

Articles and Sermons :: Tree Of Life or Knowledge of Good and Evil**Tree Of Life or Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2021/2/9 21:54****THE MEANING OF
THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL
AND THE TREE OF LIFE**

The meaning of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is man acting apart from God, man pursuing goodness according to his self-will, man hastily and impatiently seeking after the knowledge that God has not granted, and man pursuing progress by his own means rather than by trusting in God. What all these mean is that man is simply acting alone and independently, outside of God. Dear brothers, this is the first sin committed by man. In God's eyes, the meaning of sin is not necessarily related to committing many defiling acts. As long as man seeks anything, does anything, or acts in any way by himself, he has sinned, regardless of whether the thing he seeks after or does is good or bad.

God hates to see man acting independently apart from Him. God wants man to depend on Him. The purpose for God to create and save man was for man to depend on Him. This is the meaning of the tree of life. God told Adam: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. 2: 16-17). Among all the edible trees, God specifically mentioned the tree of life in contrast to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (v. 9). We see from God's specific mention of the tree of life that it was the most crucial tree among all the edible trees. This was what Adam should have eaten first. What is the reason for this?

The tree of life signifies God's life - God's uncreated life. Adam was a created being; hence, he did not have this life. Although Adam was sinless, he was natural, one among all the animals; he did not have the divine life. God's intention was for Adam to exercise his will to choose the fruit of the tree of life, thus establishing a life-relationship with Him. This would transform him from something created by God into something born of God. God wanted Adam to refuse his created natural life, unite himself with God's life, and live in dependence on His life every day. This is the meaning of the tree of life. God intended that Adam would live according to a life that was not his originally. Here the significance of dependence or reliance is most obvious. When a creature lives according to his created life, he does not have to depend on anything, because life is independent and can exist by itself. But the minute a creature decides to live according to the Creator's life, he has to exercise dependence, because such a life is not in him; it is only in God. Hence, he can not live independently from God but must depend fully on God and must have unceasing fellowship with Him. Since this life was not within Adam, he had to exercise dependence before he could receive it. Adam did not have the strength to live out this life. Hence, he had to continue to exercise a dependence on God so that he could be preserved. The condition to receive is the same as the condition to be preserved. Adam had to depend on God every day so that he could have the life of God every day.

GOD'S DEMAND ON US

The same is true with God's demand on us today. In Genesis, figuratively speaking, God's life and man's life were only planted together in the midst of a garden. Today God's life and man's life are both within us. The saved believers are all regenerated, that is, we are all born of God and have established a life-relationship with God. The created life is within us and so is the Creator's life. The present problem is whether or not we live according to God's life and completely depend on God in our daily living. As our physical body cannot survive without the created life, in the same manner our spirit cannot survive without the Creator's life.

Brothers, God wants us to have no activity apart from Him. He wants us to die to ourselves. He wants us to attach ourselves to Him as if we could not even move without Him. God does not want us to initiate anything by ourselves, but He wants us to act according to His instruction in everything. God wants us to realize that we are helpless and that we should depend on Him wholeheartedly. We should reject any independent act apart from God. It is altogether of the self to do anything, try to do anything, or have done anything without praying, without waiting for God, without seeking His will and clearly understanding it, without recognizing the self's weaknesses and impotence, without helplessly turning to and depending on God, and without the assurance (through the inspection of the conscience) that nothing of the self is involved. In God's eyes, without this assurance, what we do just involves sins. Brothers, God does not care how well you have done something; He only cares about who does it. God will not be moved just because we have done something good.

od. Besides His own work, God is not satisfied with anything else. You may act, work, labor, or suffer for Christ and His church, but unless you are certain that this is what God wants you to do, and unless you realize your own inability in fear and trembling and turn to God to work through Him, in God's eyes, you are sinning just like Adam. Brothers, stop your own work! Never think that you can do something just because it is good. God's view is not as small as ours! You can labor, and you can do something according to your own delights; but you will not have any spiritual usefulness at all.

(Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 08: The Present Testimony (1), Chapter 6, by Watchman Nee)

Re: Tree Of Life or Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/10 7:52

Good thought provoking article.

