

General Topics :: Universalism**Universalism - posted by dukster, on: 2023/5/11 15:07**

Most of the arguments that I hear against Universalism are straw men. Patristic Universalism was the prevailing doctrine during the first four hundred years and most of the Early Church Father held to this view. A much better case can be made for Universal Reconciliation or what the church fathers called Apocatastasis using scripture than eternal torment.

Re: Universalism - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2023/5/12 12:18

This isn't true, dukster. While you might find a handful of teachers who claim this, it's simply not the case. Moreover, even if some (or perhaps many) of the "early church fathers" held this view, it doesn't make it biblically sound.

In fact, the Epistles existed at the time of the apostles because there was already so much false doctrine being proclaimed during the time of the "early church." There are pseudepigraphal "epistles" and even "gospels" that are tainted and uninspired.

The standard for spiritual truth isn't history or tradition. It isn't the early "fathers" either. Rather, the standard for spiritual truth is the Bible alone. This is not to say that we cannot learn from the early church ideals. Rather, they're merely a contextual historical anecdotes rather than some inarguable truths.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/12 13:40

Chris-

Do you have a "number 1" scripture that you believe refutes UR or do you just think it's a preponderance of scripture taken as a whole? In other words do you believe it's a reasonable doubt or rather a preponderance of the evidence?

Just curious.

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2023/5/12 17:29

Hi TMK,

Good question. I suppose that it is a macro versus micro understanding of Scripture. Reading the Bible through cover-to-cover repeatedly is very helpful in "seeing" the big picture of such matters. For the most part, this helps when it comes to avoid being carried away by "various winds of doctrine" that are sometimes based (in part) on a particular verse of passage of Scripture.

I suppose that I could gather together passages of Scripture that, in context, refute a UR perception. Yet, doing this typically invites a battle of doctrines where singular verses or passages are tossed back and forth like artillery shells.

Yet, for me (and in regard this underlying message of salvation), the proper context begins in Genesis and ends in Revelation. In between all of it, there is a very real understanding of "salvation" that is seen. In fact, the entire Biblical narrative is connected in this regard. Through reading it all (with an honest and open hunger for truth rather than prior established dogma), I cannot find any semblance of an "apocatastasis" end result.

This doesn't mean that I cannot perceive why some might come to some sort of conclusion after some study. However, I do think that even one entire read-through of the Word of God -- from Genesis through Revelation -- helps in this regard.

Consequently, the passages that I hear that are used to substantiate various universalism ideas end up as "strange" when the verses are read in the ever-growing context of the Biblical narrative. In fact, I do make a list of issues that I hope to find clarity with during each new journey through the Word. Last year, I added "salvation" as something to consider as I started through Genesis and ended in Revelation. It's amazing how this topic is found throughout most books of both the old and new testaments.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/13 7:18

Thanks for the reply.

I've read through the Bible every year for a lot of years and I am not as certain as you are. The best I can say is that I am not certain.

Re: Universalism - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/5/13 9:23

dukster-

One word set forth as the condition, "if"

G1437-

ἐάν;

1. a conditional particle (derived from ἡμέρα ἡμέρα, ἡμέρα), which makes reference to time and to experience, introducing something future, but not determining, before the event, whether it is certainly to take place; if .

Hebrews 3:

6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

note; here we have Holy Spirit speaking -

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, (if) we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Also speaking to believers in the previous chapter-

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

This is only one example that torpedoes the hull of this ship, not only are there many more individual passages but the whole council speaks likewise as there would be no need of any warnings whatsoever if God intended to forcibly require belief and subsequent obedience to Christ, which by the scriptural definition would not only be witchcraft but rape. God the Father is neither a witch nor a rapist.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/13 11:16

//if God intended to forcibly require belief and subsequent obedience to Christ, which by the scriptural definition would not only be witchcraft but rape

God the Father is neither a witch nor a rapist

Have you seriously considered what the doctrine of conscious eternal torment really means? Forcing someone to believe (a position which of course no evangelical proponent of UR holds) would be far less terroristic than the doctrine of CET.

Re: Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/5/13 11:51

Terroristic !??

That's how you choose to characterize God's righteous judgement?

By definition, you are laying charge at the feet of God to be conducting unlawful violence and intimidation!??

Todd, there is only one word that suffices.

REPENT

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/13 13:35

You do not believe UR can be true because in your opinion it would make God a rapist and a witch (your words, not mine).

I have strong doubts about the doctrine of conscious eternal torment because of implications to God's character.

What's the difference? If you turn out to be wrong, won't you have to give account for your characterization of God as a rapist witch?

The obvious implication of CET is that, if true, God created humans knowing that the vast vast vast majority will be tortured forever and ever. If you want to be gung ho about that, have at it!

Now of course CET may be true. I'm not going to say that is not possible. But I sincerely hope that it is not and I certainly don't relish the idea as the great swath of Christians seem to do.

Re: Universalism - posted by narrowpath, on: 2023/5/13 16:18

We discussed this a while ago in this thread

https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?mode=viewtopic&topic_id=64577&forum=34&start=0&viewmode=flat&order=0

Re: Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/5/13 16:19

The scriptures are clear whether anyone believes them are not

the unstable and double minded will do nothing in the way of changing the scriptures regarding their application in judgment-

Personally, I've never met any who as you characterized, relish the idea of eternal torment consciously or otherwise.

Rather most people that I've met that know the Lord, fear Him and the terrible judgment that's coming they don't want anyone to be condemned on that day and urge with all sobriety and earnestness. Repent, turn to God and obey the gospel

There is no profit in arguing, rather consider this verse and ask Him yourself so that it will no longer be a matter of opinion nor interpretation-

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/13 17:37

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

The part after the last comma is key.

Re: Universalism - posted by Lysa (), on: 2023/5/13 18:40

Dukster,

I used to always go to tentmakers website and dabbled heavily in christian universalism. Then the Lord gave me a ministry teaching in the local jail to the women and He asked me point blank, "Are you going to teach universalism to those of childlike faith? And tell them there is no hell?"

With the Lord asking me that question, I figured if HE is inclined to know what I was going to teach to His little ones, then it isn't a valid teaching.

I am convinced but for you (and others), I offer the following articles from Dr Michael Heiser:

<https://drmsch.com/the-premises-of-universal-salvation/>

<https://drmsch.com/romans-512-and-universalism-applying-my-take-on-romans-512-to-the-problem/>

God bless you in your search,

Lisa

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2023/5/14 14:24

Universalism in whatever form undermines Christ's redemption, weakens the efficacy of the cross, makes light of Christ's suffering and death, mocks the martyrs and those who suffer in Christ's name. It excuses sin and cheapens holiness. It is damnable, there can be no compromise to this doctrine of demons.

OSAS is a form of universalism limited to the so called "elect". There are so many warnings to believers not to forsake the faith, not to believe lies, sinning against others, or grow wary or slacking off.

People who believe or teach these doctrines want them to be true.

And why do we have so much difficulty with works? There are works of the the devil, the flesh, and the law and works of faith and the Spirit. As long as we concentrate on the latter 2 we are doing well. Everybody who abides and believes and walks in the Spirit will do Gods works.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/14 23:09

Agreed Narrowpath.

Another thought occurred to me: Jesus said that every sin can be forgiven except blaspheming the Holy Spirit; He said it will not be forgiven in this world OR THE WORLD TO COME.

So even staunch universalists must concede that there are some people that will never, under any circumstances, now or in eternity, be forgiven.

