

One Example of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God from Isaiah

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The Gospel According to Mark

By Pastor Sean Harris

Bible Text: Mark 1:14; Isaiah 65:1-16; Romans 10:20-21

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Mark chapter number one and then Isaiah chapter number 65 is where I would like you to go. Please put something in to save your place in those two Scriptures: Mark 1 and Isaiah 65.

Our sermon title is “One Example of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God from Isaiah.”

Let me tell you what I am going to do before I do it. That always helps. I am going to show you from an Old Testament Scripture the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ok? I am going to show you that we don’t have a disconnection between Jesus, Paul and Isaiah, that we don’t have a disconnection. I am going to take a current hot topic from *Time* magazine and a book that has been released, and my goal is to destroy the guy, ok? I just want to come right out front and make sure that you understand what my objective is. I am going to be really clear. I want you to walk away saying, “What he thinks is stupid,” ok? That is my goal. And I want to do it from the Old Testament.

Would you please look at verse number 14 of chapter number one of the gospel of Mark? And I am going to ask you to remain seated for right now for just a moment.

The Bible says, “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God...”¹

Now let me remind you. When Jesus was preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God he did not have a New Testament from which to preach. He preached from the Old Testament. He preached from 39 canonical books.

Let me show you what I mean.

The book of Isaiah is quoted 21 different times in the New Testament. The book of Psalms is quoted many more times. In fact, your entire Bible comes from the Old Testament in many regards.

¹ Mark 1:14.

Mark 7:6 says, “Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”²

Then in the book of Luke 4:17 the Bible says that Jesus went into the synagogue and actually took the scroll or the roll or the portion of Luke, and Luke says that he preached from Isaiah.

So what I want to do for you this morning to help you understand the connection between the Old and the New. I want to take an Old Testament passage like Isaiah 65 and I want to show you the kingdom of God. I want to show you that we do not have a disconnection between Old and New; we do not have a disconnection between Jesus and the Father; and we do not have a disconnection between Paul and Jesus. We have one message from one Holy Spirit.

So now if you will take your Bible and stand and let’s read from Isaiah chapter number 64; this will be our primary preaching text for this morning. Chapter 64 is a prayer. Verse 65 is the answer to the prayer. Isaiah 64:11 is where I want to begin.

“Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.”³

The people are describing their current conditions. This is the post exilic period.

What do you mean by that, preacher?

This is the time after God has carried the children to Babylon and now they are getting to return to Jerusalem. So this is after Daniel. This is after Shadrach. This is after all those types of people. This is moving back in, reoccupation time. And the word “house” there is the temple of God.

In verse number 12, they asked this question.

“[God,] Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD?”⁴

Are you holding back?

Look at the second part of it.

“...wilt thou hold thy peace?”⁵

² Mark 7:6.

³ Isaiah 64:11.

⁴ Isaiah 64:12.

⁵ Ibid.

Are you going to keep silent? Are you going to speak? Are you out there, God? Will you continue to afflict us?

Verse one of chapter 65 is his answer. God is speaking now in first person.

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.⁶

Verse number eight:

Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number. Therefore will I number you...⁷

That is an interesting play on words there. We will talk about that in a few moments.

...to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall

⁶ Isaiah 65:1-7.

⁷ Isaiah 65:i8-12.

howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name: That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.⁸

Father, as we do our very best this morning to tackle 16 verses from the book of Isaiah, help me to communicate truth. Help me, God, to slow down. Help me to patiently and diligently work through the text and teach it in Jesus' name. Amen.

In verse number 12, they asked a question.

“Wilt thou hold thy peace?”⁹

Are you going to keep silent and keep afflicting us? Is that the God that we have? Is Jehovah the kind of God that doesn't talk and just afflicts and afflicts? Is that the God we have?

I mean, it has been a long time since we have heard from you, God. And our house is in waste and we feel like we are not even your people anymore. God, are you out there?

