

# An Analysis of Rob Bell's Love Wins – Mark Chanski – 3/20/11

## Introduction

1. A Word about Identifying & Refuting False Teachers
  - Matthew 7:15; 2 Timothy 4:3; Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 2:16; 1 Timothy 1:19
2. A Word about Geographical Nearness

## 1. The Book's Trailer Video

- Mohler: He comes across as if he's simply asking innocent questions – really, they're subversive Questions – in fact, they're rhetorical questions, which makes them Bold Assertions – insinuations as the serpent – “Yea hath God said?”

## 2. The Rapid Spread Universalism – Scott Mcknight

- My own estimation is that somewhere near 75% of my students, many if not most of them nurtured in the church, are more or less (soft) universalists.

A. Universalism – All will be saved regardless of religious beliefs

B. Pluralism – Each + every religion is legitimate in that it prepares a person for final existence w/ God. No unique splace for JC.

C. Christian Universalism – Whether people know it or not, God saves thru JC – all can + will be saved thru JC – Barth

D. Evangelical Universalism – God saves only thru JC, rejecters of God will experience Hell, but after a temporary time there, post mortem (probably), they will positively respond to Christ.

E. Annihilationism – those who don't believe the gospel will experience H, but their punishment will run out, + they'll be utterly destroyed + annihilated + cease from existence.

\* Martin Bushir Video – MSNBC interview w/ Rob Bell

## 3. The Deep & Wide & Diverse Stream of Christianity

- Universalism has been around a long time. But so has every other heresy. Arius rejected the full deity of Christ and many people followed him. This hardly makes Arianism part of the wide, diverse stream of Christian orthodoxy.

## 4. The Central Argument of the Book

- The book is a sustained attack on the idea that those who fail to believe in Jesus Christ in this life will suffer eternally for their sins. Beware of Bell's smooth talk. Bad theology usually sneaks in under the guise of familiar language.

## 5. The Ax to Grind Against Fundamentalism

- Bell reminisces about the scary picture in her house of a floating cross-bridge to heaven. He likens it to a joint project from Thomas Kinkade and Dante or like Dungeons and Dragons, Billy Graham, and a barbecue pit rolled into one (22–23). He and his sister were freaked out. This story of leaving earth to go to heaven by means of faith in Christ is not the story he wants to promote anymore.

## 6. The Author's Narrow Upbringing

- This is not an evangelistic work, not in the traditional sense anyway. The primary intended audience appears to be not so much secularists with objections to Christianity, but disaffected evangelicals who can't accept the doctrine they grew up with.

## 7. The Exegetical Problems

- A. Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6)
- B. Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 11:23-24)

\*Bell has a reputation for being brilliant and creative, and he probably is in certain spheres. But his use of Scripture exhibits neither characteristic.

## 8. The Gospel Problems

- Bell is saying God has already forgiven us whether we ask for it or not, whether we repent + believe or not, whether we are born again or not.
- Bell categorically rejects any notion of penal substitution. It simply does not work in his system or with his view of God. “Let's be very clear, then,” Bell states, “we do not need to be rescued from God”, as if there was something in God for us to be afraid of.

## 9. The Morphing and Blaspheming of God

- We really do have two different Gods. The stakes are that high. If Bell is right, then historic orthodoxy is toxic and terrible. But if the traditional view of heaven and hell are right, Bell is blaspheming.
- *If there was an earthly father who was like that, we would call the authorities. If there was an actual human dad who was that volatile, we would contact child protection services immediately.*

**10. The Love For People** - If *Love Wins* is wrong—if the theology departs from the apostolic good deposit, if the biblical reasoning falls short in a hundred places, if the god of *Love Wins* and the gospel of *Love Wins* are profoundly mistaken—if all this is true, then what damage has been done to the souls of men and women? Bad theology hurts real people.

## 11. The Real Gospel Solution

- How can God be both Loving and Holy? – Compassionate and a Consuming Fire? – At the Cross, God's love is wed to His holiness.