

# The Problem with “The Bible is All about Jesus”

There is a teaching prevalent in pulpits in some evangelical circles that “the Bible is all about Jesus”. The purpose of this appears to be a cajoling to get believers to read their Bibles so they know more about Jesus.

This statements is false and misleading. It is not the sort of truthful statement a leader full of godly wisdom would propagate. Really, not everything in the Bible is about Jesus, nor is everything in the OT prophetic of him or his work. The statement may seem to be a good incentive but it “serves as an excuse to avoid the hard work of figuring out what’s really going on in many passages. People are taught to extrapolate what they read to some point of connection with the life and ministry of Jesus—no matter how foreign to Jesus the passage appears. Imagination isn’t a sound hermeneutic. Not only does it lack boundaries that prevent very flawed interpretations (and even heresies), but it makes Scripture serve our ability to be clever.”<sup>1</sup>

When we apply this seemingly noble attitude to the Bible we are forgetting that it wasn’t written to us. We can’t get out of it what the writers didn’t put in it. The Bible must be interpreted in literary and cultural context, and our Western way of thinking precludes us from unearthing its real meanings if we analyse it with our modern minds and do what we like with it. I believe this propensity comes from educational institutions which teach students how to interpret art (paintings, poetry or drama) by trying to work out what the author was trying to do with their product. It’s a silly process to guess why someone made something when you can’t ask them yourself.

Back to biblical understanding.

Here are the problems with ‘it’s all about Jesus’:

*“First, if we filter passages that aren’t about Jesus through something Jesus did and said, we won’t have any hope of understanding what those passages were actually about...”*

*Second, the assumption can lead to minimizing or ignoring passages in which we can’t clearly see Jesus. Since Jesus is central to God’s sovereign plan of salvation, passages that don’t add some detail about his teachings or the gospel story are considered peripheral or optional. Why bother spending serious time in a passage that “doesn’t matter” for having eternal life...*

*Third, becoming skilled at seeing Jesus in places where he isn’t can discourage others from Bible study or lead others under one’s spiritual charge to believe we have special (even authoritative) insight. When “Jesus stuff” isn’t obvious in a given passage and we’ve been taught that it’s somehow all about him, it’s easy to just give up and let pastors and others tell us what they “see.” People shut off their brains when they are led to believe they can’t think well about Scripture.”<sup>2</sup>*

Let the Bible be what is is. Don’t make it fit your traditions, your prejudices, your personal crises, or your culture. Don’t super-spiritualize every verse. Let it say what it was meant to say by interpreting it properly. Otherwise, studying it is an academic exercise, not an activity of gaining spiritual understanding.

**The Bible is really about a kingdom lost and regained – that’s the big picture**

Laurence

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1 – Michael S. Heiser (2017) “The Bible Unfiltered: Approaching Scripture on Its Own Terms” p:27

2 – Michael S. Heiser (2017) “The Bible Unfiltered: Approaching Scripture on Its Own Terms” p:27-28