

Miscellaneous

Love Won - Part 2

August 21st, 2011

Text - Various

Scripture Reading - Love Wins Promo

Last Week

- We began by talking about how tempting it is to soften or twist some of the more difficult teachings of the Bible in order to make them more palatable for our hearers.
- We then went on suggest that Rob Bell had done just that with the doctrine of hell in his new book Love Wins and talked about how God's love and the traditional, far more biblical, view of hell fit together.
- Finally, we concluded by making the point that love *already won* on the cross 2,000 years ago and that we need to put our trust in Jesus' victory today, and encourage others to do the same, rather than hoping in some speculative, unbiblical, future victory.

This Week

- We want to go back and give biblical, non-softened, non-twisted, non-speculated answers to the many challenging questions that Bell poses in the promo we just watched.

Gandhi's in hell? He is? And someone knows this for sure?

- Though he may well be, no one knows this for sure.
 - o God is the one who determines who goes to heaven and who goes to hell, not us (Mt 10:28 & 25:31-46)
 - o Only God knows a person's heart (Acts 15:8-9); only God knows what a person does in secret (Mt 6)
 - o God can save anyone, anywhere, anytime, anyway He wants
 - Surprises in Heaven

Will only a few select people make it to heaven?

- **Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV) - In one sense no**
⁹After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their

hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

- **Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) - In another sense yes**
¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ *But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*
- **Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV)**
²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"
- We see this throughout the NT
- We see it throughout the OT
 - The Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel (remnant)
- We see it today

Will billions and billions burn forever in hell?

- **Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) - Billions and billions?**
¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. *For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.* ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to *life*, and *only a few* find it.
- **Matthew 25:31-46 (ESV) - Burn forever?**
³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the *sheep* from the *goats*. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...
⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the *eternal fire* prepared for the devil and his angels...⁴⁶ And these will go away into *eternal punishment*, but the righteous into *eternal life*.'"
- **Mark 9:43 (ESV)**
⁴³ And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for

you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the *unquenchable fire*.

- **Matthew 13:42 (ESV)**

⁴²and throw them into the *fiery furnace*. In that place there will be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*.

- **Luke 16:23-24 (ESV)**

23 and in Hades, *being in torment*, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, *for I am in anguish in this flame*.'

- **2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV)**

⁹They will *suffer the punishment of eternal destruction*, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

- **Revelation 14:10-11 (ESV)**

¹⁰...(they) will be *tormented with fire and sulfur*...¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up *forever and ever*, and they have *no rest, day or night*...

- Will people literally be burning? Not necessarily
 - o But even if they're not, it's going to be bad
- Is hell forever? It sure sounds like it to me
 - o Annihilationists lean on texts like Matthew 10:28, but what do you do with Rev 14:10-11?
 - o **Matthew 10:28 (ESV)**
²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
- Might people get a second chance to repent after they die or after Jesus comes again? I don't think so
 - o **Hebrews 9:27 (NIV)**
²⁷...man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,
 - o **Matthew 25:46 (NIV)**
⁴⁶"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."
 - o **Luke 16:26 (ESV)**
²⁶And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would

pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

o **Acts 17:29-31 (ESV)**

³⁰The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed;...

o **Matthew 24:36-51 (ESV)**

⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect...⁵⁰the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know ⁵¹and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- What about children, those who can't understand, and those who haven't heard?

o **Deuteronomy 29:29 (ESV)**

²⁹*"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

o **Matthew 19:14 (ESV) - Children and those who can't understand**

¹⁴but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

o **2 Samuel 12:23 (ESV)**

²³...I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

o **Romans 1:18-20 (NIV) - Those who haven't heard**

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹*since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.* ²⁰For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being

understood from what has been made, *so that men are without excuse.*

o **Romans 2:15-16 (ESV)**

¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them ¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.'

o **Matthew 28:19 (NIV)**

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

o **Luke 10:13-14 (ESV) - A little comfort**

¹³ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

o **John 10:14-16 (ESV) - A lot of comfort**

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,...¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. *I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.*

o **John 6:37 (ESV)**

³⁷ *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

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? 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 the few?

• **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)**

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, *through faith*--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ *not by works*, so that no one can boast.

• **Romans 3:10 (NIV)**

¹⁰ ... "There is no one righteous, not even one;

- **Romans 3:20 (NIV)**

²⁰ ... no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

- **Romans 3:21-22 (NIV)**

²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

²² *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...*

- Is Gandhi in hell?
 - o Probably

What is God like? (The question behind the questions, the real question...)

- Millions and millions of people have been 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. What gets subtly sort of caught and taught is that Jesus rescues you from God, but what kind of God is that that we need to be rescued from this God? How could that God ever be good, how could that God ever be trusted, and how could that ever be good news?

Does Jesus rescue us from God?

- **Romans 1:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

- **Ephesians 2:1-3 (NIV)**

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. *Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

- **John 3:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, *but the wrath of God remains on him.*

What kind of God is that that we need to be rescued from Him?

A God who is more than just merciful and loving.

- **Exodus 34:6-7 (ESV)**

⁶The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

- **Isaiah 6:3 (ESV)**

³...“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;...

- **Isaiah 61:8 (ESV)**

⁸For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong;...

A God who sees our sin clearly, feels our sin acutely, and punishes our sin appropriately.

- There are three possible reasons why we have such trouble fitting God and hell together...
 - We’ve got God wrong
 - We’ve got hell wrong
 - We’ve got sin wrong
- It can’t be God
 - **Psalms 25:8 (ESV)**
⁸Good and upright is the Lord;
 - **Psalms 34:8 (ESV)**
⁸Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!
 - **Psalms 119:137 (ESV)**
¹³⁷Righteous are you, O Lord, and right are your rules.
 - **Psalms 145:17 (ESV)**
¹⁷The Lord is righteous in all his ways...
- I don’t think it’s hell
 - Arguments above
- It must be sin
 - Our sin is way worse than we think
 - God sees our sin clearly, feels our sin acutely, and punishes our sin appropriately.

A God who crushed His One and Only Son in order to rescue us from Himself.

- **Isaiah 53:5-6 (NIV)**

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- **Isaiah 53:10 (NIV)**

¹⁰ Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,...

How could that God ever be good, how could that God ever be trusted, and how could that ever be good news?

- **Romans 8:31-32 (NIV)**

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² *He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

- The doctrine of hell lies at the heart of the good news. We know that God is good and we know that God can be trusted not despite the existence of hell *but because of it*. The ultimate proof of God's love for us is this, while we were yet sinners, fully deserving of eternal, conscious, torment in hell because of our prideful rejection of Him and His ways, Christ took that torment for us (Rom 5:8 & 1 Jn 4:10). When we soften and twist hell we soften and twist God and the cross, *and that we cannot do*.