

ALL OR NONE

In an article on *OneNewsNow.com*, Peter Heck reviewed recent statements by Rob Bell, identified with “the hipster emerging church movement.” Heck discussed Bell’s suggestion of universal salvation, which implies a denial of the existence of Hell. Heck rightly asked,

If one can ignore the exclusive nature of the Gospel message..., interpreting it away for some universalist, liberal doctrine that soothes itching ears, what prevents one from doing the same with any sticky or uncomfortable teaching of Scripture?

Heck has zeroed in on a basic principle regarding the Bible: It is a unit, a harmonious whole. God does not give men the luxury of approaching the Bible as if shopping in a supermarket—choosing only what pleases his palate and leaving the rest on the shelves. If the Gospel doctrines of Heaven, Hell, and salvation only for obedient believers in Jesus as the Christ (John 8:24; 14:6; Mat. 7:21–23; et al.) are dispensable, then by what principle is any of it worthy of respect? To many, of course, none of it is.

Such mishandling of Scripture robs it of any authority. To thus abuse the Bible makes it meaningless. One may as well run it through a paper shredder and be done with. The Bible accentuates the *all-or-none* approach to its contents. Psalms 119:160 states: “The **sum** of thy word is truth” (emph. DM). That is, we must take all of it and fit it all together to know the will of God. Paul wrote somewhat on this subject as well: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

When early Jewish Christians sought to “cherry-pick” circumcision from Moses’ law and make it a condition of salvation, Paul exposed their folly: “Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:3). The same is true of the Law of Christ. God’s Word must be taken as a whole.

Theological liberalism has always been mere camouflaged universalism. “Emerging church” liberals simply take it to its logical end. For over a century, liberals have denied the Biblical accounts of miracles, ridiculed the veracity, inspiration, and infallibility of Scripture, and replaced the Biblical Gospel with their humanistic “social gospel.”

Those who ignore (yea decry) such Gospel truths as baptism unto remission of sins, the undenominational nature of the church, and authorized worship, have little right to denounce the “emerging church” heretics. If such “salvation” doctrines do not deserve our reverence, then why should its “moral” strictures (e.g., lying, fornication, adultery, theft, sodomy, etc.) do so?

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