

### III. LOVE WINS

O.51.07

*“As I read my Bible, **I struggled with the doctrine of hell...** that God, who is loving, could send sinners to hell to **suffer for eternity.**” Russell Berger*

*“Millions of people **were 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.” Rob Bell*

GOSPEL ESSENTIALS: \_\_\_\_\_.

**1.** Have you ever struggled with the teaching of hell (Luke 12:5; Mark 9:43; Matthew 23:33)? Have you ever been bothered by the exclusivity of the gospel (John 3:16; 8:24; 14:6; Matthew 10:38)? Consider how these two teachings are related: How might the rejection of one lead to a rejection of the other, or vice versa?

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**2.** In the film, the doctrine of universalism, “the belief that all humankind will eventually be saved,” is contrasted with John 3:18, “whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” Does John 3:18 answer the belief of universalism? Explain your answer and provide other verses for support.

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## GOSPEL ESSENTIALS: The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.

**3.** Richard Rohr mentions a doctrine called perennialism which is “the belief that all of the world’s religious traditions share a single truth.” Notice how Rohr’s idea of separating “Christ” from “Jesus” makes “Christ” this “single truth” which he later explains is panentheistic.<sup>1</sup> Any sort of panentheism makes this “single truth” impersonal, unspecific and indistinguishable from creation. Read what John says about Jesus in John 1:1-18 and what Jesus says about himself in John 17:24. Is Jesus, as the Messiah (the Christ), personal or impersonal? Can an impersonal truth do what is described in those verses?

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*“Another word that, interestingly **this gets redefined** not just in progressive Christianity but also in the New Age movement, and that’s the word ‘**atonement**’.” Alisa Childers*

*“We called it **at-one-ment** instead of atonement. There was **no billed to be paid**. There was simply **a union to be made**.” Richard Rohr*

**4.** In the film, Alisa Childers spoke about the Biblical meaning of atonement derived from the Hebrew word kaphar (כפר) meaning “to propitiate, to cover” in contrast with Richard Rohr’s teaching that atonement is really “at-one-ment,” which signifies a union with God rather than a debt to be paid. Considering the verses in the New Testament which provide the Christian understanding of atonement (Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25, **4:7-8**; Ephesians 1:7, 2:13; Colossians 1:20, **2:14**; Hebrews 2:17, **9:13-14, 22**; 1 John 2:2, 4:10; Revelation 1:5), which definition does the evidence favor? Explain your answer.

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1. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines panentheism as “the belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but (as against pantheism, q. v.) that His Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe”; F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1221. The key is the wording “exists *in Him*” (emphasis mine). Biblical Christianity has always believed

*"I mean, why would you want to worship a god  
if you could imagine a better god? That's what I don't  
understand... if you could imagine a god better than  
the one that you worship, **trade up!**" Bart Campolo*

*"It comes back to **idolatry**. Idolatry was **the sin of Israel**.  
If you read in the Old Testament, they continually went  
back to idolatry. **We're exactly the same**. We don't  
bow to a god made with our hands; **we bow to a  
god made with our mind.**" Ray Comfort*

5. The arguments from Progressive Christians often appeal to the individual. They say things like, "How can you be okay with a God who sends people to hell?" And "Can't you see that it's okay to understand this doctrine differently than you've been taught?" These questions might incline you to desire a more inclusive god, one who doesn't simply offer salvation but gives salvation to everyone. Yet, does your desire make it true? When you put your faith in your preferred idea of god over the God of scripture, what is that called? (For assistance, see Isaiah 40:18-20, 1 John 5:21)

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*"If hell didn't exist, **neither would this ministry**, seriously.  
I would be out surfing, with long hair, probably moved up to  
somewhere in Australia... just living for myself. But I can't! If  
we **love God**, we would **obey Him**. If we **love people**,  
we would **warn them.**" Ray Comfort*

*"How much do you have to **hate someone** to not  
proselytize? How much do you have to hate someone  
**to believe that everlasting life is possible and  
not tell them that?**" Penn Jillette*

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that God is present everywhere (omnipresent) and that it is His power that upholds all things (omnipotent) but God is not in all things because he is separate from his creation. God is a different Being than man (Numbers 23:19), He is before all creation (Colossians 1:17), and He is a self-sustaining Being while all created things are not (see previous verses and Hebrews 1:3, Exodus 3:14).