I guess they are forced to imagine that the people that commit the unpardonable sin will be annihilated. They can probably change their beliefs to suit the current scripture they are trying to twist.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/15 7:02

narrowpath

Quote:
----- Universalism in whatever form undermines Christ's redemption, weakens the efficacy of the cross, makes light of Christ's suffering and death, mocks the martyrs and those who suffer in Christ's name. It excuses sin and cheapens holiness. It is damnable, there can be no compromise to this doctrine of demons.

Just how exactly does Patristic Universalism does this???

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/15 7:07

drifter

Quote:
----- Another thought occurred to me: Jesus said that every sin can be forgiven except blaspheming the Holy Spirit; He said it will not be forgiven in this world OR THE WORLD TO COME.

And what exactly is the unpardonable sin???

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2023/5/15 9:07

I know I'm not Narrowpath but I would like to see you (and dukster) to provide historical, original, quotes from the early church fathers that believed in patristic universalism.

Not alluding to or a book that says they believed in it but ACTUAL quotes stating they wrote about it and believed the Bible stated it, please.

Thank you,
Lisa

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/15 9:35

Lysa

Scripture is the authority.

We will discuss my question to narrowpath based on scripture alone.

Re: - posted by deogloria, on: 2023/5/15 12:41

Matthew 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" 23 Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!"

Ephesians 5:5 For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

The Bible is very clear that not everyone will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Where the rest will end up would be a different topic.

Our focus should be on the Good News, the true Biblical Gospel but with a warning about the bad news that "not everyone will enter the kingdom of heaven..."

Markus

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/15 12:51

"And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Mark 3:22-30

"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." Luke 12:10

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matthew 12:31,32

Part of Jesus' ministry was healing people and casting out demons. It was obvious to anyone who saw Him perform miracles that He was doing it by the power of the Holy Spirit. The unforgivable sin is when one hardens his heart against God (it can't be done on a whim or by accident), and stubbornly, obstinately resists the Holy Spirit, and attributes His work to the devil.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/15 13:23

//The unforgivable sin is when one hardens his heart against God (it can't be done on a whim or by accident), and stubbornly, obstinately resists the Holy Spirit, and attributes His work to the devil.//

Isn't this true if any persistent non-believer?

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/15 14:24

Todd, if it were true of every persistent non believer, then you must concede that every single unrepentant person people must either, 1. Suffer in hell eternally with no chance of forgiveness or, 2. Cease to exist.

So much for the protestant purgatory where people "burn off" their sins and God eventually lets them into heaven.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/15 14:26

Plus, Jesus said that people that commit this sin can't even be forgiven of it while they are alive.

Re: everlasting punishment - posted by narrowpath, on: 2023/5/15 14:48

Hi Jade, you know these scriptures, there is overwhelming evidence for eternal punishment in hell without remedy, just take scriptures literal. These are all compatible with an all merciful God who sent his son to suffer and die for our sins. If sinners reject the offer of forgiveness, God will simply confirm the sinners choice and let him bear the reward for sinning against and infinitely holy God who made all necessary provisions for everyone to get saved. Now if they refuse to take the offer, it is their choice, they prefer eternal punishment over forgiveness and here they go to the hell of their choice. Look how hell is glorified in heavy metal lyrics, how brazenly man and women long to go to this terrible place. They prefer hell where they can continue cursing God. The very thought of going to heaven and praising God is worse than hell for the reprobate. They say with Elon Musk that they are OK to go there.

The stakes are enormous, the reward immeasurable, the punishment unbearable, to the one a smell of life, to the other to death. Those who believe Christ will enter into eternal bliss, for those who reject it, it were better they were never born. It was Mount Sinai or mount Ebal, choose life or death, Now I in Christ and Christ in me forever or I will be forever cursed and tormented before the eyes of the lamb who conquered all. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God and abide under His righteous wrath.

Matthew 5:29-30

If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

This is why we must preach the Gospel to all creature.

Matthew 18:9

If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell.

Matthew 5:29

If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Matthew 10:28

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 5:22

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, "You good-for-nothing," shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, "You fool," shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

Matthew 7:13

Verse Concepts

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

Matthew 18:8

"If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire.

Matthew 25:46

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.â€•

Matthew 12:32

Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Mark 9:47-48

If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Revelation 14:11

And the smoke of their torment goes up 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.â€•

Revelation 20:10

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Matthew 25:31-33

â€œBut when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

Luke 13:24-28

â€œStrive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, â€œLord, open up to us!â€™ then He will answer and say to you, â€œI do not know where you are from.â€™ Then you will begin to say, â€œWe ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streetsâ€™;read more.

Matthew 13:42

and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25:41

â€œThen He will also say to those on His left, â€œDepart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

Revelation 19:20

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

2 Peter 2:4

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

Matthew 23:33

VerseÂ Concepts

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

Revelation 20:13-15

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every 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.

Matthew 8:12

but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Revelation 20:14

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

Jude 5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Matthew 13:47-50

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, read more.

Luke 16:19-31

Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. read more.

Revelation 14:9-11

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 goes up 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."

Luke 16:23

In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/15 18:36

//Todd, if it were true of every persistent non believer, then you must concede that every single unrepentant person people must either, 1. Suffer in hell eternally with no chance of forgiveness or, 2. Cease to exist.

So much for the protestant purgatory where people "burn off" their sins and God eventually lets them into heaven.//

All this shows is that you don't have any idea what blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is. But don't feel bad, no one does for sure. Nor does anyone know what He meant when He said "or the age to come."

It's not the best verse to negate Universal Reconciliation, nor are the ones sited by NP. Admittedly on the surface they seem to do so.

"Universalism" as currently conceived seems to be the view that everyone will automatically end up in heaven ---- no relation to their life or manner of living. The Universalist-Unitarian Church is probably the most liberal church in Christendom. It is filled with atheists and other humanists. Evangelicals who hold to the view of Universal Reconciliation try to avoid the appellation "universalist". Those who will be in Gehenna, the Lake of Fire, will have to repent and submit to the authority of Christ in order to be acceptable to God ---- just like the rest of us.

Some Scriptures Concerning the Reconciliation of All Things to God:

Colossians 1:19,20 For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all

things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Ephesians 1:9,10 For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the secret of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Romans 5:18 Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all people, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all people.

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Timothy 4:10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

Revelation 5:12-13 And I heard every created being in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that herein, saying, "To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might into the ages of ages.

Romans 11:32 For God has consigned all people to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all.

Philippians 3:20,21 But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1 Corinthians 15:22-28 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. "For God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection under him," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/15 19:07

I've seen you use this tactic many times, Todd; to muddy the water and say "no one knows for sure."

I do know what blaspheming the Holy Spirit is. It is not hard to figure it out. Jesus wouldn't warn us to not do it if it couldn't be done.

If you look at the verses you posted out of context, yes, they can look like all people will be saved. But taken in context with the rest of the Bible, salvation is conditional, some are elected by God's foreknowledge to salvation, some will be damned.

Why would the apostles endure what they did, being stoned, beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned and starved if all people were going to be saved anyway? It makes no sense.

The rich man certainly seemed repentant, or at least remorseful, when he talked to Abraham. Why didn't Jesus swoop down and rescue him the moment he asked for a drop of water to cool his tongue? I think if you offered to get him out of hell he would take you up on it.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/15 21:35

Brothers and Sisters,

A sincere and loving question for two threads running now on the forum:

Do those who desire to be saved need, in an essential way, to flee sin and chase after holiness, to make every effort and make it their goal to pursue perfection, and to make every effort to add in increasing measure godliness, in faith upon the indwelling Spirit and God's promises? And conversely, does laziness in such effort and failure to pursue with focus and every effort result in not being saved.