Watchman Nee writes in the first sentence of the second paragraph "God hates to see man acting independently apart from Him." Also he writes in the second paragraph under the "God's Demand On Us" section "Brothers, God wants us to have no activity apart from Him. And he quotes Genesis 2:16-17 "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." He makes the claim that "Brothers, God wants us to have no activity apart from Him." And then he quotes a command of God stating "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." Now if Adam is allowed by God to freely eat of every other tree other than the tree of knowledge of good and evil then that means he is acting apart from God because God gave him that freedom. This would be a contradiction and would leave Watchman Nee in error because he makes the claim we can have no activity apart from him. I think that this to do with the concept of Christian liberty. When is it liberty and when does it become bondage? When you chew your food are you acting apart from God? How about brushing your teeth? How about taking a breath? How about going to the bathroom? How about getting up from your chair or going outside for a walk? How about if someone comes up to you on the street and gets into a conversation with you?

Some verses of that come to mind are:

Acts 21:25 - As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

I Corinthians 7:39 - The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

Jesus did say:

John 15:5 - I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Jesus states that without him you can do nothing and that the only way to be fruitful is to abide in him. What do you suppose abiding in him is?

John 15:7 - If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

More on being fruitful:

Psalms 1:2-3 - But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Watchman Nee was influenced by Jesse Penne Lewis who wrote a strange book called "War On The Saints". I was never too sure what to make of that book but there were definitely things in there that didn't seem to come from the bible. Watchman Nee wrote that one of the meanings of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is "man hastily and impatiently seeking after the knowledge that God has not granted". Wouldn't this be a violation of his own writing here since he acquired knowledge from Jesse Penne Lewis's writings who was at times was extra biblical (outside of the bible)?

Interesting subject. Your thoughts on this Mike? Or anyone else?

"If it is in the Bible, it is so. It's not even to be prayed about. It's to be received and acted upon. Inactivity is a robber which steals blessings." -Smith Wigglesworth

Re: Tree Of Life or Knowledge of Good and Evil - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/10 9:39

Acts 17:28 â€
For in him we live and move and have our being.

This is evil:

Jer. 2:12-13 â€
"Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
And shudder, be very desolate," declares the LORD.
â€œFor My people have committed two evils:
They have abandoned Me,
The fountain of living waters,
To carve out for themselves cisterns,
Broken cisterns
That do not hold water.â€

All that men are, and all that man can do and achieve are worthless.

1 Pet. 1:24 â€
All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.
The grass withers,
And its flower falls away,

The wisdom of man is foolishness with God.

1 Cor. 1:19-21 â€
For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.
For it is written, â€œHe catches the wise in their own craftinessâ€; and again, â€œThe LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.â€
Therefore let no one boast in men.

All manâ€™s righteous deeds are as filthy rags to God.

Isa. 64:6 â€
For all of us have become like one who is unclean,
And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;
And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our wrongdoings, like the wind, take us away.

This is how a righteous man must live:

Rom. 1:17 â€
â€œas it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Rom. 14:23 â€
and whatever is not from faith is sin.

2 Cor. 3:5 â€
Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

Phil. 3:3 â€

for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Rom. 8:6-8

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

All our springs of life are in God.

Ps. 87:7

All my springs are in you.

Ps. 36:9

For with You is the fountain of life;
In Your light we see light

2 Pet. 1:3

for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

1 Cor. 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

1 Cor. 1:30-31

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

NOT I BUT CHRIST.

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/10 10:05

Lot of verses but let's start this one.

Rom. 8:6-8

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Note the phrase not subject to the law of God. What does the law of God mean?

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/10 18:06

The complete verse for Acts 17:28 -

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Paul is using Greek poetry to make a case. Also he is using his intellect to reason with the Greeks. What do you do with this verse? Is he carnal?

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/10 18:23

Is Acts 17:28 the wisdom of the world? Or maybe there is another meaning to it?

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/10 18:30

James talks about two wisdoms perhaps you will find it in his book.

