

(2) There is a paucity in the use of biblical data. This leads to the question of the role of the Bible in smashing "the dividing wall of hostility," a task which Matsuoka is convicted (vii) is the duty of the Christian church.

Kenneth Mulzac

McKnight, Scot. *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 263 pp.

Scot McKnight is a coeditor for the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* and the general editor for the Guides to New Testament Exegesis series. He wrote *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* and *A Light Among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period*.

This book is "an exploration of how the teachings of Jesus are to be configured in light of his mission to the nation" (ix). McKnight follows G. B. Caird, Marcus Borg, and N. T. Wright in their approaches, which are focused more on national and political elements than other approaches. He arranged his studies under these headings: "The Vision of Jesus: A Preliminary Sketch," "The God of Jesus," "The Kingdom Now Present," "The Kingdom Yet to Come," "The Ethic of Jesus: Conversion and Cost," and "The Ethic of Jesus: Morality."

In the discussion of "The God of Jesus," McKnight describes the holy God who calls Israel to repentance. Jesus represents God, who is the national God. In "The Kingdom Now Present," he emphasizes that "God's long-awaited and promised plans for the deliverance and restoration of Israel are now being fulfilled" (118). The kingdom was realized, in fact, in Jesus' table fellowship with sinners, in His offer of forgiveness, in His mysterious parables, and in His miracles. Jesus was ushering in the kingdom. He was the Prophet of the last day. Exorcisms and healings revealed the kingdom.

In "The Kingdom Yet to Come," McKnight characterizes the final kingdom as populated by those who associate with Jesus. Jesus was not certain of the time of the fulness of the kingdom. The future would begin with God's judgment in the form of the destruction of Jerusalem. The kingdom of God would be made up of restored national Israel. There would be an endless fellowship with the Father. It would be the consummation of history. Here McKnight excludes Gentile mission and Christianity from his discussion.

In "The Ethic of Jesus: Conversion and Cost," faith and repentance are focused on in the discussion of conversion to Jesus. Vocation, family, possessions, and self-denial were discussed in regard to the cost of conversion to Jesus. "The Ethic of Jesus: Morality" deals with virtues and attitudes under three major headings: righteousness and love in relation to God; humility, trust, transformation of self, and hypocrisy in relation to oneself; and love, forgiveness, mercy, and peace in relation to others.

McKnight believes that Jesus had a single vision for restoring Israel. His vision only concerned Israel as a nation; it did not contemplate founding a new religion. McKnight understands that "Jesus' vision for the nation included an ordeal of tribulation" as a judgment before God (8). Jesus saw His own death as part of that ordeal. McKnight describes Jesus as having been "conscious of his destiny as a vicarious sacrifice for Israel in order to avert the national disaster" (13). Jesus saw that the God of Israel was active in Him for the redemption of Israel. Based on form-critical study, McKnight sees the parable of the Prodigal Son to be a story about Israel's relationship to God, not simply about an individual Israelite. Luke's context tells us a different story. McKnight seems to sanitize much of the Gospel material to fit his scheme that Jesus' vision was only for Israel. He stresses Israel over individual people by saying that the people did not confess their personal sins but instead they confessed the nation's sin (212). It is an arbitrary comment and contrary to the scenes of baptism where confession of sins took place (e.g., Matt 3:6). His conclusion makes Jesus stand in line with the prophets of old, in that Jesus is believed to have had the same vision of hope for the restoration of Israel which appears again and again in the last parts of the Hebrew prophetic books (233).

The emphasis on the corporate repentance and obedience of Israel as a nation cannot be sustained unless repentance and obedience come from individual Israelites. This was why Jesus rendered services on a personal level rather than by going to the kingly court to reform the country on a national level. All His activities and teachings were geared to serve individual Israelites. McKnight's idea of Israel's restoration is a restoration before God. It is only through a spiritual renewal that this restoration may become possible.

McKnight agrees with the majority of scholars that the NT kingdom message tells about the inauguration of the kingdom in the words and deeds of Jesus, and it foretells a consummation of the kingdom in the future. In its consummation there will be judgment and complete restoration (75, 77).

Two things especially concern me: (1) By using only the sayings whose authenticity has been agreed on by scholarly consensus, McKnight is able to present a fairly consistent picture, but it is not the whole picture found in the Gospels. While one tends to feel more comfortable with a logically consistent picture, it is important to remember that not all things are always logically consistent. (2) McKnight's narrow focus on the nation of Israel may distort or ignore other texts that deal with a universal scope.

I would like to commend McKnight's book on two counts: (1) I appreciate his excellent summaries of scholarly trends. (2) His description of the historical Jesus is helpful for readers in that they can see Jesus more in terms of the political context of His day. By reading this book, students may feel the atmosphere of those days when Jesus was teaching along the lakeshores of Galilee.