

Billy Graham's Apostasy

by Tom Flannery

After more than six decades spent preaching the Gospel — the truth that we can only be saved by God's grace through faith alone in Christ — Billy Graham now says non-Christians in other faiths (false religions) and secular humanists may be going to heaven.

In a profile of Graham in the current issue of Newsweek, managing editor Jon Meacham asks the 87-year-old evangelist whether those who belong to religions that reject Christ as savior (Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc.) and secularists will be saved.

"Those are decisions only the Lord will make," Graham replied. "It would be foolish for me to speculate on who will be there [in heaven] and who won't. ... I don't want to speculate about that."

Of course, it's true that Christ is the eternal Judge and will determine who spends eternity with Him and who does not. But it's also true that He has told us plainly, through His personal testimony and the many corroborations contained in His Word, that it is only by believing in Him that a person can be saved.

He is, after all, the One who said of Himself: *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25).*

So there's no need to *"speculate"* about something that has been clearly revealed to the world by Christ.

In the Newsweek profile, Graham explains his new thinking thus: *"I believe the love of God is absolute. He said He gave His Son for the whole world, and I think He loves everybody regardless of what label they have."*

Indeed, He does. *John 3:16* assures us: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."* The question isn't whether God loves every one of us or not, but why would He allow His beloved Son to die on the cross? He answers that question in the conclusion of this same verse. It is so that *"...whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* Because He loves us so much, Christ took the punishment we deserved for our sins and died in our place on the cross because it was the only way that any of us could ever be saved.

According to God's inerrant, immutable Word, salvation is based exclusively upon believing in Christ — believing not being mere mental assent, but rather the placing of one's complete trust for eternal life in the Person of Christ and His completed work for us on the cross — apart from which there is no possibility of being saved. *John 3:36* tells us: *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

Meacham hails Graham's conversion (so to speak) on the primary issue of salvation as an enlightened ecumenism, when it's really nothing more than age-old universalism — the erroneous idea that all roads lead to God and we're all going to get to heaven one way or another. This is the *"I'm all right, you're all right"* philosophy of the world.

Well, if I'm all right and you're all right, then someone is going to have to explain the cross.

Meacham describes Graham's embrace of universalism in glowing terms, similar to the way in which media elites like himself celebrate Republican legislators who adopt liberal voting patterns over time as having *"grown in office."* Thus, the Newsweek article is entitled *"Pilgrim's Progress."* Get it?

In the piece, Meacham calls Graham *"a resolute Christian who declines to render absolute verdicts about who will get into heaven and who will not"* and as someone who *"refuses to be judgmental."* As liberals have been lecturing us for decades, we can't speak in absolutes (because, according to their warped worldview, they don't exist) and therefore should never be *"judgmental."*

Meacham writes panegyrically how Graham has come to *"an appreciation of complexity,"* or what liberals like to call nuance. They love that, because it's completely antithetical to the Bible's dogmatic teachings about right and wrong, good and evil.

He says Graham's newfound complexity and *"gentleness of spirit"* (i.e., as opposed to the rank mean-spiritedness of those who hold to the truth of Scripture) separates Graham from other far more incendiary and divisive religious figures — radicals like Graham's own son Franklin, who had the unmitigated gall to tell the truth about Islam being *"a very evil and wicked religion"* (his father, needless to say, strongly dissents).

Graham's redefining of salvation doctrine also separates him from any number of others who were considered radicals in their day.

One of them was the apostle Paul, who wrote by inspiration of God: *"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).*

Another was the apostle John, who wrote by inspiration of God about Christ: *"But as many as received Him, to them He [God] gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His [Christ's] name" (John 1:12).*

Yet another was the beloved physician Luke, who wrote by inspiration of God concerning Jesus: *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).* This verse is a four-fold declaration of the truth that salvation is found only in Christ, and in Christ alone.

How much clearer can it be?

Well, even more important is the testimony of one other *"radical"...* Jesus Himself, who declared unequivocally: *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).*

Graham hasn't completely forsaken the Gospel message, telling Meacham that he's made his share of mistakes in life but knows that all those transgressions have been paid for by the shedding of Christ's precious blood. And he does acknowledge with great regret in the article that he didn't spend nearly as much time studying Scripture as he should have through the years.

Considering his apostate redefining of salvation doctrine, I'd have to agree with him on that one.

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