Have you been there? Have you been there before or not? You haven't crossed that bridge in your life to where you have prayed and prayed and prayed and you just feel like you can't get an answer?

Am I by myself or is there anyone that can say, “No, I have been there, preacher. I know what it is to call unto God over and over again and I feel like he is just silent”?

Verse one of chapter 65 is the answer.

When they asked, “How long will you keep silent?” here is the response.

“I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me.”¹⁰

The issue is not with me. It is not me that is being silent right now. It is not me that has disappeared. It is not me that can't find you. The issue is not with me. Behold, look at me. I am here. I, in fact, have revealed myself unto a nation that was not called by my name. In fact, he says, I have spread out my hands all day long. I have spread out my hands to a rebellious people. He communicates that the issue is not with me. Don't look to the problem with me. The issue is not me. It is with you. God says, I have reached out my hands all day long, all day long to a rebellious people.

⁸ Isaiah 65:12-16.

⁹ Isaiah 64:12.

¹⁰ Isaiah 65:1.

You know what that is like, parents. You have parented a child in that rebellious period. You have been there where it seems like all you do is give and give and give and give, and they take and take and take; and every single time you turn around, it is your problem, mom. It is your problem, dad. The problem is not with me.

Are you there or not? Have you been there? Have you parented a child like that and you just feel like, my goodness, this is God. This is God communicating.

Paul takes this and he helps us understand the truth of this text. So turn to Romans chapter number 10 so I can show you an example of how Paul uses Isaiah and helps us understand Isaiah. I want to get you to see the link between the prophet Isaiah, the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul.

I want to show you today that there is complete unity in your Bible. So would you please turn to Romans 10?

Verse 11 says, “For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”¹¹

Verse 12 says, “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”¹²

Verse 13 says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”¹³

Verse fourteen asks:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!¹⁴

Now please notice verse 16.

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?¹⁵

¹¹ Romans 10:11.

¹² Romans 10:12.

¹³ Romans 10:13.

¹⁴ Romans 10:14-15.

¹⁵ Romans 10:16-19.

Paul is dealing with the question of the Gentile Christians. And why is God moving from Jews to Gentiles? And why is God moving from the Israelites to this new thing called the Church? Paul says that Israel should have known because according to Moses, the Word of God says “I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people.”¹⁶

Now remember this: in Isaiah 65, he said a nation that did not know my name.

Now he says, “A people who are of no people and a foolish nation I will anger you.”

But Isaiah is very bold. Now he is quoting exactly and says, “I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”¹⁷

Here is the question. Can we charge God with unrighteousness? Can we say, “God, there are people in South America and in Africa, and these people want to know you, God. And because you have not revealed yourself to them, they are going to go to hell and it is your fault, God”? Can we say that? Can we say that there are people in Australia and in the remote regions of the world who have not heard the gospel, and we can’t imagine how a holy and a righteous God will send them to hell? Can we really ask that question? And according to the apostle Paul he says, “No.”

The truth of the matter is there isn’t anyone out there seeking after God. It is God that is going after people. You do not have a scenario whereby there are people on the planet who want to know God and he is saying, “No, no, no, no.”

It is just the opposite. The apostle Paul wants us to understand that the true scenario is it is God that is looking after people. It is God that is reaching down; it is God that is revealing himself. It is God that is reaching out all day long and making himself known to a people that didn’t even know there was a God.

So don’t charge God with injustice. Don’t charge God with not being very loving. God says, “It was me who had my arms out. It was me who was reaching down, making myself known to a people.”

And if you will take just a moment and think about your own conversion experience, you will realize that for years God was looking after you; God was calling you. God was revealing himself to you. It was through many years that God was making himself known unto you. It wasn’t you that was calling for God. It was God that was looking for you.

So go back. Now we were at verse 11. I want to take you back to verse one and I want to show you an incredible parallel between Isaiah and Mark. Now I want to show you 64:1.

