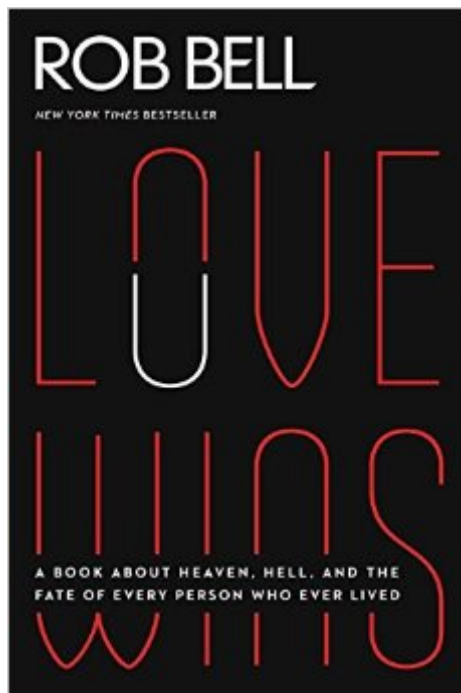


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Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, And The Fate Of Every Person Who Ever Lived



Synopsis

In *Love Wins*, bestselling author, international teacher, and speaker Rob Bell (Velvet Elvis, Drops Like Stars) addresses one of the most controversial issues of faith—“hell and the afterlife”—arguing, would a loving God send people to eternal torment forever? Rob Bell is an electrifying, unconventional pastor whom *Time* magazine calls “a singular rock star in the church world,” with millions viewing his NOOMA videos. With searing insight, Bell puts hell on trial with a hopeful message—“eternal life doesn’t start when we die; it starts right now. And ultimately, Love Wins.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am not a Rob Bell fanboy; however, I do have a generally positive opinion of the little exposure I’ve had to his ministry. When *Love Wins* was first being reviewed and its author was being held up in many quarters as Satan’s chief apostle my first instinct was ignore it. (There are only so many books one can read.) Finally, the clamor reached so close to home that I had to give in and read it for myself. I don’t like to let third parties do my thinking for me. The uproar is understandable. Bell has a habit of asking hard questions. He also has a tendency to not provide definitive answers to the hard questions he asks. And when those questions concern the issues of heaven and hell and the possibility of universal salvation...well, the sacrificial fat is clearly sizzling on the altar. It is hard to pin down Bell’s position and I am strangely OK with that. I suspect the reason is because these are some very complex questions and the Bible is somewhat lacking in absolute clarity. Where the Bible is lacking in absolute clarity we extrapolate dogma at our own risk. Honestly, when it comes to eternal things I think the Bible gives us the best picture we can possibly process from our finite

frame of reference. Sometimes that picture seems confusing because things that seem exclusive of each other in this world can actually be essential to each other in the various dimensions of eternity. (What sense does it make in this world to die in order to live?) Do heaven and hell exist? Of course they do, and Bell would be one of the first to assert their reality. He does have a little different take on what, and when, heaven and hell are but he certainly doesn't deny their existence. Far from making them smaller and less meaningful he actually makes them bigger and more meaningful.

First of all I want to say that I have greatly admired the preaching and books that Rob Bell has put out before "Love Wins". I will continue to recommend "Velvet Elvis" and "Sex God". He is a brilliant communicator of God's Word. I listen to his podcasts more than any other preacher. The Good I applaud Rob for taking a risk and writing about this extremely important, touchy, weighty, and often not talked about topic. It is a topic upon which Evangelicals are underdeveloped in their thinking. In writing about this topic publicly Rob gives us permission to talk more freely with each other about it. The more thinking and study of this topic the more we will be careful in our sometimes overly simplistic views or verbal slams against others. Bell writes, "I've written this book because the kind of faith Jesus invites us into doesn't skirt the big questions." Amen. Completely agree. The Great The book is fabulous, compelling writing. Bell paints pictures, turns a phrase ("It's as if we're currently trying to play the piano with oven mitts"), illustrates, and illuminates the biblical text in a way few others can. He clearly sets the gospel in its cosmic framework, not just its human salvation framework. Jesus came not only to save sinners, but to redeem the world--every atom. He articulates a gospel that transforms trees as well as people. This is a good thing and should stretch Evangelicals to understand what Colossians is getting at when it says, "This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven" (Colossians 1.23). "A gospel that leaves out its cosmic scope will always feel small." (p. 135) Agreed.

People who are decrying this book and Rob Bell because of his (rather vague) stance on hell or because of his so-called universalism are entirely missing the point. Even if you altogether remove those elements, Bell is still making a powerful statement about what it means to be a Christian. We are so concerned with where we're going when we die that we're ignoring what we're doing while we're here. Jesus didn't come to reconcile us in some unknowable future--he came to reconcile us to God today, which is why he came as a healer. In the OT times, sickness was considered to be curse or disfavor from God/gods. Jesus came with power, which could only be from God, and healed the sick. He took away the curse and reconciled us. Regardless of whether you think

everybody is saved or if there is a literal heaven or hell, Bell is trying to get you to understand that "our eschatology shapes our ethics." In other words, believing that it's all about going to another place makes us unwilling to do what we're called to do right here, right now. This life isn't just some space-holder to save time before we can be with Jesus. Jesus is already here, transforming us through our baptism. We were placed here with purpose by God! Bell is sounding the call for Christians to get off their backsides and BE CHRISTIANS instead of just pining for heaven or being satisfied that they won't burn in hell. I don't understand how anybody can malign that message, and condemning it just proves his point--many Christians are using their admit-one to heaven as an excuse to avoid being who we're called to be now. When was the last time you fed the poor or comforted the grieving? Or don't you think the suffering of those people matters?

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