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/10 18:33

And then maybe there is a parallel between James and 1 Corinthians because they seem to be addressing the same issue.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/11 1:05

Actually, Platy, I was responding to Mike's OP, not your post.

Anyway, you wrote:

Quote:
----- Rom. 8:6-8
For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Note the phrase not subject to the law of God. What does the law of God mean?

I would say that the mind set on flesh will debate on all kinds of things instead of just preaching our righteousness in Christ by faith.

Rom. 10:4 (Amp)
For Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to everyone who believes.

2 Cor. 5:21
He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Phil. 3:8-9
More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

You also said:

Quote:
----- The complete verse for Acts 17:28 -
For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.
Paul is using Greek poetry to make a case. Also he is using his intellect to reason with the Greeks. What do you do with this verse? Is he carnal?
Is Acts 17:28 the wisdom of the world? Or maybe there is another meaning to it?
James talks about two wisdoms perhaps you will find it in his book.
And then maybe there is a parallel between James and 1 Corinthians because they seem to be addressing the same issue.

“For in him we live, and move, and have our being” – this is the main and all-important point and is also taught in other scripture.

The word of God is simply to be received and believed in.

Jer. 1:16 “
Your words were found and I ate them,
And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart;
For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

Scripture frivolously dissected and torn apart becomes no longer palatable as spiritual food.

Your line of questioning will only lead to endless debate that will only consume a lot of precious time and in the end impart not one iota of righteousness and life and goodness to anyone.

Unless Christ alone is sought and desired and seen and believed in, scripture will remain veiled – John 5:39-40, John 14:6, John 20:31, 2 Cor, 3:14-16.

2 Cor 3:18 --

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Heb. 12:1-2 “

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS**, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Blessings

ADD:
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The mind set on the FLESH (Rom. 8:6) most definitely does not and is not even able to subject itself to the law of the SPIRIT of life in Christ Jesus that sets us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/11 7:12

The meaning of a verse is the verse not the verse itself.

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/11 7:16

BranchinVine how would you deal with error?

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/11 7:23

Luke 2 - 46And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/12 10:32

Platy,

Quote:
----- BranchinVine how would you deal with error?

Send out God's Light and God's Truth.

Ps. 43:3

O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me;
Let them bring me to Your holy hill
And to Your dwelling places.

THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF IS THE TRUTH.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Darkness is obliterated by light shining into it.

THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF IS THE LIGHT.

John 12:46

I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.

John 8:12

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

John 1:4

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

BE THE LIGHT BY BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

2 Cor. 4:6

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Matt. 5:14-16

You are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Comment:

Messages of condemnation do not light up any darkness, do not make anyone righteous, cannot save. Jesus alone and Himself is our wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.

Quote:

You are not sent to preach death and sin and judgment, but life and holiness and salvation --- not to be a witness against the people, but to be a witness for God to preach the good news --- Jesus Himself.

--- Hudson Taylor (1832 - 1905), Founder of the China Inland Mission

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/12 10:57

I once had a conversation with a pastor who was fully into social justice. I told him why go about fighting all these different things. These are all bad fruits of a unregenerate heart preach the gospel and take care of it at the root level and not at the fruit level because once you deal with it at the root level not only do you deal one thing but you deal with a host of other things. In other words it's like killing multiple birds with one stone. The conversation then was ended. What more can you say to that?

So in that sense there is agreement with your post. However what do you do with Jonah and other such prophets. What do you consider a message of condemnation?

Did not Jesus say:

Matthew 5 - 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

They aren't going to persecute you for saying nice things.

Re: - posted by deogloria, on: 2021/2/12 22:28

Good topic, thank you for the contributions. Just like to add a few more thoughts.

"Messages of condemnation do not light up any darkness, do not make anyone righteous, cannot save. Jesus alone and Himself is our wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." I agree - but God talks about both - life AND death, from the very beginning.

Genesis 2v16 And the LORD God commanded him, "You may eat freely from every tree of the garden, 17but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die."

Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, so that you and your descendants may live, 20and that you may love the LORD your God, obey Him, and hold fast to Him. For He is your life, and He will prolong your life in the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/13 2:23

Hi Platy,

Quote:

----- However what do you do with Jonah and other such prophets.

The true message of the prophets was unveiled by the Lord Jesus. They spoke concerning Him and our salvation in Him (Luke 24:44-47. Also, 1 Pet. 1:10-12). The Lord Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save the world (John 3:17).

Quote:

----- Did not Jesus say:

Matthew 5 - 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

They aren't going to persecute you for saying nice things.

It is not about being persecuted for not saying nice things.

“The Lordship of Christ is the one focal point of all Satanic challenge and opposition” T. Austin-Sparks.

Blessings

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/13 2:38

Hi Markus,

Quote:

----- "Messages of condemnation do not light up any darkness, do not make anyone righteous, cannot save. Jesus alone and Himself is our wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."
I agree - but God talks about both - life AND death, from the very beginning.

The choice has already been made by Adam. All men through Adam are already in the place of death and darkness and there is no way for any man to break free from that.

Rom. 3:16-18 “
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace they have not known.

We are not called to command men to make bricks without straw and mercilessly beat them because they are just not able to do so.

Isa 64:6 “
For all of us have become like one who is unclean,
And all our RIGHTEOUS deeds are like a filthy garment;
And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our wrongdoings, like the wind, take us away.

Isa. 59:9-11
We look for light, but there is darkness!
For brightness, but we walk in blackness!
We grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if we had no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
We are as dead men in desolate places.
We all growl like bears,
And moan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but there is none;

For salvation, but it is far from us.

Into this darkness and wretchedness and hopelessness, we bring God's message of comfort and hope.

Isa. 40:1-11 --

Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God.
Speak kindly to Jerusalem;
And call out to her, that her warfare has ended,
That her iniquity has been removed,
That she has received of the LORD'S hand
Double for all her sins.
A voice is calling,
Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness;
Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.
Let every valley be lifted up,
And every mountain and hill be made low;
And let the rough ground become a plain,
And the rugged terrain a broad valley;
Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
And all flesh will see it together;
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.
A voice says, Call out.
Then he answered, What shall I call out?
All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
When the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.
Get yourself up on a high mountain,
O Zion, bearer of good news,
Lift up your voice mightily,
O Jerusalem, bearer of good news;
Lift it up, do not fear.
Say to the cities of Judah,
Here is your God!
Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might,
With His arm ruling for Him.
Behold, His reward is with Him
And His recompense before Him.
Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,
In His arm He will gather the lambs
And carry them in His bosom;
He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

Like John the Baptist, we are called to:

Luke 1:77-79

To give to His people the knowledge of salvation
By the forgiveness of their sins,
Because of the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,
TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

Genesis 2v16 This was spoken to Adam. He made the wrong choice and brought all mankind into the death.

Deuteronomy 30:19 ' This was said to people under the law. They failed and remained in death.

Romans 6:23 ' This is the good news to us!! In Adam all die but in Christ all are made alive. And eternal life is no longer based on works of the law but is a gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are now saved by a New Covenant. We need only to believe and receive.

We preach the GOOD NEWS of our Saviour who gives life to the dead and saves us from our sin. Jesus SAVES! Hallelujah!

Ps. 145:9 '
The LORD is good to all,
And His tender mercies are over all His works.

Isa. 55:1 '
Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;
And you who have no money come, buy and eat.
Come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without cost.

Rev. 22:17 '
And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

John 3:17 '
For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

Blessings

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/13 7:23

Hi Jade,

All good points. I think we are on the same page mostly but there are still some holes. You mentioned John the Baptist. Why was he imprisoned and beheaded?

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/13 8:41

Hi Platy,

Sure, it is written that John was beheaded because Herodias hated him because John had been saying to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife' (Mark 6:17-28).

It is also written:

Eph. 6:12 '
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Re: The Spirit also says - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2021/2/13 17:57

The same messenger, to the same apostle, for the same people,

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates in to the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

We must not take away that it is Jesus Christ who will forbid anyone unclean from defiling the holiness of heaven. He is the one shutting the door so that nothing unclean will ever be able to defile the dwelling of God again.