¹⁶ Romans 10:19.

¹⁷ Romans 10:20-21.

They opened their prayer with this question.

“Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.”¹⁸

They are praying to God, and they feel like they haven't heard from God. They feel like it has been years since they heard from God, and they feel like God has been silenced. So they are down on their knees; you can just imagine them praying. And they are asking, “God, would you rip open the heavens and speak? Would you come talk to us, God? Would you reveal yourself to us?”

And what I want to tell you is that Mark 1:15 is the fulfillment of Isaiah 64:1.

Mark 1:15 says:

And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.¹⁹

So what I want to show you today is that Isaiah 64:1 was fulfilled in Mark 1:15. It contains the answer to “Will you come down?”

The answer is yes. God did come down. The answer is he did end his silence. The answer is he did reveal himself. The answer is, “Yes, Israel. I will come down and I will reveal myself to you one more time, and I will give you another opportunity to receive the kingdom, and if you will fall on your knees and worship me as Lord and King you can have the kingdom.”

But, as you well know, that people in that first generation did not accept Jesus Christ. They were a rebellious people, and they did reject him.

In verse number two, you see God's omni-benevolence and his all powerful disposition to do good. You see that all God wants to do is good, and he is always looking for an opportunity to do good. And we don't have an angry God who is cranky and crabby most of the time. It is just the opposite. Our God is always looking for a chance to do good. He is always looking for a way to take a bad situation and turn it into a good thing. His very nature is to take bad and turn it into good.

If you know your Old Testament you know he does it over and over and over and over again. And I would submit to you that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest example of God taking what men intended for evil and turning it into good.

¹⁸ Isaiah 64:1.

¹⁹ Mark 1:10-11.

So, verse two says, “All day long I have spread out my arms, all day long.”

Now please notice verse five. I want you to see the parallelism that our author intentionally puts in there, the author being the prophet Isaiah.

He says the sins articulated. We will look at them in just a minute in three, four and five. Notice please, the word “these” referring to the sin; it is a plural pronoun, “These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.”²⁰

So, God is out here with his hands out all the day, and all the day, they are blowing smoke into his nostrils. All the day he is saying, “I love you.” All the day, he is extending his arms saying, “Here am I. Here am I. Here am I.” And all the day they are snubbing their nose at God.

So the issue is not with God. We don’t have a situation in which they are offering up to God praise and worship and he is ignoring it. It is just the opposite.

So now it is getting to the sins. We will take them one at a time. We will work through them.

The first one is they are living in rebellion to God. Are you living in rebellion to God? Has God revealed his will to you in specific areas and you are living in rebellion? Are you living in rebellion? Are you living with someone outside of marriage? You are living in rebellion to God. Are you refusing to steward your money properly? You are living in rebellion to God. Is God leading you on the mission field and are you choosing not to go? You are living in rebellion to God. Is God leading you to join the church and you are refusing? You are living in rebellion.

We have a tendency to live in rebellion. Those of us that are parents know that we do not have to teach our children how to be rebellious. It came pretty natural for them, didn’t it?

Number two, they are not walking after God’s good way. They are not walking after God’s good way. They don’t walk the way God would have them to walk.

How often do I hear “Hey, preacher, I am saved. I have asked Jesus in my heart. What more do you need to hear from me?”

Yes, though that is some big deal that you asked Jesus into your heart.

John said it like this. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”²¹

If you are not walking in the light, there is no assurance of forgiveness of sins. Walking in the light is your assurance.

²⁰ Isaiah 65:5.

²¹ 1 John 1:7.

The apostle John says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."²²

And you know as an adult parent that you love to know your children are walking in the truth. That is an incredible encouragement to you. And what I want to communicate to you is that Jehovah looked down and he saw that his people were not walking in the truth. They were not walking in the truth. They were walking after their own thoughts.

