

**General Topics :: Evangelical Universalism****Evangelical Universalism - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/4/24 15:35**

I recently came upon this term through a blog and then found a forum of the same thing. It seems it states that man will all be saved whether in this life or in the life after this in Jesus.

The person who introduced me to this through their blog lives in Asia and among Buddhists. This person came from a Fundamentalist background and is being seduced to question why God would send any soul to hell. Seems this person is being seduced to think all are going to heaven which becomes a kind of heresy

My question is this. Those who have never heard the Gospel and die, what happens here? The bible does not speak to this and I believe that this topic of Evangelical Universalism is wanting to fill in the void on this.

How does a Christian answer this?

John

Re: Evangelical Universalism - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/4/24 16:01

Actually, Paul deals with this in Romans 2:12-16. Even those who have not read the Bible or had the gospel message presented to them have an innate knowledge that there is a God to whom they are answerable. This is evidenced in the fact that they establish laws to accuse or excuse their behavior. I know of many, many stories of people who had never heard the gospel who realized that there was a God to whom they were accountable and prayed, asking God to reveal Himself to them. He did, and they received Him and were born again. In the final judgement, God will not be unjust in His reward or in His condemnation.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/4/24 18:01

Would this be in the same vein as people who practice some form of religious expression because they realize there is something beyond them? Just not sure what or who?

One of the things I see at play in this thing is the emotional game. It is like an antithesis. progressively getting a little further away from the truth by thinking through the emotions and using it to interpret the Bible along the way.

John

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2013/4/24 18:45

Interesting. I have noticed a trend where individuals begin to speculate that God must be "more forgiving" than they are. Since no one would ever hope for anyone (including our enemies) to be eternally tormented, they begin to reason that "Hell" and "the Lake of Fire" just can't be meant for mankind.

I have had conversations with individuals who have argued such things with me. Not even knowing what a "universalist" is, they speculated that God may have simply decided to "save" the whole world when He died on the cross, wherefore I asking any "decision" or "repentance." After all, they reasoned that "no one is perfect" and questioned how can God punish those who are not.

My response was to agree that we could never overestimate the goodness, kindness, mercy or grace of God. However, the issue is that individuals do not fully grasp the eternal concept of JUSTICE. God is a merciful God -- but he is simultaneously a just God. We cannot think of His attributes in human terms because God is not a human being. He is the Eternal God. Humans are just a "shadow" since we were made in the image of God. However, we are tainted by our limited intellects and sinful nature. As such, I fear that many people strive to create a God in their own image that lines up to their own notions.

It is true that eternal punishment was NOT meant for all of mankind, but for the devil and his angels. However, mankind fell into sin (and a sinful nature) and the punishment that was levied for demons was created for sin.

I believe that this is a sign of the times and of the strategies that Satan uses in these days. If he can't get people to believe that God (and Satan) doesn't exist, he will try to get people to psychoanalyze the mind of God and "see" Him as a being without any motive to bring out the eternal justice as described in the Bible.

There will be many shocked individuals on that Day in the other side of Eternity. The very God that modern philosophers or casual "spiritualists" and even "Christians" paint as an "all good" being who simply loves us will be astonished to find Him as our Judge.

Leonard Ravenhill used to say that people have lost sight of the Judgment Day. I would go further and say that most have now lost sight of the meaning of Justice too.

Re: - posted by richrock, on: 2013/4/24 19:02

This is one of those difficult areas, and for some is irreconcilable.

Romans 2:12-16 is the defining scripture on this topic.

I found this essay by R. C. Sproul very helpful, personally. Maybe it will help shed some light for you too.

<http://www.ligonier.org/learn/qas/are-those-who-have-never-heard-christ-going-hell/>

Why evangelise? If we are to embrace universalism, why did the apostles preach the gospel? If everyone is saved eventually, I can live how I want (and boy, sometimes I want to) - but we are to submit to God.

But this universalist mindset is easily borne out of what I would term hyper-forgiveness, that God would forgive everyone of anything.

We need remind ourselves that Jesus is the only way, and we should count the cost seriously indeed before committing. That is something forgotten in many gospel appeals today.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/4/24 22:20

Quote:
-----Would this be in the same vein as people who practice some form of religious expression because they realize there is something beyond them? Just not sure what or who?

One of the things I see at play in this thing is the emotional game. It is like an antithesis. progressively getting a little further away from the truth by thinking through the emotions and using it to interpret the Bible along the way.

The point being made by Paul is that the Jews are guilty before God because they knew the explicit law of God and yet did not keep it. And the Gentiles are guilty because they demonstrated knowledge of a higher law than their own in the fact that they made their own laws to condemn and excuse behavior. C.S. Lewis gives a really good explanation of this point in his book Mere Christianity. The very fact that we judge one action or behavior as right or good and another as wrong or bad means that we acknowledge a higher morality than our own to whom we will judge us by a higher standard. So, all men have an innate knowledge that God exists and it is those who will turn to Him and seek Him out of a pure heart to whom God will reveal Himself.