The same spirit and the same messenger to the same apostle for the same people.

mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/14 7:52

Quote:
----- He is the one shutting the door "-----

Rev. 21:25 "Its gates SHALL NOT BE SHUT at all by day (there shall be no night there).

?

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/14 8:25

Isa. 66:23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon
And from sabbath to sabbath,
All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.

Ps. 86:9 "All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
And they shall glorify Your name.

If no unholy person can come before God, surely these scripture point to the salvation and sanctification of ALL men?

As is also indicated by following scripture:

1 Cor. 15:22-28 "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive"-----so that God may be all in all.

If God is all in all, surely all are holy as God is holy?

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/14 10:06

Hi Jade,

There is a teaching called universalism that says everyone (and maybe everything) will end up being restored and reconciled to God. Nothing of God's work will end up being lost and that it will end up turning out for the good in the end. What also goes with that is God also will not condemn anyone to hell. Reading your posts it seems your viewpoints are similar to this.

It's a lovely teaching. If I could rewrite the bible that really is the teaching I would want. Who wants to see anything lost?

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/2/14 10:19

God's holiness is far beyond anything else. No one will ever come to close to it not in this life either in eternity. The same holiness of God demands God's justice which then demands God's wrath but in God's love he has provided a way out through Jesus Christ.

All who are in Christ will be saved but they have to be in him. Not all are in Christ though.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2021/2/14 10:57

Jade, you have overlooked the divine decree that is not to be sealed up and is unalterable. We must not take away from these words:

And he *said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.

By God's own decree - those who do wrong will still do wrong and those who are filthy will still be filthy.

Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will enter the city.

Jesus IS the door - only those IN Him will be allowed to enter. He gives eternal life to all who obey Him.

mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/15 7:05

Hi Platy,

Acts 17:11 " "

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

I have dared to question, dared to challenge, and, dared to search the scriptures to see whether commonly taught things are true.

I have no interest in "universalism", whatever it is.

I stand on God's word alone.

And I have found sufficient scriptural backing to believe that all men will be saved and I have peace in my heart in believing this.

God saves not because of what we are but because of WHO HE IS.

Ps. 106:7-8 " "

Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders;
They did not remember Your abundant kindnesses,
But rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea.

Nevertheless He saved them FOR THE SAKE OF HIS NAME,
THAT HE MIGHT MAKE HIS POWER KNOWN.

Yesterday, today, and forever, Jesus is the Saviour of the world .

Heb. 13: 11
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

1 Jn. 4:14 11
We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

1 Jn. 2:2 11
and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

The Lord Jesus has already paid the full price for the salvation of ALL. Will anyone rob Him of the full reward of His suffering and sacrifice?

Quote:
----- If I could rewrite the bible 11 11 11

Please don't! You can never reach the heights of God's goodness and love.
Just read the bible NOT with man's heart of stone BUT with God's heart of LOVE.

Isn't it comforting to know that the gates of God's Holy City will never be shut? And, right at the end of Revelation, the Spirit and the bride still say, "Come." And whoever who is thirsty and who wishes to can still take the water of life without cost.

Definitely. Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination can come into God's Holy City.

God is a most holy God.

Ps. 5:4-7, 12 11
For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness;
No evil dwells with You.
The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes;
You hate all who do iniquity.
11 11 11 11 11 11
For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD,
You surround him with favor as with a shield.

Eternity will surely open with billions of people outside the gate.

Is it too hard for God to bring all men to repentance and make them holy? Can God's mighty Name fail?

LUKE 15

Our Good Shepherd will not rest till the last lost sheep is brought home.

The Father waits patiently for His prodigal sons to return.

Certainly. Every sinner must come to his senses and repent.

Certainly. No one is permitted to enter the Father's house in filthy rags.

The Father re-robes His lost and found sons in garments of righteousness and praise!

May we be there with the Father to celebrate and rejoice and not be angry like the elder son (Luke 15:28-30).

I guess

The eternal tormentists will still be eternal tormentists.

