

#105 FORUM POST ON TWELVE QUESTIONS

Dear all,

1. How should we interpret Jesus's words regarding 'hell' or 'Gehenna,' 'the outer darkness,' 'the fire that is not quenched,' 'the worm that does not die,' and the like?

Christian belief in the reality of hell and the possibility of separation from God rests on Jesus's own words in the Gospels. "Hell" or "Gehenna" and other related terms point toward a state of punishment and suffering after death. Yet if everyone without exception is headed toward the same final destination with God—as universalists claim—then why do we find Jesus saying the "sheep" will be separated from the "goats" (Matt. 25:31–46)? That the "wheat" will be separated from the "weeds" (Matt. 13:30)? That the "wheat" will be separated from the "chaff" (Matt. 3:12)? That the "good fish" will be separated from the "bad fish" (Matt. 13:48)? That the "wise virgins" will enter the wedding feast but the "foolish virgins" will be stuck outside (Matt. 25:1–13)? Separation is occurring in all these passages.

But if universalism is true, there can be no truly lasting separation. And in that case, isn't Jesus's teaching highly misleading? Are we to imagine that our Savior frightened his hearers by describing a fixed separation of sinners that will never occur, or a future state of punishment that will not exist?

2. If hell is a temporary state but heaven is a forever state, then why are both denoted by the same word as 'eternal'?

In the ancient church, Severus of Antioch and Augustine made a similar observation: in Matthew 25:41 and 25:46, the same Greek word (*aionios*) is used to describe both the duration of heaven and the duration of punishment after death. Universalists often argue that *aionios* as applied to hell or punishment doesn't mean "eternal" in the strict sense, but merely "age-long." In other words, hell exists but it's temporary. In that case, though, we'd need to conclude heaven too is temporary—that heaven comes to an end. Otherwise, how can the same Greek word have two different meanings in the very same verse—"age-long" when applied to punishment or hell, but "forever" when applied to heaven? This makes little sense.

3. What about the 'two ways' theme in the Old and New Testaments?

The New Testament's teaching on heaven and hell doesn't materialize out of nowhere. The theme of "two ways" leading to differing outcomes is woven throughout the Bible. In just the second chapter (Gen. 2), Adam is given a choice between life with God (if he doesn't eat from the forbidden tree) or death in defiance of God (if he does eat). In Psalm 1 there are different outcomes for the righteous and the wicked, and so also in Isaiah 1:

“If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword” (Isa. 1:19–20). The universalist idea of only one outcome for everyone—regardless of choices made—doesn’t merely contradict one verse here or there. It runs against the whole thrust of Old and New Testament teachings.

4. Why did Jesus need to die such a horrible, agonizing death on the cross for our sins?

It’s a poignant moment in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asks his heavenly Father to “remove this cup” of suffering from him (Mark 14:36). What is the outcome? His petition is denied. The sinless Son of God prayed to the Father—yet his request wasn’t granted. It’s hard to imagine how the necessity of his death on the cross could be demonstrated more emphatically than this. But why? If God simply wanted to demonstrate his love for humanity, there were innumerable ways he might have done so. Yet as John Stott argued in *The Cross of Christ*, the love revealed in Jesus’s death was a holy love. The cross satisfied justice and demonstrated love—thus it can’t be viewed as an act of divine love in isolation from divine justice.

The universalist idea of only one outcome for everyone—regardless of choices made—runs against the whole thrust of Old and New Testament teachings.

Universalism struggles to explain the necessity of Jesus’s horrifying death. For if a universalist admits that God’s righteous opposition to sin required something that awful (i.e., the death of God’s incarnate Son), then it also makes sense to say that sinners not justified by Jesus’s death deserve hell or something like it. God’s justice requires one or the other—either the hell of Jesus’s agony, in which the sinner’s guilt is vicariously atoned for, or the hell of individual suffering for the one who rejects Jesus and his atoning work. The logic of atonement and the logic of hell are intertwined.