Here is the problem. They are walking after their own thoughts. They know what the revealed will of God is in the first 39 books of the Bible. All of them had not been written at this time, but they had the Torah. They had the Mosaic Law. They know what the Word of God said concerning things. And Jesus, I mean, God looks down and says, "You are not walking the way I would have. You are walking after your own thoughts."

Let's talk about your own thoughts. Most recently a person from Michigan who is in charge of a large body of people that assembles on Sunday wrote a book, and the book is titled *Love Wins*. *Time* magazine got a hold of the book and the author and decided to write an incredible article about Pastor Rob Bell. That is their word, not mine. What if hell doesn't exist?

And in this book titled *Love Wins*, the great suggestion is that in the end, everyone goes to heaven. In the end, love wins. In the end, God wins because love wins, and love wins is the essence of the book.

And if you take the time to read the article (and I would encourage you to), you need to be aware of things. You will notice that the words "traditionally" and "traditional" are used. It uses phrases like "the traditional reaction", "the Christian traditional perspective", "the conservative Christian perspective", and "the Christian tradition." And that is how what this blessed book says is no longer called biblical. It is called traditional.

Can I tell you? I am not following a tradition. I would not get up here spit, holler and run up and down over a tradition. I am communicating to you from a book that I believe to be divinely inspired. Now if you have not come to the conclusion that this is a unique and special book, then my message to you is going to sound like the critique I got last week which was, "Preacher, you sound a lot like a used car salesman."

And do you know what? If this was not a divine book containing truth, then perhaps that is the way you would see it.

You say, "Why are you so passionate, preacher? Why were you so fired up last week? Why are you constantly asking us to examine ourselves and take a look at situations and all of that?"

I want to tell you why. It is because heaven and hell hang in the balance.

²² 3 John 4.

Now, if I didn't believe that there was a real hell, if I believed like Rob Bell believes which in the end love wins and maybe you get a day or two which you are delayed, but eventually you get to heaven, then I certainly wouldn't need to be as passionate. I certainly would not be as bold. I certainly would not be as engaging. I could just tell clever stories and talk about marriage and how to have a better life and everything would be fine because it really doesn't matter whether you fall on your knees unto the lordship of Jesus Christ. You can go through your entire life snubbing God and in the end love wins.

Let's watch this video from Rob Bell, please.

Several years ago we had an art show at our church and people brought in all kinds of sculptures and paintings and we put them on display and there was this one piece that had a quote from Gandhi in it. And lots of people found this piece compelling. They'd stop and sort of stare at it and take it in or reflect on it. But not everybody found it that compelling. Somewhere in the course of the art show, somebody attached a hand written note to the piece and on the note they had written, "Reality check. He is in hell."

Gandhi is in hell? He is? And someone knows this for sure and felt the need to let the rest of us know?

Will only a few select people make it to heaven and will billions and billions of people burn forever in hell? And if that is the case, how do you become one of the few? Is it what you believe or what you say or what you do or who you know or something that happens in your heart? Or do you need to be initiated or baptized or take a class or be converted or be born again? How does one become one of these few?

And then there is the question behind the questions. The real question: What is God like? Millions and millions of people were taught that the primary message, the center of the gospel of Jesus is that God is going to send you to hell unless you believe in Jesus.

And so what gets subtly sort of caught and taught is that Jesus rescues you from God. But what kind of God is that that we would need to be rescued from this God? How could this God ever be good? How could that God ever be trusted? And how could that ever be good news?

This is why lots of people want nothing to do with the Christian faith. They see it as an endless list of absurdities and inconsistencies and they say, "Why would I ever want to be a part of that?"

See, what we believe about heaven and hell is incredibly important because it exposes what we believe about who God is and what God is like. What you discover in the Bible is so surprising and unexpected and beautiful that whatever we have been told or taught, the good news is actually better than that, better than we could ever imagine.