Lest the reply is made that this is human works, please know the cross and the new covenant in his blood is God's provision that makes this goal and prize the path of salvation possible and gives assurance when this race is run that entry into heaven is provided.

Universalism is precluded by this doctrine of Christ in me by the blood of the covenant as the source and provision towards salvation. Also, His keeping is in essence, His making me holy, perfect, mature and Christlike which is complete when the sons of Glory are revealed upon receipt at the final consummation when we receive glorious resurrected bodies, when we see Him face to face. Those with a good recall of Scripture, will recognize that every word in this post is a summary in close approximation to many verses only listed in a connected way.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/16 9:48

Robert,

Quote:
----- Universalism is precluded by this doctrine of Christ in me by the blood of the covenant as the source work and provision towards salvation.

1 John 2:4 "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

John 1:29 "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

1 Cor. 15:28 "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.

NOTE: SO THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/16 9:49

narrowpath,

The scripture verses you gave do mention hell but they do NOT say that there will be no universal reconciliation.

The scripture verses Todd gave point to universal reconciliation.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/16 9:56

Nigel,

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

This thread is not about the unpardonable sin so I won't digress.

But let me ask you this in connection with what you said:

Countless people have died without hearing the gospel and without knowing Christ and the Holy Spirit. Have they committed the unpardonable sin?

Quote:
----- Why would the apostles endure what they did, being stoned, beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned and starved if all people were going

to be saved anyway? It makes no sense.

They suffered for Christ and the Kingdom of God.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the Kingdom of God was inaugurated on earth.

They were Christ's witnesses and preached the Kingdom of God and Jesus is Lord. As more and more people turned from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, the Kingdom of God expanded on earth.

There is opposition from the kingdom of darkness.

Paul said:

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.

But Jesus is Lord!

2 Cor. 4:7-11

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Isa. 9:7

There will be NO END to the increase of His government or of peace.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/16 12:37

Jude, people go to hell because they love sin and prefer darkness, not because they haven't heard the gospel.

The unforgivable sin is clearly in a category all its own: it is attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil; this is caused by a deliberate, persistent hardening of the heart and a refusal to heed the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures make it very clear: whoever commits this sin will never be forgiven in this life. They will also never be forgiven in the world to come. Never means never. Not ever. Under no circumstances.

My point about the apostles suffering and dying for the gospel is this: if they knew that all people would be reconciled regardless of what they did, even if they were an unrepentant mass murderer or serial pedophile, say, then why bother to preach the gospel, much less suffer for it? Just to give people a better life here on earth?

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/16 12:50

And it seems that a lot of eisegesis is used to try to make those texts seem "universalist."

1 John 2:4, for example. Jesus shed His blood to forgive us of our sins. Hallelujah! But He also OFFERS his atoning blood to an unbelieving world. They have the choice to accept or reject it. But He did shed it for them.

1 Corinthians 15:28. Wesley notes: "Shall deliver up the mediatorial kingdom. That the three-one God may be all in all - All things, (consequently all persons,) without any interruption, without the intervention of any creature, without the opposition of any enemy, shall be subordinate to God." It looks like you're reading into the "all in all" statement. It doesn't mean that all will be saved; it is talking about God's rulership and dominion over creation.

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2023/5/16 14:17

Hi Jade, the scriptures I mentioned all speak about a final eternal and everlasting punishment. The evidence is overwhelming, allowing for no other interpretation. You do not want to believe that, therefore no matter how many scriptures I mention, it will not convince you. Truth only works if it is revealed to the spirit in a man.

Truth is vested in the person of Jesus Christ. The truth of eternal and everlasting punishment is foundational and taking it away makes me wonder how one can believe the other foundational truths...

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/16 15:18

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1,2

The doctrine of eternal judgment is included in the list of foundational articles of faith, right in there with repentance and faith.

All universalist arguments stem from sentiment and human reasoning, totally misunderstanding God's character and hatred of sin, and isolated scriptures taken out of context.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/16 15:29

Most evangelicals don't **really** believe that the vast majority of humanity will end up in never-ending torment. Not **really**.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/16 16:04

I really don't care what the majority thinks. Truth is not determined by popular vote. The very fact that the majority of people (and allegedly the majority of evangelicals) reject this truth only confirms its validity, in my mind.

And Todd, yes, I **really** do believe it.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/16 17:17

You missed my point. Almost every evangelical says they believe but hardly any **truly** believe it.

If evangelicals truly believed this doctrine the USA and likely the world would not be the state it is now.

Re: - posted by ChrisA, on: 2023/5/16 18:24

Todd wrote: "If evangelicals truly believed this doctrine the USA and likely the world would not be the state it is now."

The Bible tells us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness, yet only his wife, sons, and their wives got into the ark, along with the animals God brought to them.

We can't blame Noah for the state of the ancient world. The thoughts of men were continually evil, we are told. Likewise, the current state of the world does not reflect poorly upon followers of Jesus Christ. It was prophesied millennia ago that the world would be judged again - not with water, but by fire.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/16 18:31

I caught the undercurrent of your thought. Many (professing) Christians live in a way that makes it seem like they don't care whether people go to hell or not. Might I suggest that if people do live this way, if they don't pray for the lost and tell them about Jesus at every available opportunity, they don't really believe? Isn't the Bible quite clear about this?

Could it be also that doctrines like universalism (in whatever form, they all come to the same thing) cause spiritual laziness and apathy because people don't feel the need to evangelize?

Remember, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him!" Luke 12:5

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." 1 Corinthians 5:11

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:31

Not very fearful if I can just juke my way into heaven...

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/16 19:10

If sanctification is real as a condition to seeing the Lord, then universalism can't be. If we deliberately go on sinning after receiving a knowledge of the truth there is a point where repentance is not granted by the Lord (Hebrews 10)and one only has a "fearful" expectation of judgement. Not sure why this universalism debate isn't over at that point but, some people hold onto their biases (which is idolatry) and can lead many astray with their unstable and untaught doctrines. Jesus used warnings to create fear even with his best friends who were told they must not deny him by failing to proclaim what he gave them. Likewise, he told them they would be thrown into the lake of fire if they stopped doing the work he gave them to do. Inconceivable that he would so warn his friends but gladly welcome the rest of the world that denied him from the start, never loved him and never obeyed him.

Todd, this is a dangerous parlor game or is an intellectual exercise in wisdom from below. Either way, please stop. By undercutting the warnings of God, you are gutting a primary means of God waking men up from spiritual deadness or spiritual sleep.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/16 19:27

I don't think you understand that Universal Reconciliation does not do away with a hell of torment. This view holds that the vast majority of humanity must go there, just like the traditional view. Many will spend eons there. Some perhaps less. They will be there as long as they need to be.

So the apathy argument doesn't wash. If I was a proponent of UR, I would not want any friends or loved ones or even acquaintances to spend even one day in torment.

A proponent of UR says that God's punishments are always remedial, never vindictive.

