

## **Rob Bell – Velvet Elvis**

Rob Bell and other leaders of the so-called ‘Emerging Church’, like Steve Chalke, also undermine the trustworthiness of the Bible by stating facts in complete opposition to the clear teachings of scripture. To give a simple example Bell states on page 85 of *Velvet Elvis*: [‘*This is why Jesus wouldn’t have blessed the food before he ate. He blessed God for providing the earth, which provides the food. The food is already blessed, because it comes from the earth, and “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it”.*] On the surface this sounds correct until you actually test Bell’s statement against scripture and discover that before multiplying the 5 loaves and 2 fishes, Luke 9v16 clearly states that ‘*looking up to heaven, Jesus blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude*’. Also at the last supper it is recorded in Luke 22v19: ‘*And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me”.*’ The Bible clearly states that Jesus did bless food before He ate it and Bell is incorrect. The Apostle Paul also encourages us to give thanks and pray before eating in 1 Timothy 4v3-5, because prayer sanctifies our food. Bell states that he thinks that the food is already blessed because it comes from the earth. Unfortunately, Bell does not realise that the ground has been cursed as a result of Adam’s sin as stated in Genesis 3v17. Bell does not even teach the simple truths of scripture correctly, therefore it should not be surprising that he also teaches major doctrinal errors of which I will give just 2 examples:

On page 26-27, Bell says that if archaeologists dug up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father called Larry and that the virgin birth was just a myth, that shouldn’t stop us being Christians or loving God. Unfortunately, the virgin birth is a ‘*foundational doctrine*’, as Jesus had to be born without a biological human father, otherwise He would have inherited a sinful nature like us (Romans 5v12-21) and therefore could not be a sinless sacrifice for us and would face death for His own sin (Romans 6v23). In addition, the Bible is absolutely clear that Mary was a *virgin* in the true meaning of the word. In Luke 1v34 Mary tells the angel Gabriel that she had never ever had sexual relationships with a man. I think that Mary should be the one to know whether or not she was a virgin rather than Bell! In addition, in Luke 1v31-32, Gabriel tells Mary that she will conceive the Son of God in her womb *supernaturally*: ‘*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, also that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God*’ (Luke 1v35). Matthew 1v18 and 20 also state clearly that Mary was with ‘*child of the Holy Spirit*’. The scriptures are unanimous that Jesus’ conception was *supernatural*. It had to be because how else could God become a man? Bell’s interpretation of the virgin birth is heretical at best.

Then on pages 32-33, Bell makes exactly the same error as Steve Chalke in his book ‘*The lost message of Jesus*’. As did Chalke, he quotes only the first half of John 3v16: ‘*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son*’. Then Bell poses the question: ‘*What does it mean for God to love the world?*’ Instead of using

Jesus' own answer as detailed in the second part of John 3v16, Bell poses even more questions, leading the reader around in a circle and giving the impression that the Bible does not provide a clear answer to the question that he posed. If we quote the whole of John 3v16 the answer to Bell's question becomes clear: *'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'* The answer to the question: *'What does it mean for God to love the world?'* is: *'it means that God must give His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life'*. How sad that such a simple answer appears to be beyond Bell. The correct answer as given by Jesus Himself in John 3v16 is also echoed by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5v8: *'But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us'*. This is also affirmed by the Apostle John in 1 John 4v10: *'In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins.'* The cross of Christ as the ultimate demonstration of God's love, and the only means of our salvation, has been removed from the central place of Bell's teaching. Like Steve Chalke, Rob Bell preaches another gospel! In addition, on page 21 of *Velvet Elvis*, Bell repeats his error by quoting only the first part of John 14v6 where Jesus says: *'I am the way, the truth and the life'*. As a result of quoting only the first part of this verse, Bell comes to the erroneous conclusion that: *'Jesus was not making claims that one religion was better than all other religions'* but that *'the kind of life Jesus lived is the best possible way to live.'* In other words Bell thinks that these words of Jesus are to do with lifestyle i.e. *'Jesus shows us the way to live and is our example to follow'*. If Bell had quoted the second part of this verse: *'No one comes to the Father except through Me'* he would have realised that in declaring that He was the only way to God and the only Saviour of the world *Jesus was claiming that one religion was better than all other religions*. To prove this he said to a Samaritan woman (a believer in another religion): *'Salvation is of the Jews'* (John 4v22) i.e. your religion is wrong! This same truth is echoed by Peter in Acts 4v12: *'Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other Name (Jesus) given among men by which we must be saved'*.

Since both Bell and Chalke deny the true gospel, it is also therefore not surprising to find that they both never mention Satan in their books and also have erroneous ideas about God's wrath and eternal judgement. This is because the true meaning of the cross i.e. the propitiation (turning away) of God's wrath against sin, is absent in their teachings.

Similar to Chalke, Bell does not believe the Genesis account of how sin came into this world through Adam's rebellion and affected the whole of creation. At the bottom of page 170, Bell says that *'when God made the world, God said it was "good". And it still is.'* He then states on page 171: *'We're not going somewhere else at the end of time, because this world is our home. And our home is good.* Once again Bell mixes truth with error. After all that is how deception works. It is true that before Adam and Eve sinned, God pronounced everything that He had made as *'very good'* (Genesis 1v31). However, since Adam's rebellion against God, as Romans

8v20-22 states, *the creation has been 'subjected to futility', 'the bondage of corruption' and 'groans and labours with birth pangs until now'*. Genesis 3v17 also clearly states: *'Cursed is the ground for your sake'*. God has a very different view to this world than the one that Bell has and that is why He sent a Saviour! The Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3v7 clearly tells us that this earth is not going to be our home at the end of time for *'The heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men'*. v10 states: *'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.'* v11 states: *'the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat'*. Thus our present earth is not where we are going to be at the end of time. It will be destroyed! In fact Peter goes on to say in v13: *'Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells'*. Revelation 21v21 and Isaiah 66v22 also state that our future involves *'new heavens and a new earth'*. Therefore, we can see that as Rob Bell and Steve Chalke reject the Biblical account of origins detailed in Genesis (authored by Moses), then it is not surprising to find that they also reject Jesus' clear teachings about sin and judgement and that He is the only way to God and the only Saviour. Jesus makes this connection very clear: *'For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe His writings, how will you believe My words'* (John 5v46-47).

Again, this would become a treatise if I dealt with every error in Bell's book. It makes one wonder whether Bell's experience of God as described on pages 40-41 was really of the God of the Bible!

For further critiques of Velvet Elvis google: rob bell velvet elvis , and see [cicministry.org](http://cicministry.org) and [www.reformedfellowship.net](http://www.reformedfellowship.net)