I guess it is true that men seek religious expression out of an acknowledgement of something higher than themselves. But, I think at the core of all non-Christian religion is a vain effort to approach God in the flesh and on our own terms. Men and women who have been devout Muslims, for example, have had God reveal Himself to them in dreams and visions and have abandoned their own self-effort for the grace that God offers and the total abandonment of self and surrender to the only true God.

In Romans 1:28 Paul says, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" Men do not invent such doctrines as universalism out of a true desire to know truth and an honest mistake in Bible interpretation. They choose such doctrines because they do not want to retain God in their knowledge. They willfully reject the truth and turn to lies. Unfortunately they then lead others a

stray through their own deceptive doctrines. See Colossians chapter 2.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/4/24 22:31

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Chris: This is true brother. Paul also warned against using grace as license to sin. Gal. 5:13. It is absolutely true that God's grace is rich, free, abundant, and offered to all who will receive Him. But, when we receive Him, we receive the entire package. As Paul said in Romans 6, we are dead to sin, buried with Him in baptism, and raised to newness of life. Grace teaches us to deny ungodly lusts and to live righteous and holy. Titus 2:12. Those who look at grace as license to live as carnally as possible without feeling guilty are deceived. They understand neither grace, nor salvation. We will stand in judgement before a righteous and holy God. I am so thankful that my defense is the blood of Jesus Christ. I have been made righteous in Him. So how could I, who have been made righteous by the blood of Jesus, who have the Spirit of Christ, the one in whom dwelleth all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily, dwelling in me then return to the mire that He pulled me out of? Why would I desire to do so? Perhaps if I had not truly received the grace of God, but rather a change of philosophy?

Re: Evangelical Universalism - posted by wombat1 (), on: 2013/4/25 6:49

Hi I have a book from a friend of mine that not only says that all will end up in heaven but also all animals and every fallen spirit including lucifer.

Its constantly amazes me that people will believe and promote things that they know are against the word of God.

Ignorance is one thing, but deliberate refusal is another thing all together.

wish you well Oskar.

Re: Evangelical Universalism, on: 2013/4/25 11:49

Paul provides us with a template on what to say:

" But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord."

Acts 13:8-12

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/4/25 15:54

Quote:

Actually, Paul deals with this in Romans 2:12-16. Even those who have not read the Bible or had the gospel message presented to them have an innate knowledge that there is a God to whom they are answerable. This is evidenced in the fact that they establish laws to accuse or excuse their behavior. I know of many, many stories of people who had never heard the gospel who realized that there was a God to whom they were accountable and prayed, asking God to reveal Himself to them. He did, and they received Him and were born again. In the final judgement, God will not be unjust in His reward or in His condemnation.

I agree 100% to this. This is a scriptural answer that I would have given as well. People who have never heard the gospel will be judged based on their Moral law written in their conscience. My personal belief is people who listen to this law in their conscience will soon realize that there is some other law (law of Sin) working in their body. Now they have 2 options either to harden their conscience and keep living their life (More than 99% do this) or to Cry out to God about this Sinful flesh. It is when they cry out they either meet an evangelist who shares the truth with them or Jesus reveals himself directly, both according to God's plan.

I also believe that Jesus is the only way to Father (John 14:6). The Moral law written in heart of men is only used for judgment. No one can become righteous and enter the kingdom of God based on law. That is why we need Jesus.

In short answer them like this, Men go to hell not because they did not hear the Gospel but because they are sinners. Gospel is the only truth that can save them from their sins.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/4/25 17:34

Well now wait a minute. If on one hand Jesus is the Way to Salvation and on the other hand people who have never been heard the Gospel will be judged based on their works as a result of the law in their conscience, this gives a wide open road to those who believe in evangelical universalism. It leaves the door open to ask why should the Gospel be preached if those who don't hear it will be judged by their own works? Does the Bible say how those works will be judged?

Walk me through this understanding because I want to give an answer to some of these people I have encountered with this nonsense but I also need complete understanding with it in order to do so.

(Am I really saying/asking this? lol)

John

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/4/25 18:31

Quote:

f on one hand Jesus is the Way to Salvation and on the other hand people who have never been heard the Gospel will be judged based on their works as a result of the law in their conscience, this gives a wide open road to those who believe in evangelical universalism.

I am not sure what evangelical universalism is but what you have stated above is exactly true. Even if it is misleading people and makes them believe that salvation is possible without Jesus. This is exactly what Romans 2-14 states.

Romans 2-14:-For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

So based this verse it is clear that Gentiles will be judged based on their conscience (moral laws). Acts 10 talks about Cornelius who was a gentile and said that he was God fearing. I seriously believe that if a person truly listens to his conscience then he will soon find out that he cannot meet God's standard. I was raised as a Hindu and I knew it very clearly that my life was not pleasing to God and it is not according to God's standard. The point I am trying to make is, it is impossible for someone to have their conscience absolutely clear before God on the day of Judgment. If they have then they will enter the kingdom but they cannot have it. For example everyone's conscience would have troubled when they lied the first time but gradually it would have faded.