Those who believe all men will be saved will still believe all men will be saved.

In eternity we will know the truth.

Blessings.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/2/15 7:09

Hi Platy,

Quote:

----- All who are in Christ will be saved but they have to be in him.

What does "in Christ" mean to you?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2021/2/15 10:49

It appears that Jade does not hold "eternal tormentists" in very high esteem.

That list would include Jesus, John, and Paul as the primary sources of the movement.

After all it is their words that began the trend.

Just sayin

Mak

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/3/5 19:37

Hi Jade,

What does "in Christ" mean? That is probably too deep of a question for me to properly answer. Simple answer justification by faith with the evidence of progressive sanctification.

Anyway I would recommend a book by R.C. Sproul called "The Holiness of God". Its a easy read and deep. Sproul makes the case using scripture that the holiness of God is above the love of God. If the holiness of God is higher than the love of God then one's viewpoint/theology of God has to change if the love of God was credited as being his primary attribute.

Also I found this for you (audio lectures by R.C. Sproul):
https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/holiness_of_god/

I would recommend R.C. Sproul in general. A very good bible teacher/theologian.

Also I would agree with makrothumia which is why I had previously stated I would have to rewrite the bible to accommodate the belief that all will be saved. One would have to wipe out all the passages talking about hell.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/3/6 7:44

Hi Platy,

You cannot wipe out MANY passages like these from the Bible:

The Love of Christ surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:19).

Lam. 3:22 (Amp)â€™

It is because of the LORDâ€™S lovingkindnesses that we are not consumed,
Because His compassions never fail.

Lam. 3:31 â€™

For the Lord will not cast off forever.

Isa. 26:9 â€™

For when the earth experiences Your judgments
The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

1 Cor. 15:22-28 â€™

For as in Adam all die, so also IN CHRIST ALL WILL BE MADE ALIVEâ€™â€™â€™When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.

This is the Good News:

The Lord Jesus came to save ALL mankind out of the wickedness of sin into the holiness of God.

The Lord Jesus came to save ALL mankind out of the kingdom of darkness and death into the Light and Life and Peace and Joy and Righteousness in the Holy Spirit in the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus came to save ALL mankind out of the wrath of God into the Love and Kindness and Goodness of God.

If you disagree, then again, I say: In eternity we will know the truth.

Regarding R. C. Sproul, I have heard a few of his sermons and they were good to me. I am definitely interested in knowing what he said in the book you recommended. I have other commitments at the moment and will browse through his book when free.

Blessings

Re: PLATY - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/3/8 23:23

By the way, Platy, can you give the scriptures in which Paul preached eternal torment? Thanks.

The words of Jesus and John (Revelation) had already been debated on. (edited)

Quote:

----- Also I would agree with makrothumia -----

Re: Lake of Fire - posted by billy1980 (), on: 2021/3/8 23:51

The Apostle John

"Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.' Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." Revelation 14:9-12

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:11-15

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/3/9 0:00

Thank you, William.

These Revelation passages had already been debated on. I have in mind John's epistles and gospel.

I have edited my post to Platy.

Blessings.

Re: The Words of Paul - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2021/3/9 4:46

Here are Paul's words indicating his own understanding of eternal torment

II Thessalonians 1

since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe,

mak

Re: Mak - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/3/9 7:55

2 Thess. 1:9 (NASB 1995) --

These will pay the penalty of eternal (Strong NT 166 aia¹nios) destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Jude 1:6 â€

And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal (Strong NT 126 aidios) bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

How do you explain â€œaia¹niosâ€ and â€œaidiosâ€?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2021/3/9 11:53

The simple answer for both words is beyond or outside of measurable time.

Both words are used of God Himself - who exist outside of any limits measurable to finite men.

Can you give us your understanding of â€œthe second death?â€

Mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2021/3/9 12:57

Might as well reference one of the main proponents of Jadeâ€™s position to make sure at least some of the arguments are laid out plainly:

<http://www.thomastalbott.com/pdf/chapter5.pdf>

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2021/3/9 15:07

I could draw up bible verses to support universalism:

Disclaimer: I am writing nonsense, do not follow this argumentation:

Romans 14:11

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Every knee and every tongue means everyone, then you go into Romans 10 and claim all who confess will also be saved:

Romans 10:9-10

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

So if God wills it, there is nothing that hinders it.