The good news is that love wins. (End of Video)

Let me tell you what Rob Bell has done. Rob Bell has created a new god and the new god is love. That is what Rob Bell has created. It is not the God of the Bible.

Let me tell you what the good news is. It is not that Jesus rescues you from the Father. The good news is that Jesus rescues you from yourself.

The good news is that, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”²³

We are not pitting Jesus against God and God against Jesus. We don’t have a major disconnect in which Jesus has to rescue you from the Father. He said, “I and my Father are one.”²⁴ We don’t have a disconnection like that.

I don’t know what gospel Rob Bell is talking about, but it is not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not at all. It is ridiculous. The manner in which he makes God out to be this meanie and Jesus is the good guy is not in sync with what I just read to you from Isaiah 65:2 where Jehovah says, “All day long I have been reaching out my arms. All day I have been reaching out. All day long I have been loving. All day long I have been rescuing people. All day long I have been making myself known unto a people that didn’t even know I existed.”

Don’t tell me that Jesus rescues me from the Father. Tell me that Jesus rescues me from myself, for I am inherently selfish. According to Rob Bell, the reason millions are going this way is not because of a list of absurdities. It is because we are inherently selfish people. And we don’t want anyone telling us what to do. And so the only way you can build a church in Michigan is to invent a new god with a new gospel.

And in the new god with the new gospel you will reinvent the Bible and preach what you like and call into question what you don’t like. And you will tell your people from your preaching position that that is not what the apostles meant and that is not what the Word of God says. And all of a sudden you have elevated yourself to a pope position.

And while he would easily say he denies that, the truth of the matter is, all he is doing is calling into question thing after thing after thing that has been understood to be orthodox, evangelical position for 2,000 years.

And this is not a new idea. In 1885, 1886 and 1887 Charles Haddon Spurgeon was fighting the same thing in Great Britain. For Baptist preachers in Great Britain were telling people that because Christ died for all, which he did, that all would eventually get to heaven and it really didn’t matter whether you, in fact, would accept Jesus or not on this earth. You would be given another opportunity and another opportunity and another

²³ John 3:16.

²⁴ John 10:30.

opportunity and that is how we have the Unitarian church of today. It came out of the downgrade controversy.

And if you decide to go back to Great Britain some day and make a visit, you will have a hard time finding a Bible believing, gospel centered, Christ exalting church. Do you know why? Because the downgrade controversy enveloped Great Britain and if Bible believing, Christ exalting, gospel preaching preachers don't teach their people and call into question men like Rob Bell, we will have another Great Britain right here in America.

And somebody says, "Golly, I thought after that Easter message you would settle down."

How can you settle down when you have nuts writing books like in the end love wins?

I want to walk up to Rob Bell and say, "What kind of God would send his son to die on a cross if in the end everybody gets to go to heaven anyway? What kind of God would do that? That doesn't make any sense. You talk about a loving God. What kind of God would send his only begotten son to die on a bloody cross if he had a plan B?"

See, what I find amazing is that the God that he invents is an all loving God and yet if we find an earthly father that is all loving, we call the guy a bum. If we find a dad who doesn't discipline his children, if we find a dad who doesn't teach standards, if we find a dad who doesn't take a hard stand when there is a necessity to take a hard stand, we call that earthly father a bum because he raises spoiled brats. But suddenly it is ok for the heavenly Father to have no justice, no truth and no moral standards whatsoever such that even Hitler can find his way into heaven eventually.

That is nonsense, hogwash, and other four letter words.

Accusation number three: The people provoke me to anger. They sacrifice in the gardens and burn incense upon the altars.

Remember in verse number 11 of chapter 64? The temple is burnt down. It is in waste. And so instead of rebuilding the temple, they just go out to alternate places to worship God.

Have you ever had someone tell you, "I can worship God wherever I am. I don't need to be part of the Church. God knows who I am. God knows my heart. I really don't need to be connected"?

