

[Frequently Asked Questions]

We hope this FAQ helps you interact with the book, *Love Wins*. For information on Mars Hill's beliefs, see our Narrative Theology at marshill.org/believe.

Does *Love Wins* affirm that Jesus is the only way by which we are saved?

Yes. *Love Wins* is clear, our only hope for reconciliation with God is found in Jesus alone because of all he accomplished through his life, death and resurrection. Rob shares in *Love Wins* his belief that the only way to God is through Jesus by quoting and affirming Jesus' statement, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" [pg. 154]. Mars Hill affirms that Jesus is the only way to inherit salvation, how exactly that happens, however, is a matter of mystery that we do not claim to have all the answers to. As Rob says after quoting Jesus, "What he doesn't say is how, or when, or in what manner the mechanism functions that gets people to God through him" [pg. 154].

What does *Love Wins* say about heaven and hell?

Love Wins recognizes heaven and hell to be realities all around us. We see hell everyday through the atrocities of war, famine, human trafficking, broken relationships, and abuse. We also see heaven all around us through acts of love, kindness, and compassion.

There is also the reality of heaven and hell in the future. Our ultimate future hope is a restored creation under Christ where God will dwell with us forever on a restored heaven and earth [Rev 21-22]. There are many who accept the invitation of the life of heaven and many who reject the invitation. Those who reject the invitation experience a purifying "fire" of judgment in hell, yet there is hope. We live in the hope that the redemptive work of Christ is beyond what we can ask or imagine. *Love Wins* helps us have a biblical imagination that leaves room for the hope of the redemption of all while recognizing humanities free will to continue to reject God.

Does *Love Wins* promote Universalism?

No. Rob isn't suggesting Universalism [all will be saved, regardless of their faith]. He is proposing that God's love is so big that the invitation to God's grace may extend into the next life so that all could be saved. *Love Wins* clearly points to the centrality of Jesus and the work of his life, death, and resurrection and the hope that Christ's work will bring restoration to all. Jesus is the only way to God. God's love does not force anyone and there may be those who continue to reject the invitation extended to them. *Love Wins* speaks often speaks of human freedom [72-73, 103-104, 113, 115, 117]. Rob shares, "Love demands freedom. It always has, and it always will. We are free to resist, reject, and rebel against God's ways for us. We can have all the hell we want." [113]

What does *Love Wins* say about judgment?

In the book, it is stated that we experience judgment now for choices we make and there will be the final judgment to come. God cannot tolerate sin and injustice and will judge acts of injustice decisively. Rob addresses God's judgment in *Love Wins* several times [See pages 37-39, 49-50, 89-90.] In *Love Wins* judgment is also viewed as self-induced. When we continue to reject the way of Jesus we choose hell, bringing judgment on ourselves.

In what ways does *Love Wins* address the atonement?

The atonement is a theological concept that describes how God addresses sin and provides a way to bring people back into a restored relationship with God, self, and others. *Love Wins* uses many metaphors in the Scriptures to describe what happened in light of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. These include a defendant going free, a relationship being reconciled, a battle being won, a final sacrifice being offered, an enemy being loved [cf. pp. 123-129]. All these metaphors help us capture and communicate this wonderful mystery of God's good news for our world.

In light of the message of *Love Wins*, how are we to live and evangelize now?

The best possible way to live is the way of Jesus and he has called us to invite others into this way of life [Matthew 22v36-40, 28v19-20]. The power of sharing one's story and experience of the resurrected Christ should flow naturally as we engage others. God's judgment of sin and injustice is real and Christians long for people to be free from a life of hell now and to experience the life of heaven now. This makes evangelism a proclamation that Jesus brings freedom now and in the life to come and we echo this in our words and actions. See pages 181-182 of *Love Wins* as it relates to the importance of evangelism.

What if I don't agree with all of the content of this book?

This is ok. *Love Wins* describes Christian orthodoxy as a wide stream that has room for a variety of perspectives and plenty of uncertainty, hope, and mystery. Within that stream, our community values and practices questioning, leaving room for mystery and doubt. Whenever Jesus is firmly established at the center, there is room for disagreement, tension, questions, faith, and paradox in any conversation. Because of this, our community can hold varying opinions and yet be united in Christ. Both those who agree and disagree with all or part of *Love Wins* are swimming in the stream of orthodoxy and belong at Mars Hill.

What are other Christian Leaders saying about *Love Wins*?

A variety of well-known Christian leaders have endorsed the contents of *Love Wins*. Here's what a few of them are saying:

In the current religious climate in America, it isn't easy to develop an imagination, a thoroughly biblical imagination, that takes in the comprehensive and eternal work of Christ in all people and all circumstances in love and for salvation. Rob Bell goes a long way in helping us acquire just such an imagination. Love Wins accomplishes this without a trace of soft sentimentality and without compromising an inch of evangelical conviction in its proclamation of the good news that is most truly for all.

- Eugene H. Peterson, Professor Emeritus of Spiritual Theology, Regent College, and author of *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*

Love Wins is a bold, prophetic and poetic masterpiece. I don't know any contemporary writer who expresses the inexpressible love of God as beautifully and as powerfully as Rob Bell! Many will disagree with some of Rob's perspectives, but no one who seriously engages this book will put it down unchanged. By my reckoning, this makes Love Wins a "must read" book!

- Greg Boyd, Senior Pastor of Woodland Hills Community Church, and author of many books including *Letters to a Skeptic*.

Richard Mouw, president of the world's largest Protestant seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary based in Pasadena, Calif., calls Love Wins "a great book, well within the bounds of orthodox Christianity and passionate about Jesus. The real hellacious fight, says Mouw, a friend of Bell, a Fuller graduate, is between "generous orthodoxy and stingy orthodoxy. There are stingy people who just want to consign many others to hell and only a few to heaven and take delight in the idea. But Rob Bell allows for a lot of mystery in how Jesus reaches people.

- Richard Mouw, president of the world's largest Protestant seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, as quoted in *USA TODAY*