**6.** Read Luke 16:19-31. Is eternal torment taught in this text? What is the rich man told by Abraham about how his brothers will be able to escape the same fate (v. 31)? Does the answer Jesus provides through the mouth of Abraham in this text help you understand the problem with those who promote universalism and reject hell? Explain your answer. (See John 5:39-47 for help)

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**7.** Returning to the concept that Richard Rohr teaches, that the atonement simply means being “at-one” with God, think carefully about how Rohr’s teaching effects penal substitutionary atonement. If you accept that the atonement of Jesus Christ simply means being “at-one” with God, and reject the penal substitutionary nature of the atonement, is there any need to be reconciled to God? Does the “at-one” atonement leave you with the same god? Does the “at-one” god have any significant difference from other religions?

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## **RICHARD ROHR’S VIEW OF JESUS ≠ CHRIST**

In this chapter you learn that Richard Rohr separates Christ from Jesus. Below is a quote from Richard Rohr which demonstrates further how heretical his view of Jesus Christ is, removing the exclusivity of the gospel through this novel separation. Consider the implications of what Rohr says:

If Christ is the kite, Jesus is the person flying the kite and keeping it from

escaping away into invisibility.

If Jesus is the person holding the string, Christ is the great banner in the sky, from whom all can draw life—even if they do not recognize the one flying the kite.

Jesus does not hold the kite to himself as much as he flies it aloft, for all to see and enjoy.<sup>2</sup>

A further explanation is provided saying, “Jesus is a person whose example we can follow. Christ is a cosmic life principle in which all beings participate. The incarnation is an ongoing revelation of Christ, uniting matter and spirit, operating as one and everywhere.”<sup>3</sup> Rohr clearly rejects the exclusivity of Jesus Christ and manipulates the person and natures of Christ by claiming He operates as two different beings which essentially have different functions (one a personal being, Jesus, and one an impersonal being, Christ). Rohr’s claim that this distortion of Jesus Christ is “unified” does not make much difference when you think carefully about what he is claiming. Rohr is saying that Jesus is both an individual person and, at the same time, is equal to everything in creation. In other words, you and I are part of Christ’s being, His essence. These two claims are contradictory. You can not have an individual and a mass, you can not have a person and a non-person. This is one of the false Christs which Jesus warned about in Matthew 24:23-25 and it is not a Christ who can save you.

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2. <https://cac.org/another-name-for-every-thing-the-universal-christ/>

3. Ibid.

UNIVERSAL



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(HISTORICAL)

**Jesus**

(COSMIC  
UNIVERSAL)

**Christ**

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# Pantheism

GOD = UNIVERSE

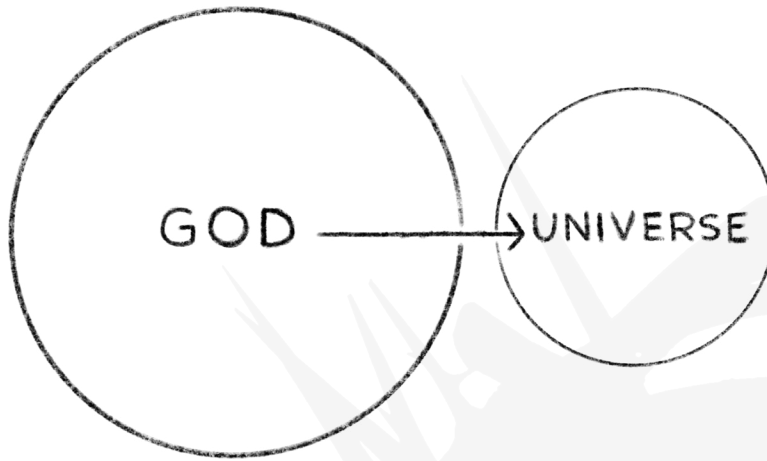
# Panentheism

("All in God")

GOD

UNIVERSE

# Theism



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## REDEFINING WORDS:

# ATONEMENT

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**"No atonement is necessary."  
-Richard Rohr**

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