and King] and the community that bears his name."²¹ Such is the "big story" from the Testaments about God and his love for his world.

The Unified Gospel Story of Scripture

Now that the pieces of the gospel story have been gathered from both Testaments and connected and evaluated, "Humpty Dumpty" is positioned to be reassembled; that is, a unified gospel story of Scripture can be synthesized and stated.

The gospel message is a thread of redemption that began in eternity past (Eph. 1:4), was woven through human failure in the Garden (Gen. 3), progresses through individuals of extraordinary faith (πιστις) and then a chosen nation (cf. Heb. 11), through the covenant promises of the Old Testament (Gen. 9:11, 12:1-3; cf. Exod. 19:5-6; 2 Sam. 7:12-17; Jer. 31:31-34), and finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the seed of the nation as the promised Redeemer who, in a single act of supreme obedience, set in motion the redemption of humanity and the restoration of creation as Lord over all (1 Cor. 15:1-5; Phil. 2:5-11; cf. Heb. 8:7-1; 9;

¹⁹ Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision*, 65.

²⁰ Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News*, 11.

²¹ Boda, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*, 111.

10:11-24) to (1 Cor. 15:3-8). It is the universal story of God captured through the Story of Israel that is fulfilled in the Story of Jesus Christ. This is the full-orbed, whole-Bible gospel of God—the expression of the gospel within the umbrella of the entire biblical narrative revealing the enormous scope and unity of God’s plan and sovereignty and his faithfulness to all those who are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28).

The present-day aspects of the biblical story find imperfect humans as imperfect image-bearers of God ruling an imperfect world imperfectly.²² Nevertheless, God is faithful and has promised to set all things right. McKnight rightly observes that, in the end, the world will be right and notes,

Because Jesus will be the temple, and the Garden will become the eternal city, and it will be filled with peace, love, joy, and holiness. All usurpations will end, and everyone will serve Jesus in the power of the Spirit to the glory of God the Father. Humans will govern on God’s behalf in the way of Jesus. Forever.²³

Proclamation of the Full-Orbed Gospel

In proclaiming the “big story” gospel to those who would hear, we must take stock in the original premise of this paper; that is, like Humpty Dumpty, the full-orbed gospel of God has in most cases been reduced to a piece of the greater whole—to a decision-oriented plan of salvation culture versus a holistic gospel culture. McKnight weighs in writing,

When the plan [of salvation] gets separated from the story, the plan almost always becomes abstract, propositional, logical, rational, and philosophical and, most importantly, de-storified and unbiblical.... we cut ourselves off [from] the story that identifies us and tells our past and tells our future. We separate ourselves from Jesus and turn the Christian faith into a System of Salvation.²⁴

²² McKnight, 152.

²³ Ibid., 153.

²⁴ Ibid., 62. Ronald Johnson has observed another by-product of this simple decision-making gospel in a contemporary generation. Johnson cautions, “Emerging postmodernism seems to have little patience with the meta-narrative represented in a systematized plan of salvation. Many young postmoderns today reject the rationalism of the plan and prefer to think of God in image, symbol, concept, and story. This shift is not without critics who say

What, then, is the concise gospel presentation that accounts for the entire Story of Israel that is completed by the Story of Jesus? McKnight assists in reassembling the full gospel story by drawing from the preaching of the apostles, and bundles the gospel message as follows:²⁵

1. The Story of Israel frames the gospel—the saving story of Christ captured in his life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and future return—as the completion of Israel’s Story.
2. The gospel centers on Jesus as Messiah and Lord.
3. The gospel is a call to respond through repentance, faith (πίστις) in Christ, and public testimony in baptism.
4. The gospel promises forgiveness of sins, the indwelling gift of the Spirit, and justification.

For McKnight, the central aspect of the gospel proclamation is the lordship of Christ.²⁶ But the Story of Israel appears to be presumed in such a presentation, and McKnight does not embrace the brevity of this gospel presentation writing, “There is no way to reduce this [gospel] to four points, and there is also no way to sketch the gospel in a minute or two. To grasp the gospel we have to grasp what God is doing in this world, and that means we’ve got a story to tell.”²⁷

Matthew Bates helps in developing such a storied presentation by spelling out how Jesus and the Gospel authors proclaimed the one gospel. Bates begins by proclaiming the gospel through an outline of the life of Christ that, according to the Scriptures, is represented by elements beginning with his preexistence with the father and continuing through his incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances, ascension and exaltation to the right

that it leads away from a proper theological view of God and God’s offer of salvation, toward a kind of designer religion where any concept of God can be fashioned and found legitimate” (Ronald W. Johnson, “Gospel Witness: What It Has Been, What It Might Need to Be.” *Review and Expositor* 105, no. 4 (2008): 660).

