

THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALISM

AN INTRODUCTION ABOUT WHY THERE IS A PROBLEM

*"[God] will have all men to be saved,
and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*

~ 1 Timothy 2:4

1. Universalism Appeal

- a. The sales pitch of universalism is tried and true: show a problem, then solve it.
- b. *Lost family, friends, neighbors? If they were all saved, wouldn't you rejoice?*
- c. *Does eternal fiery hell cause consternation? If it wasn't, wouldn't there be peace?*
- d. *Asking why does God finally condemn? If he didn't, wouldn't God be eternal love?*
 - i. *Universalism is the greatest solution to the biggest problem there is!*
- e. *Why is that a problem? Do you think not enough people are suffering for eternity?*
- f. + the present environment: not friendly to any judgment (postmodern, 73%, <2%)
- g. + there is historical precedent: Origen, Greg the Universalist, scholars
- h. + there is scriptural defense: 1 Tim 2:4, 4:10, Eph 1:10, Col 1:20

2. Universalism Facts

- a. Universalism is the doctrine that all men will be saved or made happy in the end.
- b. It has been repeatedly condemned as heresy, and also called most attractive heresy
- c. 3 spaces to be a universalist: Biblically 1) uninterested 2) unapologetic 3) apologetic
- d. It became more accepted in 18th-19thc during Enlightenment / Romantic periods as a rejection of strict double predestinarian Calvinism.
- e. Universalism accepts the fact that there are people who die in rejection of God.
 - i. It is not true at the moment of death or judgment - Heb 9:27

3. Why There is a Problem

- a. Universalism is wrong, but why? By denying it are we condemning billions to ECT?
- b. False hope is destructive: Wrong hope, no matter how attractive, is false hope.
 - i. The harm? Salvation, service to Christ, truth.
- c. Dishonesty - Believing without the truth is not just wishful thinking, it is dishonest.
- d. Wrong study methods - Starts at the end, or feelings, or subjective intuition.
- e. The end never justifies the means - What greater end can you have?
- f. Pluralism - All universalism is pluralistic in this life.
- g. Evangelism/church ministry - All universalism affects how we preach/serve others.
 - i. The most effective evangelism ministry will be after death.
- h. It is too heavily attached to numbers - it only takes one to defeat it - Rev 20:10
- i. It gets Paul wrong - We who are Pauline should pay special attention to this.
- j. It damages belief - "What must I do...Believe" turns into, nothing - Acts 16:31
- k. The double-standard - To hold hell to the fire, but not themselves (with sin)
- l. The good: it will bring out your deepest held beliefs, and challenge your motives

4. The Problem of Universalism

- a. There are problems with universalism, but also a problem it attempts to solve.
- b. Universalism has a problem with the judgment of God as Biblically presented.
- c. Universalism directly speaks to the salvation of all, but they have a problem w/hell
- d. This often requires a change to core doctrines like an infallible inspired Bible, universal sin, abundant grace, salvation by faith, the character of God.
 - i. Universalists necessarily create their own Bibles (or Greek yours to hell)
 - ii. God's judgment described as everlasting, eternal, forever, fiery - Matt 5:22, 25:46, Mark 9:43-48, Rev 20:10
- e. The problem of universalism is ours, not God's, and not with the Bible.
- f. God gives true love, grace, hope through Jesus. We can speak the truth confidently.
- g. We will study the problem of universalism from a Bible believing grace perspective.