5. How should we interpret the end-times teaching of Revelation?

Universalists generally understand God as a loving being who doesn’t exercise judgment toward sin or sinners. Yet Revelation offers a picture of God’s righteous judgment against a sinful world, in overt rebellion against himself, as the bowls of his wrath are poured out (Rev. 16). The Beast, the False Prophet, and the Devil are later seized by the Lord and thrown into “the lake of fire” (Rev. 19)—an outcome set over and against the New Jerusalem, where the Lord dwells with Christ and the saints (Rev. 21).

Universalism struggles to explain the necessity of Jesus’s horrifying death.

In his book *The Evangelical Universalist*, Robin Parry tries to interpret Revelation in a universalist fashion, and does so by equating God with “the lake of fire.” Sinners fall into “the lake of fire,” get purified in God’s fiery presence, and then enter the New Jerusalem. But since Revelation identifies “the lake of fire” with “the second death” (Rev. 20:14), if

“the lake of fire” is God, then God is “the second death.” Such exegesis twists the meaning of Scripture and distorts the character of God.

6. Doesn't the New Testament show that salvation is connected to faith?

No less than seven times in the Gospels, Jesus says, “Your faith has made you well” or “Your faith has saved you” (Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42). A concordance will show the words “faith” and “believe,” with their cognates, appear over 500 times in the New Testament. The texts are too numerous to cite. Hebrews 11 is a whole chapter linking salvation to faith. But how is this tight connection between salvation and faith consistent with universalism?

The universalist is bound to say either that (1) people in the present life who don't seem to be believers really are believers in some hidden or cryptic fashion, (2) people who depart this life in unbelief get a further opportunity to become believers after death (see #11), or (3) salvation isn't tied to faith, despite the biblical witness to the contrary. None of these three options is congruent with Scripture. Some universalists believe God saves people who don't believe and don't want to be saved. This sounds a lot like coerced salvation.

7. What's the historic teaching on final salvation in the major branches of Christendom?

If universalist teaching is correct, then it's remarkable it never found its way into any of the official documents, confessions, or creeds of the major Christian communities—Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant. With the exception of the Universalist Church in the States, beginning in the 1800s and continuing to the early 1900s, one simply doesn't find universalism officially taught by any Christian community. (Many Unitarian Universalists today don't believe in life after death at all.) Read through Philip Schaff's or Jaroslav Pelikan's multivolume works on the creeds and confessions—you won't find universal salvation as a historic Christian teaching.

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In Orthodoxy and Eastern Christianity generally, certain individuals were self-conscious universalists (e.g., Gregory of Nyssa, Isaac of Nineveh), but they represented a minority group, and their universalist views were merely a tolerated, private opinion. Universalism was never admitted as official public teaching nor allowed to be preached from the pulpits of Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant congregations.

Moreover, the best-known early teacher of universalism—Origen—was condemned by name at the Second Council of Constantinople in AD 553. Throughout history, this

condemnation was taken as a rejection of Origen's teaching on universal salvation. In the ancient church, the number of non-universalist writers far outnumbers the universalists, by a factor of about 10 or 12 to 1 (see my tabulation in *The Devil's Redemption*, 1097–99). This was true not only of Latin-language authors but also of those who wrote in Greek, Coptic, and Syriac.

If the universalists are correct, then many of the greatest Christian teachers—including Augustine, Chrysostom, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Bellarmine, Pascal, Owen, Edwards, Newman, and so on—were all mistaken on an essential theological question. Do we really think 21st-century Christianity is so much more enlightened than preceding centuries that we alone have discovered the truth of universal salvation? Is it not more plausible to imagine we inhabit an age of spiritual and moral laxity and that universalism is growing because of a widespread desire to find a more permissive set of beliefs?

J

Dear J _____,

1. How should we interpret Jesus's words regarding 'hell' or 'Gehenna,' 'the outer darkness,' 'the fire that is not quenched,' 'the worm that does not die,' and the like?

Mar 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

This verse is a good example of how Christ teaches in His spiritual language. Christ words are "spirit" (John 6:63) and they have meanings that are different than what man's wisdom teaches (1Cor 2:13). Christ teaches this way so that carnal mankind cannot know the truth, and this includes "babes" who are also carnally minded.