The whole idea that God would torment someone for all eternity for a lifetime of sin seems so hard to justify. And there are so many persons that don't have realistic opportunities for salvation. I would submit God's wrath can be justified by 100,000 years of torment. It needn't last for all eternity. Jesus died to reconcile *all things* to Himself. How can all things be reconciled to Himself if 40 quadrillion years from now the vast majority of humanity He created is still burning in agony? Remember this is Jesus we are talking about here.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/16 19:35

You and I discussed eternal torment some time ago and after trading scripture verses you said then that eternal life and eternal torment seemed strongly linked together. Again, now we always seem to return to your view that God would never do that because of his character. No one can argue you out of your human wisdom. There is no reason for the lake of fire to burn forever if its purpose has been served in a relatively short period of time unless you think the demons likewise deserve Jesus' mercy as you seem to think His character demands for humans who likewise hate him which is Scriptural.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/16 19:59

Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? Gen. 18:25.

God did not tell Abraham that his sense of rightness was out of whack.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/16 20:30

He will do right in his eyes. Among men, even good men, they tend to view things from what seems right and good in their own eyes. That isn't often just a sincere mistake but rather it is judging things and God from their own decisions of what is good and what is evil. Whatever God does is good and right by definition. Our ideas of good and right must bow. Otherwise, God would have to conform to our definitions of good and right. We must be careful not to project onto God ourselves, our character, reasonings, desires and biases. That is spiritually dangerous for the projector.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/16 23:24

One other point Todd,

Paul says he was a minister of reconciliation and also a minister of the new covenant. Assuming they are the same, then the reconciliation is achieved for those who are born again and in the new covenant in his blood. Hope that helps.

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2023/5/17 1:38

Hi TMK,

Quote:

The whole idea that God would torment someone for all eternity for a lifetime of sin seems so hard to justify. And there are so many persons that don't have realistic opportunities for salvation. I would submit God's wrath can be justified by 100,000 years of torment. It needn't last for all eternity. Jesus died to reconcile *all things* to Himself. How can all things be reconciled to Himself if 40 quadrillion years from now the vast majority of humanity He created is still burning in agony? Remember this is Jesus we are talking about here.

In a previous topic discussion, I think that I brought up the point that eternity is not measured by years or even time at all. Scientists often point out that "time" itself is an illusion in our universe because of relativity. It moves differently relative to the influence of things like mass, acceleration and gravity.

The eternity that we think of is not a realm constrained by our finite universe's laws of physics. We often think of time as a measurement which travels along a two-dimensional axis (line) -- with only past and present with our position only being called "now." Yet, in eternity, there really isn't a need for any measurement of time at all.

My feeble attempt at a point is to say that eternal punishment is not measured in years, centuries, millennia, ages, epochs, eras, eons, etc. By its very nature, it is eternal -- an everlasting state of "now." It's a non-temporal state of being. After the universe (i.e., "the heavens and the earth") are passed away, the notion of time is as well.

This is difficult for our minds to grasp given our state of being is entirely set on a physical universe's temporal plane. Our entire lives are measured by time. Even speed is measured by distance divided by time. Dr. Einstein pointed out the relativity of time -- something by which all modern science, engineering and exploration is indebted.

So, personally, I think that it is important to think of "eternal damnation" or "eternal punishment" being unconstrained by measurements of time. No where in Scripture do we see a "you've served your time" concept even hinted at in Scripture.

The UR argument almost sounds like a "purgatory" type of concept. This simply isn't found in Scripture. While it is a concept possibly hinted at once in the Apocrypha (in 2 Maccabees 12:41-45); yet, even this is highly speculative and even comes when the Jews at that time were highly influenced by rabbinic literature, the Babylonian Talmud and recent traditions rather than solely upon the Law and the Prophets.

There just aren't any clear passages from the Scriptures as a whole that speak of a temporary punishment for fallen man. But, there are plenty of passages that speak of the eternal nature of damnation.

Consequently, I believe that there is a danger with trying to conceptualize God thinking like "benevolent" man rather than man accepting the infinite supremacy of God. C.S. Lewis mentioned that this was one of the concepts that was something of an obstacle toward actually believing in God or the Bible -- because he thought that God seems to be a "villain" if he permitted eternal damnation. He eventually overcame that roadblock and came to believe.

There is something to be said about "faith." We must believe that:

- 1.) HE IS; and,
- 2.) HE IS a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

That reward is not temporary either.

Re: - posted by deogloria, on: 2023/5/17 2:19

If we would spend more time on Evangelism then discussing Universalism, (and all sorts of other -isms) maybe we could still make a bit of a difference in this fallen world.

Untold people are suffering and dying without knowing the Lord.

The whole Bible is about Christ, His Bride, The Gospel, His blessings and his judgement.

"Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off." (Romans 11:22, NLT)

Markus

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/17 6:40

Chris- you may be right.

But perhaps then preachers should stop using the rhetoric of unrepentant sinners burning forever and ever and ever in hell.

Like I've said before I am not a proponent of UR, but I don't like to see it bashed for being unscriptural. It is very hard to adequately make the biblical case in a forum like this and I haven't really attempted to do so. Believe it or not, a strong biblical case can be made, at least as strong as that for the traditional view but perhaps not as strong as for unconditional immortality, for which a very strong biblical case can be made.

If the traditional view is correct, then there is a lot about it that we cannot grasp or understand.

Re: - posted by ChrisA, on: 2023/5/17 17:11

Todd, we will be outside time as we know it when we leave this mortal coil. We will be in a permanent "I am" state, be it "I am with Christ in glory" or "I am in hellish torment." Here is where eternal security or eternal damnation is. It is a permanent state, not a place of time progression. It simply IS.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/17 17:36

Will you note the passage of time in heaven? Will you see Jesus walk toward you? Or perhaps a relative? If so it is not an eternal now.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/17 21:44

I think there is not nearly enough biblical hellfire preaching these days.

"...And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Jude 23

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2023/5/18 13:39

Hi TMK,

Quote:

-----Chris- you may be right.

But perhaps then preachers should stop using the rhetoric of unrepentant sinners burning forever and ever and ever in hell.

It is still "forever" -- just in a sense of eternity that is somewhat unfathomable for our mortal minds.

If you speak with a scientist about the origins of the universe, they'll talk about the "known universe" and the "unknown universe." If science is based upon observation or assumptions derived from observation, it's impossible to fathom or hypothesize.

othesize a realm unseen.

While most embrace the idea of a "big bang" type of beginning -- they are quick to point out that this is the beginning only of our "known universe." What came before that "singularity" is completely unknown. The science behind a singularity itself kind of defy all known physical laws too.

So, in terms of Biblical truth, "eternity" sans a universal construct of time is a state of being -- an eternal "always." I think that many people have formulated this concept using different words and terminology.

However, consider a little more from the epistle of Jude (as Nigel previously pointed out):

Quote:

8 Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.
9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."
10 But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.
11 Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.
12 These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;
13 wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved FOREVER.

14 It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."
16 These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.
18 They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."
19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.
20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,
21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to ETERNAL life.

Jude 1:8-21 (ESV)

Note that verses 13 and 21 use the terms "forever" and "eternal." Verse 13 mentions a "gloom of utter darkness" that (for those who are "twice dead") is reserved "forever." Verse 21 mentions "eternal life" where the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ leads us to.

The Greek words used here for "forever" and "eternal" (αἰώνιος and αἰών) are based upon the same root -- "aei." This root appears elsewhere in the New Testament as "always." It reflects a state of being.

Personally, I cannot find a UR view in either the old or new testaments. There are just too many passages -- even after the death and resurrection of Christ -- that refer to the eternal consequences of life lived without faith in the Lord. In truth, I cannot find any passages in Scripture that even imply something else.

I do think that there is a danger in trying to moralize (using contemporary morality within the feeble, fleeting human mind) the judgment of God. Although this doesn't apply to you, me or other believers, I have conversed with atheists who are quick to point an accusatory finger at God. It's strange because the very people who claim to not believe in God are the first to point their fingers at him. They almost believe that they are more "moral" or "loving" than God.