And God says, "Why are you not worshipping me at the temple? The temple is where you are supposed to be offering sacrifices. You are not supposed to be out in the gardens of your own making offering sacrifices. Get busy rebuilding the temple."

Do you remember this? Nehemiah has to come back as the first governor and say, "What is going on here?"

They are offering sacrifices on bricks.

You say, "What is the problem with bricks?"

Bricks are defiled because man makes bricks, and they are not to offer anything from a man made foundation.

There we go. Don't miss this. This is so insightful. The foundation has to be a stone cut by God. It cannot be a man made stone. When you have a man made stone, you have a man made religion. That is what is happening in Michigan right now. You have got a new religion starting and the new religion has a different God and a different gospel and a semi Bible.

Accusation number four: they remain among the graves and lodge in the monuments.

What are they doing among the dead all night long? Is that where God's people are supposed to be? Are they supposed to be hanging out with the spirits? Isn't it amazing how this new age is infiltrating Christianity, and now what we have is this quasi Christianity stuff in which you are allowed to dabble in this and dabble in that and dabble in this. You get into the horoscopes and you get the new age movement, and all of a sudden Christians have a fascination with all this kind of stuff and the Word of God is no longer enough.

Albert Mohler said that what Rob Bell does is exegetical gymnastics with the Word of God. What a great description. He does gymnastics with his exegesis.

When you can write an entire book, and nobody agrees with you from orthodoxy; maybe you are wrong.

And yet hundreds upon thousands of people are sucking up the book. Do you want to know why? It is because nobody wants to think about their relatives being in hell. And it is not a joy to me to think that way. Nobody enjoys thinking that way. There is something wrong with you if you like to think that way.

So what are you trying to do, preacher?

I am trying to preach the Word of God. That is it.

Accusation number five: They are eating swine's flesh. They have got abominable things in their vessels.

Is this permissible according to Mosaic Law? No, but remember, they are thinking after their own thoughts. So in their religion you don't worship at the temple. You worship in the gardens. In their religion you offer sacrifices on bricks that you made. In their religion

you eat what you want, and all of a sudden you have a new man made religion. And in Rob Bell's religion, nobody goes to hell.

Accusation number six: What do they say? They stand by themselves. Don't come near me. I am holier than thou, and a self righteous attitude begins to infiltrate churches in which man made religions take over things.

I am better than you because I am more intellectual than you. I am better than you because I wear the right clothes and you don't wear the right clothes. I am better than you because I am in the right church and you are not. I am better than you.

And all of a sudden, you don't need the grace of God because I am better than you.

Six and seven, here is God's response.

Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.²⁵

So what you have is this incredible, perfect, balance of justice and truth and love in Jehovah in which he is reaching out his arms all day long to a rebellious people, but his love does not over take his justice. And he extends love and he extends love and he extends grace and he extends grace, but at one point he draws the line in the sand and he recompenses evil of their iniquities.

Verse number eight says:

“Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.”²⁶

Here is what Rob Bell should be asking. Instead of asking the question “Why do some people go to hell”, the more appropriate question is “Why does anyone get to go to heaven?” That is the more appropriate question. Why does anyone get to go to heaven? There isn't anyone good enough. We are in and of our own selves prone to a man-made religion. We will in a millisecond think our own thoughts. It takes grace to submit to the Word of God. We don't naturally submit. We are just the opposite. Nobody tells me what to do.

And you don't have to teach that to a two year old. Am I right?

²⁵ Isaiah 65:6-7.

²⁶ Isaiah 65:8.

So here is what the text is saying. If you see a cluster of grapes and anywhere in that cluster of grapes there is a good grape, don't destroy it, because there is some new wine in there. There is something that can be redeemed in there.

Now you take that illustration and move it over to Israel. God says, "So will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all."²⁷

God promises as he looks down at Israel to preserve a remnant.

In Isaiah 65:9, God says, "And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob."²⁸

And remember, Abraham begat Isaac and Isaac begat Jacob. Now don't forget that.

