

The Heresy of “Christian” Universalism

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There is a movement afoot in professing Christendom to erase the literal hell, which is clearly taught in the Bible, from our theology. I say professing Christendom, because those who deny its existence are very likely if not surely (God knows) on their way to that very place. The Lord Jesus Himself said, “Unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:2, NKJV). The heresy of Christian universalism that all will be saved and reconciled to God in the end is a denial of the core Christian gospel verse, John 3:16, which speaks of two outcomes, “perish” or have “everlasting life.” Daniel 12:2 and John 5:24-30 teach of the eternal condemnation of the unbelievers. Mark 9:42-48 and Revelation 20:11-15 are the strongest proof passages in the Bible for a literal hell, with literal fire, which will last for eternal duration. The believer will experience 2 births and 1 death (Cf. John 3:3-6; Revelation 20:5), and the unbeliever will experience 1 birth and 2 deaths (Revelation 20:14). And there are many, many more passages which teach the same throughout Scripture, but especially in the gospel accounts, such as Matthew 5:22, 18:9, 23:33, and Luke 12:5, 16:19-31. I don’t like the concept of a literal place of eternal torment anymore than you do, but I do like the concept of a just God who says what He means and does what He says. The Lord gives us clear directions as to what we must do to inherit eternal life and avoid the horrible place. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). Reader, consider yourself warned.

Recently, it was brought to my attention that a paper with 75 questions which supposedly “prove” the heresy of “Christian” Universalism is being circulated. As with any deviant teaching, the questions are twisted for the purpose of confusing and confounding the average Christian into submission. This is the methodology of the false teachers, always has been, always will be. “Untaught and unstable people twist (the Scriptures) to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). Christian Universalist friend, I shall assume you honestly misled and asking for honest answers, which you shall receive. I shall not neglect to expose the intellectual dishonesty of some of these questions, however. Please do not take that personally. The statements and questions are posed by the “Christian” Universalist, and the responses are mine.

1. God will have all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Can His will be thwarted? First, the verse says “desires all men to be saved.” Second, God does not decree that all men be saved. Third, many men “resist the Holy Spirit” (Acts 7:51). God’s perfect will and desire is one thing. But God also allows free will, and in His permissive will, He allows for each individual to choose Him or reject Him, and experience the consequences of that decision, which are presented beforehand by God through His Word. To respond to the direct question in light of these things, God’s perfect decreed will (i.e. “Let there be light”) cannot be thwarted, but we given free will, we are in the realm of God’s permissive will.

2. God desires all to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Will His desire come to pass, or is it a weak wish? First, I agree that this Scripture does say that. Consistent with my response to question 1, the answer to both questions is “no.” Sadly, it will not be so that all will accept God’s gracious offer of salvation. Even though it is a strong “wish” of the Lord. This question, if it was designed to confuse and entrap, has failed to do either here.
3. Salvation of all is testified in due time (1 Timothy 2:6). Are you judging before due time? The verse neither reads nor implies “salvation of all.” The premise of the statement is faulty. The “due time” is a reference to God’s timetable of salvation. Therefore the question does not make any sense.
4. Jesus came to save all (John 12:47). Will He succeed or fail? It is true that Jesus came to save all. He will succeed in granting eternal life to all those who believe (John 10:25-29, 17:8-26). “For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame”” (Romans 10:11). Many walk away from Christ because they do not believe, however (John 6:63-66), and they will be “put to shame”, and left to the consequences of their own unbelief (Romans 1:18-32). The failure of any to be saved is the fault of the unbeliever, and not Jesus. In fact, hell is the default destination apart from the divine work in one’s life, that God’s grace may be magnified. So we see again, that the statement and question posed here is dishonest, framed for the purpose of confusion and entrapment.
5. God works all after the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11). Can your will overcome His? The context of Ephesians 1:3-14 is divine election and predestination. If God has chosen anyone from “before the foundation of the world” (1:4), then God’s will is the determinative factor, and not man’s will. “There is none who seeks after God” without the divine initiative (Romans 3:11-12). Having framed the question in this context, the answer is no.
6. Jesus is Savior of the world (John 4:42). Can He be Savior of all without saving all? Yes, He can. The Scripture clearly affirms this to be true. 1 John 2:2, addressed in context to believers, reads, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The blood of Christ is of infinite value and has power to save all. It is sufficient to save all but only efficient to save those who believe (Matthew 20:28).
7. Jesus is Savior of the world (1 John 4:14). Why don’t we believe it? This question implies that the one who does not accept the heresy of “Christian” Universalism does not believe the Scriptures. Orthodox Christians do believe this, but do not agree with CU doctrine.
8. Jesus will draw all mankind unto Himself (John 12:32). To burn or to love? The question reveals the distaste of the questioner regarding the biblical doctrine of hellfire (Mark 9:42-48; Revelation 20:11-15). It is an irrelevant question to the verse referred to. That said, I affirm both the perfect just judgment of God and the perfect love of God as divine attributes. In context, we read, “And I, if I am lifted up from the

- earth, will draw all peoples to myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die” (John 12:32-33). The drawing was based upon the kind of death He would die. The event would be public and it would be universally published. People would have to choose sides. Mark 16:15-16.
9. By Him all were created (Colossians 1:16). Will He lose any part of His creation? He won’t “lose” them, technically speaking. He will know where they are. “And anyone not found written the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).
 10. In Adam all condemned, in Christ all live (Romans 5:15-21). The same all? No, not the same all. The question deals with 5:18, which talks of judgment and the free gift both coming to all men. The judgment is universal. Sin leads to death, both physically and spiritually. The free gift is universally offered but not universally accepted. So the first all is absolute and the second all is conditional.
 11. In Adam all die, in Christ all live (1 Corinthians 15:22). Again, the same all? The context of this passage deals primarily with resurrection of believers, “those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:23). John 5:28-29 does indeed affirm the bodily resurrection of all, some “to the resurrection of life” and others “to the resurrection of condemnation.” The fault in the “Christian” Universalist argument is in the reading of their doctrine into the text.
 12. All come into Him at the fullness of times (Ephesians 1:10). Are any getting tired of seeing the word all? Tired of the condescension, yes. The word all, no. The verse says “all things in Christ”, meaning believers only.
 13. Every tongue shall confess Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11). Everyone? Yes, everyone, sadly. Even unbelievers. They will know the truth, but it will be too late to do anything about it. Hebrews 9:27-28. Luke 16:19-31.

After answering the first 13 of 75 questions, it is enough. The rest of the questions are equally redundant and/or dishonest. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” If you are playing games with this or any other strange doctrine, you have played games long enough. It is time to walk out of the darkness and into the light.