Jeremiah 32:27

â€œI am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?

See the fallacy? It is even dangerous though wrapped around bible verses. The problem is not with the bible verses themselves but in taking them out of context and constructing something gross out of it.

You could even find bible verses in favour of homosexuality and polygamy!

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2021/3/9 16:59

NP it is safe to say you are not representing the arguments very well to make them sound ridiculous. Obviously you realize every argument you make can be refuted by someone who knows what they are talking about.

Do you seriously think someone like Thomas Talbott (author of article below) is ignorant about and/or ignores context?

I am not saying the idea of Universal Reconciliation is correct, but it is far less easy to refute than you have represented.

There are those who can make extremely cogent arguments for both Universal Reconciliation and Conditional Immortality (annihilationism). Of course, arguments can be made for Eternal Torment as well. The arguments for all three are scriptural and take context into account.

The idea, if a person is interested, is to find the best sources for the three arguments and then decide which is strongest.

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2021/3/10 6:41

Do you seriously think someone like Thomas Talbott (author of article below) is ignorant about and/or ignores context?

This is exactly the point I wanted to make. Talbot believes this error not because he lacks reasoning capabilities, which he obviously has a professor.

No, I see it as an deliberate act of suppressing the truth in unrighteousness as described in Romans 1:18-32.

People who believe these things and promote them do so because they love sin and self more than God and strangle their conscience with chords of lies, lest they be convicted and believe and be saved.

The plain reading of the bible does not support universalism, even a child would understand that. God deliberately veils these basic and simple truths from those who think they know better.

The late Ravi Zacharias appeared to be one of the most astute apologetics in public, but when it came to his own immortality he used very phoney arguments to excuse his behavior.

Re: Mak - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/3/10 7:23

Quote:
----- Can you give us your understanding of "the second death"?

We had debated on this before.

No further comment.

Re: What the Church Fathers Believed - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/3/10 8:53

The Church Fathers who held the doctrine of UNIVERSAL RESTORATION include:

Origen
Clement of Alexandria
Theophilus of Antioch
Athenagoras
Gregory of Nyssa

The following two Church Fathers seem to have held the doctrine of ANNIHILATION OF THE WICKED:

Justin Martyr
Irenaeus

Augustine was the great champion of the doctrine of ENDLESS PUNISHMENT (ETERNAL TORMENT). There was significant opposition to his belief in his day he had to write this concerning his opponents:

“And now I see I must have a gentle disputation with certain tender hearts of our own religion, who are unwilling to believe that everlasting punishment will be inflicted, either on all those whom the just Judge shall condemn to the pains of hell, or even on some of them, but who think that after certain periods of time, longer or shorter according to the proportion of their crimes, they shall be delivered out of that state.”

Re: - posted by Platy, on: 2021/3/10 18:04

Hi Jade,

I've been busy with work so don't have much time to respond.

Lets start with the conditional statements made by Paul. What do you do with the "if" statements made by Paul?

Romans 4:24 - But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 - 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Above are taken from the KJV. Romans 4:24 in NASB and ESV read "us who believe" instead of "if" but doesn't really make a difference because "us" is not "all" and is referring to a specific group of people (believers).

What happens if the condition is not met/fulfilled? What would be your interpretation?

If I don't respond back in time its because I'm unable to.

Re: The END of the age - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2021/3/11 4:14

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words

The words of Jesus must be the standard other scriptures are interpreted by. We must not allow men to reinterpret the plain words of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 13

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

We must beware of any man, or any woman who attempts to reinterpret these clear words. At the end of the age there will be a separation of the lawless and the righteous. That is the end - there is not another end where the lawless will become the righteous. These are the words of the judge Himself. He was not speaking in a mystery. Every other truth about redemption of men must agree with this clear statement about "the end of the age." Only the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; all who offend and practice lawlessness will be cast out - not gathered in - this is the end of the age.