Yet, in their ways, I believe that they are guilty of doing the very same thing that Job's friends were guilty of doing. They are trying to rationalize their perceptions and attributions of God and what they perceive flows from Him -- justice, love, morality, etc. They question how a "loving God" can let babies get sick and die OR send human beings to hell for eternity. Yet, God never needed to consult us at the creation of our universe.

The "I AM" created a temporal universe that was filled with laws (physically natural and spiritually supernatural) and consequences. Yet, because of love, God sent his Son -- a very part of himself -- into the world that he made in this temporal universe to become a sacrifice that would provide a means that can free us from both the inflexible laws and the consequences.

ences derived from it. We simply must believe that HE IS and that He is a rewarder of those who DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

A person cannot be saved without calling upon the Name of the Lord. The very verdict from our Day of Judgment itself is tantamount upon this. It's why the Book of Life exists.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/22 8:53

Quote:

----- Jade, people go to hell because they love sin and prefer darkness, not because they haven't heard the gospel.

Nigel, if you had lived before Christ's first coming, would you be able to go to heaven? Or would you also become one of the vast number of people that many Christians consign to hell because they are fiercely adamant that heaven's gates are firmly shut once time ends and eternity begins?

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/22 9:14

Hi narrowpath

Quote:

----- Truth is vested in the person of Jesus Christ. The truth of eternal and everlasting punishment is foundational and taking this away makes me wonder how one can believe the other foundational truths...

Gen. 2:16 'The

Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'

This is foundational scripture.

God told Adam he would die, not that he would be condemned to everlasting 'punishment'. How do you explain this?

Re: - posted by ChrisA, on: 2023/5/22 9:40

I can't believe you're asking such basic questions, Jade. I'm sure you already know the answer to these. Being purely rhetorical then?

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/22 9:46

Absolutely not.

It is a matter of truth or lie.

And my answers may not be your answers.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/22 13:03

It seems to me you have a wrong concept of man's sinfulness. The Holy Spirit's work is to convict people of sin and show them it is "exceedingly sinful" (Romans 7:13), it is hateful to God and a blight on the universe, poisoning everything it touches.

In the universalist view, it seems, man is not all that bad, he's just made a couple of mistakes, and the mean, vengeful, cruel god wants to send them to hell forever?! It was just a couple of swear words, just a white lie or two! Surely nothing worthy of spiritual death! At the worst, god should just let me burn off my sins in purgatory for a couple hundred years, to ps, and let me graciously into heaven.

What absolute nonsense.

Jude, Christians don't "consign" anyone to hell. Sinners hate the light and will not come to it; they bring condemnation on themselves. In stubborn hardheartedness, they reject mercy time and again, heaping up righteous wrath on their heads. God is not willing that they should perish, but He will not force His will on free moral agents.

In the Old Testament era, people were born again, or regenerated, if you like, the same way we are today. Some people were even filled with the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. And salvation has come to people the same way right from the start of human history, by grace through faith. The only difference being the Old Testament saints didn't see the full picture like we do, having the full canon of scripture. The law was only given to show people that they are sinners in need of forgiveness. All of the animal sacrifices and rituals were only a type and shadow of New Covenant promises.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/22 19:24

Hebrews 4 makes clear that anyone who hardens their heart "today" will never enter his rest. Since all means all, certainly, never means never.

Just so everyone is aware, UR in many circles holds that Satan and the fallen angels will likewise be in heaven one day as "all" created things are reconciled to God through Jesus' suffering. Those who hold to this view have to because the fundamental argument is that God was reconciling "all" things through Christ in Colossians 1:15. To be internally consistent, all is all, including demons and Satan. But apparently, Never is not Never as Hebrew 4 makes clear.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/23 12:42

Nigel,

God hates sin and so do I.

Ps. 5:4 "For

You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness;
No evil dwells with You.

Ps. 15:1-2 "O

Lord, who may abide in Your tent?
Who may dwell on Your holy hill?
He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness,
And speaks truth in his heart.

Quote:

----- The Holy Spirit's work is to convict people of sin and show them it is "exceedingly sinful"

So how can people be convicted of sin before Pentecost?

Quote:
----- In the universalist view, it seems, man is not all that bad, he's just made a couple of mistakesâ€”just a couple of swear words
, just a white lie or two! Surely nothing worthy of spiritual death!

That is not my view.

There is none righteous, not even one (Rom. 3:10-18). Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50)

Quote:
----- â€”the mean, vengeful, cruel god wants to send them to hell forever?!

God is certainly not that.

Adamâ€™s fall from God was a great tragedy. God did not act to punish Adam and his descendants forever in anger. On the contrary, God so LOVED the WORLD He gave His only begotten Son, NOT TO JUDGE the WORLD BUT that the WORLD might be SAVED through Him. (Caps for emphasis).

Quote:
----- At the worst, god should just let me burn off my sins in purgatory for a couple hundred years, tops, and let me graciously into heaven.

Not that.

The Father waits for every prodigal son to leave the misery and torment of the existence in sin and darkness to return to the joy and peace and exceedingly abundant life in the Fatherâ€™s house (Luke 15:11-32).

The Saviour of the WORLD (1 John 4:14), the Good Shepherd, will search for every lost sheep and bring them home (Luke 15:3-7).

The gates of Godâ€™s eternal city will never be closed (Rev. 21:25).

Quote:
----- In the Old Testament era, people were born again, or regenerated, if you like, the same way we are today. Some people were even filled with the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. And salvation has come to people the same way right from the start of human history, by grace through faith. The only difference being the Old Testament saints didn't see the full picture like we do, having the full canon of scripture. The law was only given to show people that they are sinners in need of forgiveness. All of the animal sacrifices and rituals were only a type and shadow of New Covenant promises.

This is a big topic.

Abraham was the father of faith. The Lord Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day.

But it is written:

Heb. 11:39 â€”
And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/23 22:01

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/23 22:06

I hate to say this and I do so in all sobriety and concern. I truly say it in love to truth, the body and the lost. if you do not love the Lord and obey Him in this life and love His appearing when He returns, You will be accursed forever and most assuredly die The second death and be tormented like Satan and his in the lake of fire night and day forever. Do not let anyone say or lead you otherwise. This strategy has been spoken before. A long time ago.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/23 23:36

Robert,

Heb. 4:7

He again fixes a certain day, saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.

3 Questions:

- (1) When is Today?
- (2) What will happen to the millions of people who have lived and died without knowing Today?
- (3) What about the people in Today who have not heard His voice?

Another Question:

Quote:
----- Since all means all, certainly, never means never.

1 Cor. 15:22

For as in Adam ALL die, so also in Christ ALL will be made alive

Doesn't all means all?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/23 23:55

Romans 1. All are without excuse (or complaint) because God has made Himself clearly evident and they suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. God has been merciful to all for thousands of years and they have refused to give him thanks or glory. That truth of ongoing witness and mercy to all mankind for all this time leaves ample and sufficient room for all to repent to God. And all that mercy was purchased by Jesus. Backwards, present and future time and mercy.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/24 0:00

If ALL are condemned in Rom. 1 and ALL means ALL how can anyone be saved?

You say:

Quote:

----- And all that mercy was purchased by Jesus. Backwards, present and future time and mercy.

Rom. 10:13-14 "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?

?

So what happens to the millions of people who are unable to believe because they have not heard?

