

“Love Wins” by Rob Bell Book Review

This is my personal review of the controversial Christian book “*Love Wins*”. I have seen many of the negative Christian reviews, and have seen many Christians on social websites warning Christians not to read a book they have never read. So I ordered it to read it for myself. To be bluntly honest if it wasn’t for the controversy of this book, I wouldn’t really know who Rob Bell was.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge Rob Bell as a brother in Christ. While I may not agree with all his particular viewpoints, Rob and I have the same heavenly Father who loves us equally. There are many high profile Christian authors that have more toxic doctrines than what you will find in “*Love Wins*”, yet there is not an outcry against them. You can read a book, not agree with all of their views, and still receive some great insight. This review will share the insights that I received from this book.

I think the biggest challenge “*Love Wins*” presents to Christians is to envision God as bigger and greater than our natural minds can comprehend. Christians are quick to judge and make assumptions when really we are called to love and not condemn. It was Jesus who said that He did not come to earth to condemn the world, but rather to save the world. Rob uses Ghandi as an example of an individual that Christians jump on and quickly conclude is in hell. The question he asks is how do you know? Do you have confirmation of this? Have you been there and observed Ghandi in hell for yourself?

To deduce that one has died and gone to hell shows that we have judged that person. According to the Bible only God has that authority. How do we know that in the final and last breath that person did not recognize Jesus as Lord and enter into heaven? The bigger question Rob proposes is this. Is it possible for people who have died in the physical realm to have another chance to believe in Christ Jesus in the eternal realm? To deny such a possibility would be to deny that God is all-powerful and is capable of all things. Now this is not a thought that I am about to preach, but it is an interesting thought. I know you all want to get your Bible’s out and quote Scripture, but if you read the book you will find that Rob tackles the very Scriptures you are about to quote.

There have been many comments that Rob teaches that there is no hell, but then conversely you would have to say Rob teaches there is no heaven. Chapter 2 is titled “*Here is the New There*” implying that we can have heaven here on earth. This leads into the question of when does eternity start? For me, Rob solidified my belief that eternity begins at conception. Although we live in time and space here on earth, we also live in eternity today. When God spoke to Moses, He said that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God was telling Moses that even though these men are not on the earth, they are very much still alive. Paul states that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. While his physical body may rot and decay, Paul knew that he would not really be dead. Eternity is simply a different form of life.

How does God want us to live on earth? Romans 5:17 says, “*those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will **reign in life**, through the One, Jesus Christ.*” 1 John 4:17 says, “*By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of*

*judgment, because **as He is so also are we in this world.***” The apostle Paul is clear in his writings that while we live on the earth, we also have access to every blessing of heaven. Was the message Jesus taught about how to get somewhere else? Didn't Jesus say the Kingdom of Heaven is here? Could this be considered heaven on earth?

Probably one of the most powerful messages I received in reading this book is the question of which Jesus are people rejecting? There are so many stories of who Jesus is in Christian circles. Are people rejecting the Jesus who condemns and punishes? Are they rejecting the Jesus that is anti-gay or anti-abortion? Or are they rejecting the Jesus that stands on the street corner with a bullhorn shouting turn or burn?

For me, it makes me consider which Jesus is presented to people through my life. It also gets me worked up to see the Jesus other Christians are presenting. Jesus is love and loved all people. He sat down and ate with sinners. He did not condemn those around Him. Is the God of love the Jesus people see me presenting?

In closing, Rob remarks that God is so loving He grants us our freedom. That's how love works. It can't be forced, manipulated, or coerced. It always leaves room for the other to decide. God says yes, we can have what we want, because love wins. (pg.119) He gives us freedom to walk in isolation, despair, and the right to be our own god if we want. God graciously grants us that option. God grants us the ability to walk in our own strength because of His love. However, God is also so loving He also grants us Himself when we come to the end of ourselves and our abilities.

If you read this book, read the whole thing. Rob believes in heaven and hell, but he is stating that we should not speculate who makes it to heaven and who doesn't. That verdict rests solely on God alone. Even Jesus told His disciples that we might be surprised as to who's there and who's not!

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