Every human being knows that they have fallen short of their conscience but they don't know the solution. That is why they have come up with different religions. In Hinduism it is believed that taking a dip in river Ganga will clear their sins and set things right. All these mythologies came into picture because men believe that there is something wrong with them.

The only solution is Gospel and Jesus is the way. Cornelius was introduced to Peter who explained the Gospel to him. L

uke 7:1 talks about the Roman Centurion who based on his Conscience judged himself as unworthy to receive Jesus, but Jesus praised him for his faith. I am sure he would have become a disciple when Salvation was open to Gentiles.

I hope this answers your question. I had the same question as yours and this is the best answer that I have come up so far. Mostly based on my personal quest for truth.

Re: unregenerate men - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2013/4/26 1:25

Heaven is not a place for the unholy or profane. Rebellion took place one time in heaven. And, that was the LAST TIME it will ever happen.

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5).

"nor unclean person".

JOHN 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Tim 2:19)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/4/26 8:28

sree wrote:

"I am not sure what evangelical universalism is"

That is the problem-- very few people do, nor will they take the time to look into it. It is evident per the responses here that there is not a true understanding of what credible proponents of "universal reconciliation" believe.

Credible theologians who hold this position DO NOT believe there is no hell. But they DO believe that hell is for remediation and correction-- i.e. that God's punishments are always remedial in nature. They believe that there will be opportunity for post mortem repentance and reconciliation for each person, perhaps after eons of correction in hell.

"The Inescapable Love of God" by Thomas Talbot is a fairly short book (and one of the more popular works on the subject) that sets forth the case for this position. You can read some chapters for free on his website.

I am not sure if Universal Reconciliation is truth, but I HOPE that it is. What I do NOT hope is that hell is a place of conscious eternal torment.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/4/26 8:42

pilgrim777

Your words are admirable but please explain how they bridge the gap for those who die and have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to what you have posted?

Understand that when I ask this question I do it simply seeking the balance between scripture and Holy Justice without our human element involved in it. How do you bridge the gap that Evangelical Universalism wants to employ with what you have posted?

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/4/26 15:13

Quote:
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Paul is not saying that men will be judged based on the laws that their own conscience establishes. He is saying that the fact that they establish laws at all is evidence that they are aware of someone to whom they are accountable, or that they are aware that a higher law, specifically God, exists. So, in the end, no one can plead ignorance. No one can say, "But God, I did not know you existed."

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/4/26 15:24

Paul says they show the work of the Law in their hearts. The work of the law was one of condemnation. In Gal. 3 Paul says that the law was meant to conclude and condemn all men under sin. It revealed to us that we were sinful as Paul also states in Romans 7. So the fact that people establish laws to judge themselves as right or wrong, justified or condemned, shows that they understand that they are also sinners and do wrongly. The next obvious question would be to ask, against whom am I sinning? Some try to say, against society or my fellow man. But who determines what constitutes this sinning against my fellow man. When you do something I don't like, I could claim you sinned against me and you could claim you did not. So who mediates? Who is the judge? Ultimately we must point to God as the judge and acknowledge that we are, in reality, sinning against laws that come from a source that is outside of ourselves. So the fact that man creates these laws means that he acknowledges a God to whom he will be held accountable, and thus he is without excuse when he stands in judgement.

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2013/4/26 23:40

deadn,

I don't pretend to have all the answers and I trust the Lord will judge according to His character. My point, was that no rebellious, unholy, blasphemous, unsubmitted person will be allowed in heaven.

Universalism presupposes that God converts everyone against their will, and that in itself does not line up with His character. If the Rebellious One was cast out of heaven, surely no rebellious ones will be let into heaven.

God is looking for a people who willingly turn away from everything that is not of Him, and turn towards Him. For those that never heard of Him, I leave them in His hand and don't pretend to know all the details about their hearts and how God will judge them. I would rather have Christ for my advocate than left to my own conscience (without Christ).

Pilgrim

Re: Evangelical Universalism - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/4/27 7:47

John, seems to me Romans 1 addresses this issue. God does reveal himself to people through his creation. How they respond to it is not a whole lot different then if they hear the word, as I understand it.

There are many testimonies of the LORD Jesus revealing himself to people apart from any activity of any Christians. I personally know of one such lady, an Indian from India. Then you have Muslims whom the LORD Jesus is appearing to in visions. These stories, testimonies are becoming common-place in areas where the gospel is restricted.

There is an old, old book titled "Sammy Morris" that details God calling a black boy in the depths of Africa a hundred years ago. This is an encouraging read. Am not sure if it is still in print, but I did find some on eBay.

My understanding on this issue...