Quote:

----- That truth of ongoing witness and mercy to all mankind for all this time leaves ample and sufficient room for all to repent to God.

Then why is there even any need for anyone to go to all nations to preach the gospel? Why were Christ's disciples commanded to wait and to preach and be His witnesses AFTER Pentecost?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/24 0:41

All are not condemned in Romans 1. It doesn't say that. All are guilty and without excuse. Their judgment is fair and reasonable. They have been given plenty and sufficient mercy to repent from their hatred and enmity towards God. Judgment and condemnation are when the books are opened. Jesus came as the lamb of God and He came with a winning fork in His hand. Mercy is being extended now to many. Not to all, but they have all had, from the Garden on to the end, plenty of revelation of God, his divine nature and power, many have had his witness in the good things they have received (rain, crops, families, happiness) and all have had time to repent but they refused and their judgment is just and completely fair even if it offends a mere human's sense of fairness, propriety or measure. Some may think they are more merciful than God or establish what mercy needs to be. That is projection of human wisdom onto God and that is not good at all and that isn't the biggest concern because in their misplaced sincerity, they may be leading others to not evaluate their condition and may be fighting the Spirit that is striving with the consciences of men.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/24 3:03

Quote:

----- All are not condemned in Romans 1.

ALL are condemned.

Rom. 5:18 "So then as through one transgression there resulted CONDEMNATION TO ALL MEN, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men."

Quote:
----- but they have all had, from the Garden on to the end, plenty of revelation of God, his divine nature and power, many have had his witness in the good things they have received (rain, crops, families, happiness) and all have had time to repent but they refused-----

Isn't that because fallen flesh is hostile toward God and does not subject itself to the law of God, for IT IS NOT EVEN ABLE TO DO SO (Rom. 8:7)?

That is why the Holy Spirit is sent to convict the world of sin.

That is why God must give us a new heart and a new spirit and put His Spirit in us so that we can walk in His ways.

Ezek. 36:26-27 ' Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Quote:
----- Mercy is being extended now to many. Not to all-----

Are some elected to go to heaven and others to eternal torment in hell?

(All caps for emphasis)

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/24 5:25

Hi Jade.

The trouble is that you haven't answered the questions asked. First, do you believe that there is a warning in Hebrews 4 to real Christians that they must be careful not to harden their hearts at that time or they will never enter his rest ?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/24 5:27

Hi Jade.

The trouble is that you haven't answered the questions asked. First, do you believe that there is a warning in Hebrews 4 to real Christians that they must be careful not to harden their hearts at that time or they will never enter his rest ?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/24 6:30

Robert, is everything God does 'good'?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/24 8:33

Always. Good includes hating evil and judging. That's why only the righteous can dwell in His presence. Mercy includes not just reconciliation or even merely forgiveness. Mercy and Grace make us perfect as He is perfect making us fit to dwell with Him forever. This perfection process occurs when we are born again, continues in sanctification and ends in glorification. The fullest glory and praise worthy mercy and Grace of God is our Christlikeness. Scripture about reconciliation is the beginning of the journey.

My question to you is this. if the universal remedial punishment you have suggested is accurate as a means of salvation and glorification for billions of people who die in their sin, why is this remedial temporary suffering in the lake of fire not specifically mentioned and explained generously in Scripture as is you must be born again, you must be sanctified

in order to see God, you must endure suffering from the Father in training in righteousness or you are illegitimate children? Why are those not born again referred to as children of the evil one ?

Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2023/5/24 9:35

Quote:

-----For as in Adam ALL die, so also in Christ ALL will be made alive.

That verse is not saying everyone is in Christ. It is saying that all who are in Christ will be made alive.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/24 10:31

TrueWitness

Quote:

----- That verse is not saying everyone is in Christ. It is saying that all who are in Christ will be made alive.

This is the grand end:

1 Cor. 15:28 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.

2 Cor. 5:18-19 â€

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Comment: God will be ALL IN ALL by ALL IN CHRIST.

Note: "that God was IN CHRIST reconciling the WORLD to Himself".

Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2023/5/24 10:49

That is all who survive and remain after the Great Judgment.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/24 11:18

Connect these 2 scripture verses:

1 Cor. 15:22 â€

For as in Adam ALL die, so also in Christ ALL will be made alive.

Rom. 5:18 â€

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to ALL men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to ALL men.

Where is it written that the ALL are all those who survive and remain after the Great Judgment?

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/24 11:49

Hi Robert,

Quote:
----- The trouble is that you haven't answered the questions asked. First, do you believe that there is a warning in Hebrews 4 to real Christians that they must be careful not to harden their hearts at that time or they will never enter his rest ?

The warning is that they will not enter God's rest if they harden their hearts.

God's rest is the place of exceedingly great peace and joy and blessings.

It is typified by the land of Canaan in the OT, the land flowing with milk and honey; the land filled with great and splendid cities they did not build, and houses full of good things they did not fill, and hewn cisterns which they did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which they did not plant, and they ate and were satisfied (Deut.6:10-11).

Those who did not enter Canaan died in the wilderness. They were not subjected to a tormenting punishment that went on and on and on and on.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/24 17:56

Goodness Jade,

I know you have stressed Scripture over opinions or bad extrapolations in the past. This was very easy to find to undo your statement.

And another, a third angel, followed them and spoke with a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he will also drink the wine of God's wrath, which is poured full strength into the cup of his anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or anyone who receives the mark of its name. This calls for endurance from the saints, who keep God's commands and their faith in Jesus."

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "so they will rest from their labors, since their works follow them." -- Revelation 14:9-13 (CSB)

Notice the direct link between eternal torment, those who worship the beast and receive the mark, and the saints who enter into His rest. One would really have to be dead set and intransigent towards a preferred point of view to wrestle long with this one.

Eternal torment or not, and it does seem obvious, those who harden their hearts who are described in Hebrews 4 will 'never enter His rest'.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/24 20:25

Taking Rev.14 where there is no rest day or night from the torment that lasts forever and ever and combining it with this similar text from Jesus:

Then he (Jesus) will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and angels..... and they (those who are told to depart) will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. Matthew 25: 41, 46.

"eternal" never ceasing, without end. BLB

As life is eternal, never ceasing, so is eternal punishment, never ceasing punishment, to specific people committing specific sins..... those who do not love Jesus and do not love his brethren.

At this juncture, one would have to decide whether Jesus is "good" in light of what He says and commands to those who hate Him and His people. But most certainly, one cannot argue from this text that He feels or acts reconciled to them at the judgment through His blood and suffering on the cross. Nor is there one scintilla of intention on His part that He is looking forward to seeing them in the "future" as His beloved, chaste and holy Bride once they have paid their temporary debt for hating Him and His Bride.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/24 20:47

Amen Robert. This is just one of the many ironclad proofs of eternal hell. The Greek word for "eternal" is "aionios" and it means age-lasting, and it is used to describe the duration of the believers reward in heaven as well as the duration of the punishment of the wicked in hell. If universalists say that hell is not eternal and enduring then they have to say the same thing about heaven. Also people in heaven could change their minds conceivably and choose hell (like Satan did.)

Maybe every few million years they could switch it up and spend some time in hell, then go right back to heaven when they've had enough rebellion.

Re: - posted by RandRman2023 (), on: 2023/5/24 21:15

Matthew 10.28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Not sure if this passage has been mentioned yet, but if Jesus mentions hell, shouldn't that be enough?