"And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there."²⁹

Now he just talked about if I see in the grape anything to redeem it, I will save it.

Verse number nine says "I am going to send a seed out of Jacob."

This is how you should understand that from the apostle Paul.

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."³⁰

What did the previous verse say? A what? A seed. A seed out of where? Who is that? It is Christ.

In Genesis 3:15, what was the promise to Eve that she would have a seed? What would that seed do? It would crush the head of Satan.

I wanted you... there it is. So when Rob Bell says, "Hope," when Rob Bell says that Jesus is rescuing us from God, that isn't in sync with the Scriptures, because the Scripture says that God is sending Jesus.

So we don't have a scenario in which Jesus says, "Man, I know the Father is a mean angry guy. And do you know what? I am going to go down there and rescue people because they are really pretty good people. And the Father is kind of a cranky old dude and I need to rescue them."

That is not what we have. That is not what we have at all. God the Father, Yahweh, Jehovah says, "I will send. I am the one making this." This is not Jesus' sidebar plan.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Isaiah 65:9.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Galatians 3:16.

This is God saying, “I will send a seed out of Jacob. I will create an inheritor. I will ensure there is elect. I am going to make sure the remnant is saved.”

What we need to understand, people, is that if God left us to our own devices, none of us would be redeemed. We don’t have a scenario in which we have got a bad God and good people. We have got a great God and evil people.

Jesus said that the Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms all talk about me.

So I know that I am right when I say Genesis 3:15 is talking about Jesus. I know that I am right when I say that Isaiah 65:9 is talking about Jesus, because Jesus said, “I am in the law. I am in the prophets. I am in the Psalms.”

So this is what I want to say to Rob Bell and I want to say to everyone who is paying attention to this book. The cross of crucifixion stands as the symbol of God’s outstretched hands, saying to a dying world, “Behold me. Behold me.”³¹

So when someone walks into the art show and puts the reality check on there, I love it. What a great solid fundamentalist it was that walked in there and said, “Reality check. Gandhi is in hell.”

And Rob Bell attacks them and says, “Have you been there?”

How arrogant. That is an intellectual elitism right there.

“Have you been there? Can you confirm that?”

According to the Word of God, I can. According to the Bible, I can.

See, that is why it all comes down to the Word of God, folks. Either the Word of God is truth or it is not. Either you have embraced it as your book or not. Teenagers, it is not you mom and dad’s book. Is it your book?

In verse 11 there is an interesting play on words here that I want to show you.

“But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop.”³²

It is a Hebrew word that could go either direction. It could go like numbers like a troop or it can go down here to fortune which is the way the ESV renders it. I want to show you how it is a play on words both in the King James and the ESV. It doesn’t really matter. It is there because both see it.

³¹ Isaiah 65:1.

³² Isaiah 65:11.

They are preparing an offering for a new god, the god of fortune, the god of destiny, the god of numbers, the god of multiplying things, and they furnish a drink offering unto that number referring back to that Hebrew word previously, fortune and destiny.

I wonder if that is America offering gods up to destiny, offering offerings up to fortune.

Now notice, please in verse 12.

“Therefore will I number you...”³³

The God of a troop, the God of numbers, that is where they are going and God says, “You want that? I will number you, all right. You are seeking to offer things to destiny. I will destine you, all right.”

See, here is how Rob’s book should be titled. In the end God wins, not love, God wins. God wins for the good and God wins for all. In the end God wins.

“Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear.”³⁴

The issue is not with God. The issue is with them. It is with them. It is not a matter of Gandhi didn’t know. Gandhi knew there was a Jesus. Gandhi knew the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gandhi wasn’t clueless. Gandhi wasn’t living in a bubble and had no idea that there was something out there called Christianity. Gandhi wasn’t out there clueless as to the cross of Jesus Christ. He consciously rejected Jesus Christ.