Do not allow anyone, be it an early church father, teacher, or prophet, to twist the clear words of Jesus Christ by overlaying the false idea of a "mystery" upon the plain words of Jesus Christ.

added: the word used here for "the end of the age" is ἡ τέλος, - and means the "culmination". The way certain men and women are attempting to reinterpret the clear words of our Lord is by claiming there is another "culmination".

mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2021/3/11 9:48

Hi Platy,

Quote:
----- If I don't respond back in time its because I'm unable to.

No worries. Take your time. I am busy too.

Quote:
----- Lets start with the conditional statements made by Paul. What do you do with the "if" statements made by Paul?

Romans 4:24 - But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 - 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Agree. Faith in Christ is absolutely necessary for eternal life.

We come back to the OP.

I don't exactly agree with everything Watchman Nee said but I agree with these statements:

Quote:
----- The meaning of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is man acting apart from God, man pursuing goodness according to his

self-will, man hastily and impatiently seeking after the knowledge that God has not granted, and man pursuing progress by his own means rather than by trusting in God. What all these mean is that man is simply acting alone and independently, outside of God. Dear brothers, this is the first sin committed by man. In God's eyes, the meaning of sin is not necessarily related to committing many defiling acts. As long as man seeks anything, does anything, or acts in any way by himself, he has sinned, regardless of whether the thing he seeks after or does is good or bad.

â€œâ€œâ€œâ€œâ€œ

But the minute a creature decides to live according to the Creator's life, he has to exercise dependence, because such a life is not in him; it is only in God. Hence, he cannot live independently from God but must depend fully on God and must have unceasing fellowship with Him.

Adam's fall was a fall from faith and dependence in God to faith and dependence in self.

I will list again the scriptures I quoted in my earlier post:

Jer. 2:12-13 â€œ

"Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
And shudder, be very desolate," declares the LORD.
â€œFor My people have committed two evils:
They have abandoned Me,
The fountain of living waters,
To carve out for themselves cisterns,
Broken cisterns
That do not hold water.â€œ

Isa. 64:6 â€œ

For all of us have become like one who is unclean,
And all our RIGHTEOUS deeds are like a filthy garment;
And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our WRONGDOINGS, like the wind, take us away.

This is how a righteous man must live:

Rom. 1:17 â€œ

â€œas it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Rom. 14:23 â€œ

and whatever is not from faith is sin.

2 Cor. 3:5 â€œ

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

Phil. 3:3 â€œ

for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Rom. 8:6-8 â€œ

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

All our springs of life are in God.

Ps. 87:7 â€œ

All my springs are in you.

Ps. 36:9 â€œ

For with You is the fountain of life;
In Your light we see light

2 Pet. 1:3 â€

for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

1 Cor. 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

1 Cor. 1:30-31 â€

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

I will add the following scriptures:

Heb. 11:6 â€

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

1 John 5:11-12 â€

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Gal. 2:20 â€

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

I ask:

Is God not able to save ALL mankind out of the sin of unbelief and bring ALL mankind into the life of faith in Christ?

Is God not able to give ALL mankind the gift of faith?

How did Lydia believe?

Acts 16:14 â€

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and THE LORD OPENED HER HEART to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Saul (Paul) was breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1).

How was Paul saved?

Acts 9:3-6 â€

As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

ANOTHER THOUGHT:

=====

The Lord Jesus said:

Matt. 7:3-5 â€

"Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

"Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?

"You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.â€

Paul said:

2 Cor. 13:5 â€

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!

Before we condemn anyone else, have we ourselves passed the test of faith?

The test is: Is Jesus Christ in you (2 Cor. 13:5)?

Christ is not in us just by assent and consent.

To know that we are in the faith is to know that Christ is in us as a living reality. It is to know the power of his life, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, and ascension as a living power in us. It is to possess the fruits of Christ within us, which are love, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It is Christ, or the divine nature in us. Every faith that is not Christ in us is a dead and useless faith.

Blessings