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2023/5/25 3:48

I noticed that in these discussions that some people are entrenched in their positions and they do not respond to overwhelming evidence and facts presented against their position. Actually, most people in the world, including the smartest, believe a lie. This is all well described in Romans 1, as many of you already mentioned. Divine truth can only be understood by surrender to God and revelation otherwise it is withheld from our minds, and rightly so. God takes pleasure in confounding the wise and giving grace to the humble.

I have seen people with Down syndrome praising Jesus, they are wiser than the Einsteins of this world.

Truth is vested in the person of Christ. Universalism strikes at the fundamentals of the faith and is diametrically opposed to Jesus words. Jesus spoke so much about hell and I wonder how any born again Christian can ever believe this doctrine.

Jade, I do not want to attack you in person but I am praying for your soul.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/25 3:56

Quote:

----- Jade, I do not want to attack you in person but I am praying for your soul.

narrowpath,

There is NO NEED for you to do that, absolutely.

I have peace in my soul with God.

It is not for you to judge me. You don't even know me. How can you be so sure that your own position is true? There certainly are scripture verses pointing to universal reconciliation that you will not consider. We will all come before the judgment seat of Christ and each one of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

Salvation is not contingent on whether we believe in universal reconciliation or not. Salvation is the reality of Christ's death and life in the depths of our being. Do we all have that? It is this that we must pray about.

And, yes! We are exhorted to pray for ALL men for it is God's desire for all men to be saved. May that be our daily prayer item. That is obedience to God's Word.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/25 5:47

Jade,

This doctrine of UR can and does lead people astray. It's not just a personal issue. Keep to this doctrine as you will. The concern is not just for you but those you might mislead. There is eternal consequence and damage when one convinces someone they might not surely die. If this were just a theological debate I personally would have never begun.

In my brother Todd's case, I have even more concern even though he might not need it in his mind. Todd has staked the character of the goodness and mercy of God on his interpretation and preference. This isn't my speculation but his own explicit statements. That is a very dangerous road to convince others to take in the first instance or walk others down.

There are no "strong arguments" for UR in light of direct statements (not arguments) in the Scriptures that explicitly state the contrary. Pure Eisegesis to fit a preferred definition of what a good or merciful God would do in one's own musings. Deadly game. It's idolatry and one who leads others into idolatry has some pretty harsh addresses from God in Old and New.

It's heartening to see others correct because they love the lost and desire Godly sorrow and repentance for all.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/25 7:57

When we say God is good, all the time, on what basis do we make that judgment?

It seems there are two possibilities: 1) we use our idea of right and wrong (we were created in God's image). God expects us to know the difference between right and wrong, otherwise God would not expect holiness or obedience. 2) we take the position that everything God does is good, because He does it, regardless of whether in actuality it seems very bad.

Someone once said (can't remember who) that to say God's goodness might be different from man's goodness.

ess is just another way of saying that God may possibly not be good.

Yâ€™all are saying that sinners deserve an eternal hell. But you have to go back further than that. You have to think a bout who created sinners. Who allowed a Satan. Who set up a system where the known outcome would be sin, and who created a place of endless torment.

Indeed, there was provision made at the cross, but only a tiny fraction avail themselves. And further, in a certain theolog ical system God chooses who will avail themselves of that provision and who will not.

So to state it succinctly, and to summarize, most of you believe that God created men and women, knowing that the vast vast majority of them will end up in place He created where they will be tormented forever.

That means that most of you think this is good because God did it. So the question becomes, what in the world would it take for God not to be good?

I believe God is good, because God has instilled in me a sense of what â€œgoodâ€ means. CS Lewis appeals to this i dea of â€œconscienceâ€ in his opening chapters of Mere Christianity. Because I believe God is good, I have great diffi culty with the â€œset up.â€ It doesnâ€™t seem good, no matter how you slice it, that God would create humans to tor ture them, much less for all eternity.

Like I said previously, I suspect there is much hidden from us by God that is not clearly revealed in scripture. We cannot know the full mind of God not how this will all work out because human language cannot adequately convey it. But ultim ately I believe God is good, really good. Not pretend good.

And Robert you need not fear for my soul either, nice of you to think about me though. Iâ€™ve been a Christian for man y, many years, walk closely with the Lord on a daily basis. I have never discussed this topic other than in this and one ot her theology forum. I am not an apostle of Universal Reconciliation because I am not a universalist. But I do lean towar d Conditional Immortality. Ultimately, however, I am undecided, but itâ€™s a moot point for me because I know my dest ination.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/25 8:28

Todd,

If I had your phone number I would call you. Just to be clear, if God created billions of people and most of them end up in eternal torment by their own intentional sin, then such a God is bad or evil ?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/25 10:30

You left out the part about Him allegedly creating the â€œsystemâ€ in the first place and knowing what would happen.

I am decidedly *not* saying God is bad or evil- quite the contrary.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/25 11:48

CofG

We disagree.

And it is clear that even long after the cows come home, we will still disagree.

But I am sure that you cannot disagree that we are exhorted to pray for all men because it is Godâ€™s desire for all me n to be saved.

2 Tim. 2:1-4 â€

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of ALL MEN, for king s and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and a cceptable in the sight of God our Savior, WHO DESIRES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a

ransom FOR ALL, the testimony given at the proper time.

If you sincerely heed God's Word and do that, that is enough. God will do the rest.

Matt. 21:22

And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.

Isa. 59:16

And He saw that there was no man,
And was astonished that there was no one to intercede;

God who calls us to be in the image of His Son and also calls us not to repay evil for evil and to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:17,21) will surely Himself do the same.

Re: - posted by deogloria, on: 2023/5/25 14:41

"God who calls us to be in the image of His Son and also calls us not to repay evil for evil and to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:17,21) will surely Himself do the same."

Yes God provided a way to overcome evil with good.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

But we need to read a bit further than that:

V 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

V 18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son

Just a thought I want to add that I believe is important.

But I won't comment further.

"In Christ alone my hope is found..."

Markus

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2023/5/25 16:36

I could not more agree with your statement. It is not a small thing to try to convince others of this doctrine, just as it is with any other doctrine that is contrary to the bible. The bible is full of warnings about this.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/25 17:45

NP-

Who is to judge what doctrines are contrary to the Bible? You? How awesome for you. Where do you stand on Calvinism and all its points? What is your eschatological view? Where do you stand on gifts of the spirit- do they continue today? Shall I continue on?

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/25 20:46

Todd, there are essential doctrines and non essential doctrines. The essentials are: The Trinity, the virgin birth of Christ, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the sovereignty of God, salvation by grace through faith. And eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1,2.)

Non essentials are thing like: eschatological views (pre, post-millennialism, pre, mid or post tribulationism), Arminianism vs Calvinism, age of the earth etc.

The writer of Hebrews says eternal judgment is a foundational (essential) doctrine. One view is right and one is wrong. It is an emanation from Satan that we can't know for sure.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/25 21:16

The list of Hebrews 6:1-2 is not a Christian list but rather a Jewish list. These are Jewish foundations. Look into it further.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/26 3:15

Quote:

I could not more agree with your statement. It is not a small thing to try to convince others of this doctrine, just as it is with any other doctrine that is contrary to the bible. The bible is full of warnings about this.

2 Tim. 2:1-4

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of ALL MEN, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, WHO DESIRES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom FOR ALL, the testimony given at the proper time.

We are urged to pray for "ALL men" because "GOD DESIRES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED" for "the man Christ Jesus" gave Himself as a ransom FOR ALL.

Is this not an instruction to pray for universal reconciliation??

Do you sweep this instruction under the carpet because it does not align with your belief?