Paul said it like this in Romans 1:19-20.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that [please notice] they are without excuse.³⁵

The intellectual elitism of the Rob Bell crowd wants to ask this question. They want to look you right in the face and they want to say, “What kind of God would let somebody way down in the remote regions of Brazil who never heard the gospel go to hell? What kind of God is there like that would allow somebody in South America who has never heard the gospel go to hell? What kind of God could that be? That is not a very great God. That is not a very big God, is it?”

And what Paul says is there is nobody out there screaming for God. There is nobody out there that is saying, “I want to know the one true God,” and God turning a blind eye to

³³ Isaiah 65:12.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Romans 1:19-20.

him. There isn't anyone down there in Australia or in the remote regions of Africa getting up every day and saying, "I want to know the true God." and God is saying, "No, you can't."

In fact, he has got just the opposite scenario. God is reaching down to villages. God is reaching down to South America. God is reaching down to North Africa. God is reaching down to tribes. God is reaching down. God is sending missionaries.

Flip it on them. Don't let them ask the questions. You ask the questions. That is ridiculous nonsense.

Anybody that has read anything about missionary accounts knows that God in an amazing way directs missionaries to find people. Story after story after story after story in which we were going south and all of the sudden we found ourselves going north. We thought we were going to the southern village and we were in the northern village. We thought we were going to this tribe, and we ended up here. And when we got there we found the people were ready to hear the gospel and we couldn't get over the way God had brought an increase.

Do you think that was an accident? No. That is a sovereign loving God directing people to those who want to know him.

Gandhi didn't want to know God. Gandhi wanted to know his own god.

Verse thirteen says:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice..."³⁶

But it is the opposite. Christ's servants serve God. Christ's servants do good. Christ's servants eat, drink, rejoice, sing for joy and will inherit the land.

But the opposite is true. The rebels provoke God. They do evil. They will hunger and they will thirst. They will be put to shame. They cry for sorrow, will howl and die by the sword.

So here is what I want to say to you. If Rob Bell is right and we are wrong, then the Bible is wrong, because how is it, then, that they cry? When do they cry then? When do they cry? When do they sorrow? When are they thirsty? When are they hungry?

You see, you are either cursed or you are blessed.

In verse 16 you are blessed.

³⁶ Isaiah 65:13.

“That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.”³⁷

I am going to read from this passage and we will close.

I am not going to preach from it. I am just going to read from it, just so I want you to get the parallel between what Jesus said and Isaiah.

If you want to follow along that would be great. If you don't want, that is fine. Mark, Matthew 25:31 and I am just going to read the Word of God right now.

As we leave this place I want you to be fed from the Word of God.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.³⁸

Now, pray, tell me, Mr. Rob Bell, why in the world would you divide the sheep from the goats if they are all going to heaven? There is not a whole lot of point in dividing sheep from goats if they are all going to heaven, is there?

That is why he does the gymnastics with the Word of God to write his book.

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.³⁹

In Rob Bell's book the only difference is instead of getting to golf on Monday, some of you won't get to the golf course until Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, but in the end everybody gets to golf at the golf course.

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer

³⁷ Isaiah 65:16.

³⁸ Matthew 25:31-32.

³⁹ Matthew 25:32-34.

and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.⁴⁰

That sounds a lot like Isaiah, doesn't it? Hungry, thirsty, clothed.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into...”⁴¹
What kind of fire? Is it a temporary fire? No. That is not what the Word of God says.

So what Rob Bell does is he reverts to the ancient languages and decides that he has got to reinvent words and redefine them.

It is very clear; it is the everlasting fire.

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.⁴²

In the end, my dear brothers in Christ, God wins. And if you want to be a winner, get on God's side. God doesn't get on your side. We get on his side.

⁴⁰ Matthew 25:35-40.

⁴¹ Matthew 25:41.

⁴² Matthew 25:41-46.