²⁵ McKnight, 132-33.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 133

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 148.

hand of the father as Lord, and future return as King and judge.²⁸ Central elements of this gospel presentation include God's Old Testament covenantal faithfulness to Israel, his New Covenant faithfulness to humanity by way of Jesus, and his culmination of the salvation story in the "city-dwellers" of the new heavens and new earth.²⁹

Yet proclaiming such a holistic gospel message is not a "back-of-the-napkin" or notecard endeavor. Indeed, this wide-screen Story of Israel fulfilled in the Story of Jesus does not necessarily make for a simple, accessible, and transferable proclamation for most people. Consequently, this writer has embraced a gospel of promise espoused by Bock that contains the following major elements:³⁰

1. The "good news" of the gospel is that God has taken the initiative in Jesus Christ to restore humanity into a relationship with him.
2. At the core of this good news is God's promise to form a new relationship and a new community.
3. God was remaking this relationship with a people he formed long ago (the nation of Israel) around the Ten Commandments and other mandates that formed a law.
4. Following this law did not lead the people of Israel fully into a right-relationship with God, not because the law was flawed, but because the people were.
5. For a right-relationship to function with God, "a new work had to be done from within the depths of the human soul."
6. God, therefore, offered all of humanity hope through a promised sending of his Spirit in the last days and an expectation of a restored right relationship with him.
7. But the obstacle that prevented the right-relationship with God before remained; that is sin, a barrier that would require a deep, deep price for removal—a life.
8. God paid the price himself through his Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the world.
9. Evidence that Jesus is the Messiah is found not only in his empty tomb and resurrection from the dead, but also the promise of a new era, the gift of a new relationship with God through his Spirit.
10. In the Spirit's presence, God not only draws near, but we regain fellowship with him and join "the reconciled people He had been dying to create."³¹

²⁸ Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 51.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

³⁰ Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*, 20.

³¹ For a more conversational presentation of the same full-orbed gospel story, see Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York, NY: Viking, 2015), 58-59.

While this gospel proclamation does not dive deeply into the “tall grass” of Israel’s story, enough of the story is conveyed to bridge the gospel between the Testaments and reveal what God has accomplished through the death, burial, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ. This writer believes such a gospel proclamation provides a foundation for an unbeliever to rationally understanding the “big story” of the gospel and, by God’s grace, forms a basis for intellectual assent to the person and work of Christ and allegiance to his lordship in their life.

The Impact of a Theology of the Gospel on Ministry and Life

The theology of the gospel introduced and restored in this course of study has been an unveiling of a fractured message, much like Humpty Dumpty, and fractured living, themes that did not previously come to my mind. The fractured message is a loss of sight of the forest for the trees. In other words, the typical plan of salvation merely seeks to persuade unbelievers to turn from their sin in repentance and find Jesus as Savior over and against the “big story” of the gospel described in this paper. Though I believe context and culture have a significant influence on the gospel presentation, the full-orb gospel of Scripture now informs my ministry and my evangelistic witness. Such a witness is intended to be the substance of the ten points presented in the prior section of this paper.

What is meant by the term “fracture living” is living outside the bounds of the holistic gospel of Scripture as this course now reminds me. Reassembling a gospel-centered life into my own life and ministry is the desired product of these studies. What does this “unfractured living” look like? Michael Gorman rightly concludes God’s universal purpose is “to call a people into existence from both Jews and Gentiles, and to make them fully into the kind of peaceable, holy,

and faithful community the people of God were always intended to be.”³² Such is the essence of “becoming” the gospel (unfractured living) and participating in advancing the good news through witness: “witness in word, in deed, and in the unpleasant consequences that often attend faithful witness.”³³ Gorman argues the character demanded by such a witness is expressed as a triad of faith (or faithfulness), hope, and love—“not an arbitrary group of virtues, but a natural consequence of the gospel of God.”³⁴ Wright aptly concludes that the work of the gospel of salvation is about “what God does *through* us, not merely what God does *in and for* us.”³⁵

A comprehensive theology of the gospel provides me with faith and hope in God’s story, and my positional placement in this story is “in Christ.” Being “in Christ” means pursuing a reconfigured life in fellowship with God that will flow into and out of my ministries. For all believers, being in Christ means “that our identity is clearly established, as is our allegiance to Him. This pulls us in a positive direction with a new possibility for living that we did not have before God entered our lives.”³⁶

Conclusion

At the outset, this paper conceded that the gospel of Scripture has frequently been reduced to a simplistic plan of salvation, a persuasive message of repentance and pledged loyalty to Jesus Christ based on God’s promise of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The caricature

³² Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission, The Gospel and Our Culture Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 61.

³³ *Ibid.*, 89.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 200.

³⁶ Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News*, 118.

of Humpty Dumpty represented this simplistic gospel as a fragment of a greater whole that is the Story of Israel completed in the Story of Christ.

Working through Old and New Testament texts and ideas, a complete gospel story has been revealed and its proclamation proposed. The Old Testament portion of the story brings promises of victory, restoration, and renewal and the return of the presence of the Lord among his people. The New Testament portion of the story reveals that the “messianic, lordly, and kingly confession of Jesus” is the point of Scripture, and “the gospel is the good news that Jesus is that Messiah, that Lord, and that King.”³⁷ The full-orbed theology of the gospel flowing from this “big story” has not come to my mind in recent years. Nevertheless, the application of this renewed theology has been expounded and now introspectively applied to my approach to ministry and life.

Despite the rather sad conclusion to Humpty Dumpty’s tale that “all the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t put Humpty together again,” this course of study has shown and instilled in me that all of King Jesus’s people can put the gospel message back together again. There is genuinely no warrant for a fractured gospel message, nor is there a warrant for living fractured non-gospel-centered lives. The gospel should be recounted and preached as the Story of Israel completed in the Story of Christ, a gospel that instills hopeful anticipation both in its proclaimers and its hearers.

³⁷ McKnight, 141.

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