If a clear instruction in scripture clashes with your belief, shouldn't you re-think what you believe?

Do we rely on the power of prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit OR our hell-fire preaching to bring sinners to Christ?

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2023/5/26 6:09

WHO DESIRES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Yes, God desires is all men to be saved, but this is not an automatism, it also depends on our faith and obedience to be saved. It needs all of God and all of me. That has nothing to do with works salvation, as faith and obedience is not a work but rather the opposite; the surrender of my life to Christ.

In other passages of the letters to Timothy Paul wants explicitly about apostasy and they consequential loss of salvation.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2023/5/26 7:15

Matt. 21:22

And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.

Who are we to limit God?

Is anything too hard for God?

Is the Holy Spirit not able to bring every descendant of Adam to repentance and have faith in Christ?

If New Jerusalem is the bride, who are the "nations" that will walk by its light (Rev. 21:24)?

If New Jerusalem is already filled with the glory of God (Rev. 21:10-11), who are the "nations" that will be healed by the leaves of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2)?

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/5/26 14:25

The principles of the doctrine of Christ is Jewish? So I guess it's not an essential doctrine to believe in Christ anymore?

The church started with the Jews, so of course it would be a "Jewish list." To say, though, that repentance from dead works and faith towards God is for the Jews only is just... I have no words left.

Re: - posted by RandRman2023 (), on: 2023/5/26 17:06

Take a deep breath...I know, I know... :(

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/26 17:33

From David Guzik's Bible Commentary:

A. The essential nature of maturity.

1. (Hebrews 6:1a) Going beyond the basics.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection,

a. Therefore: The writer rebuked his readers for their spiritual immaturity but he knew that nothing was gained by treating them as immature. He continued with his instruction and warnings.

b. Elementary principles: This has the idea of "rudiments" or "ABCs." They are basic building blocks that are necessary, but must be built upon or otherwise has only a foundation and no structure.

c. Perfection: This is the ancient Greek word teleiotes, which is much better understood as "maturity." The writer thought the Hebrews did say that we can not reach perfection on this side of eternity, but that we can and should reach a place of maturity in Jesus. The call is plain: let us go on to perfection.

i. "Teleiotes" does not imply complete knowledge but a certain maturity in the Christian faith. (Barclay)

2. (Hebrews 6:1b-2) Some of the "basics" to go beyond.

Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

a. Not laying again the foundation: These elementary principles are given in three pairs. Repentance and faith go together. Baptisms and laying on of hands go together. Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are paired together.

b. Not laying again the foundation: Many people regard this as a Biblical list of important elementary principles for the Christian life. Bible study and discipleship series have been taught developing each one of these topics, with the thought that

at this is a good list of basic doctrines. But that wasn't the writer's point here at all.

i. To understand this list, one must ask basic questions:

What is distinctively Christian about this list?

Where is the specific mention of Jesus or salvation by grace alone?

Could one believe in or practice these things and still not be a follower of Jesus Christ, and not believe Him to be the Messiah?

ii. When we consider the rudiments one by one, it is remarkable how little in the list is distinctive of Christianity, for practically every item could have its place in a fairly orthodox Jewish community. Each of them, indeed, acquires a new significance in a Christian context; but the impression we get is that existing Jewish beliefs and practices were used as a foundation on which to build Christian truth. (Bruce)

iii. It is profoundly significant to observe how little distinctively Christian there is in this statement. Repentance, faith, resurrection, and judgment were certainly Jewish, and on this account the reference seems to be the Jewish foundation, and they are urged to avoid these elementary things which they are to leave for something higher and richer. (Griffith Thomas)

c. Of the doctrine of baptisms: Not even baptisms, as it is used in this passage, is necessarily Christian. The specific ancient Greek word here translated baptisms (baptismos) is not the word regularly used in the New Testament to describe Christian baptism (baptizo). Baptismos is the word used on three other specific instances to refer to Jewish ceremonial washings (Hebrews 9:10, Mark 7:4, and Mark 7:8).

i. The New English Bible translation reflects this, translating "doctrine of baptisms" as instruction about cleansing rites. The ESV translation has, instruction about washings.

ii. Bruce quotes Nairne: "Doctrines of washings"--how unnatural are the attempts to explain this plural as referring to Christian Baptism.

d. The foundation: In this case, the elementary principles to move beyond are all items in a common ground of belief between Christianity and Judaism. This was a safe common ground for these discouraged Jewish Christians to retreat back to.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/26 18:59

Todd,

The elementary principles listed in the Hebrew 6 text are called "milk" in the immediately preceding verses and they are taught to Christians as baby food. The milk of the Gospel for unbelievers is the focus of those elementary principles, repentance toward God and faith in Jesus, the resurrection, eternal judgement (which is in all actual Gospel presentation recorded in the NT). There is also the Gospel for believers that calls and enables NT Christians to move onto maturity and that is really the tenet of the New Covenant in His blood which is what is discussed in the companion texts in Hebrews 10.

Meat, or food for training in righteousness, that is Christ like character and bearing fruit for the saints in service discussed in the ensuing Hebrews 6 verses are the point of maturity and likewise the leaving behind of immaturity when one is brought into the covenant through forgiveness and new birth. This is the same theme picked up again in Hebrews 10 where people have gotten "lazy" or dull of hearing and haven't moved on in their walk because of neglect and fear.

The proof of the point in this reply is in Hebrews 6:4 where there is a warning about the potential danger of reaching a point of remaining immature and then losing the ability to repent because of their intentional failure to attain to maturity and fruit bearing for the saints. God permits a degree of laziness but eventually His patience could run out which is what the point that verse 3 declares. A huge warning.

Laziness in the Christian walk to make every effort to attain to perfection (Philippians 3 and 2 Peter 1:3, et seq) or maturity or the fullness of Christ is the point of this warning in Hebrews 6 and the one in Hebrews 10. Not to sound condescending, but "Look into the texts themselves further." Read Hebrews 5:11-14 and Hebrews 6:4-8 and then look into 6:1

-2. Compare these texts to Philippians 3 and 2 Peter 1. No offense to David Guzik.

Hebrews 6 and 10 are intended to describe the lazy or neglectful Christian who has spent years as a baby in self feeding and self concern and who has not striven or raced or made every effort to move in the direction of Christlikeness and putting others' needs in the Body or Kingdom first which is the point of the New Covenant and Christ's sacrifice.

Unfortunately far too many Christians have enabled far too many professing Christians to stay comfortable with a false sense of security in either their original conclusion that they are saved or in their immaturity as real Christians. Their laziness and neglect in making every effort to increase in and attain to the goal of "perfection", the "divine nature" or the "fullness of Christ in maturity" is putting them and those who teach them or encourage them in such an attitude at great risk.

Without any doubt, Hebrews 6:1 concerns the elementary teachings about Christ and thus the text and the warnings of Hebrews to Christians who are in peril of falling backwards and not moving forwards in maturity in the face of fearful persecution, and then having to face the living God, are critically important to salvation and not being broken off.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/5/26 19:57

BTW Todd,

Virtually every established religion the world believes in the salvific effects of "dead works". Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and many professing believers in Christ. Therefore all true Christian repentance anywhere in the world includes repentance from trying to appease for sin or even please God through dead works. The idea is far more applicable in the non-Jewish context in sheer volume alone.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/5/27 7:48

I understand all that. I realize those items listed are starting points. My only point was that these starting points had already been in practice in the Jewish religion and were something to move beyond, as the commentary I quoted explains.

I was not originally commenting on those verses as any sort of support for universalism.