The phrase "hand offend thee" is referring to man's works (the Old Covenant/the crooked way). Salvation comes from faith in Christ who will do all the works of a person's salvation. This is the straight way and the way taught by the New Covenant. When a "babe" mixes their own works with faith, they are committing the only sin that leads to death. It is from this sin that Satan has built the apostate church in this world - all the approx. 2,000 different denominations/sects that call themselves Christian.

The "fire that never shall be quenched" is referring to the Lake of Fire which represents Christ's judgment of mankind. It is in the Lake of Fire that all mankind will pay the penalty of death for their sins. That fire is not quenched. No one (not even the Elect) is excluded from this judgment because all mankind has sinned and is "condemned already" (John 3:18). To be saved, Christ will give each and every person a new birth before they perish from His judgment. The spiritual process that Christ uses is called "conversion". Conversion into a child of God is mankind's salvation.

You mentioned the spirit phrase "outer darkness". This phrase is referring to a person's spiritual blindness. It is not a location.

2. If hell is a temporary state but heaven is a forever state, then why are both denoted by the same word as 'eternal'?

Mat 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The above translation is incorrect. Here is the correct translation:

Mat 25:46 And these shall go away into age-during punishment: but the righteous into age-during life.

One of the rewards that Christ gives His Elect is life during the final age. This is in contrast to the "punishment" that most of mankind will receive during that age.

This scripture below also shows this contrast:

1Cor 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he (child of God/the Elect) shall receive a reward (life during the final age). 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he (child of the devil) shall suffer loss (no life during the final age but only punishment): but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The "day" in this verse occurs after Christ has resurrected all mankind and they appear before His White Throne. This is when Christ separates the sheep (the Elect) from the goats (all others). The Elect will receive life during this final age while the goats all receive punishment in the Lake of Fire. But before the goats perish from Christ's judgment, Christ will have mercy upon them all. His mercy will come to them (just as it did with the Elect) as the RAIN, both the Early and Latter Rains of the Spirit.

Hos 6:3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the RAIN, as the latter and former RAIN unto the earth.

With the Spirit now within the goats, they will have faith and be "born again" as a new creation. Christ will then gather the new child of God from the Lake of Fire and leave the child of the devil (the goat) to perish. This death will satisfy justice.

Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint

and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

What I described above is called "conversion". To be saved, Christ will convert all mankind into His children prior to the child of the Devil perishing in the Lake of Fire (a symbol for judgment).

In this age, Christ is only converting the Elect. They are the "first fruits" of His harvest of mankind. The main harvest of mankind will occur in the final age.

After all mankind has been harvested into the Kingdom of Heaven, this scripture will be testified to be true:

1Tim 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; 4 who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

3. What about the 'two ways' theme in the Old and New Testaments?

The crooked way of man's works (Old Covenant way) will not save a person. The straight way of having faith in Christ to do all the works (New Covenant way) will save a person. That is the correct contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

4. Why did Jesus need to die such a horrible, agonizing death on the cross for our sins?

God requires a perfect blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Christ's sacrifice on the cross also earned Him the keys to death & hell - and because it did, Christ has the legal authority to resurrect all mankind from death.

This verse applies:

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Christ gave mankind life by His sacrifice at the cross. Christ gives mankind a more abundant life by converting each person into a sinless child of God. This is mankind's salvation and it only requires the work of Christ for it to be accomplished. Mankind has nothing to offer or contribute to their own salvation (no works).

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before

ordained that we should walk in them.

5. How should we interpret the end-times teaching of Revelation?

The teachings of Christ concerning the "end-times" are teachings that present the pathway to salvation that all the Elect in this age will travel. In other words, the Elect (who are the "blessed") will "keep the sayings of the prophecy" (both the good and bad sayings).

Rev 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Rev 22:10 And he saith unto me, SEAL NOT the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for THE TIME IS AT HAND.

The second coming of Christ is a reoccurring spiritual event that happens when the ends of the ages come upon the Elect. This is when Christ gives the Elect person the Latter Rain of the Spirit, followed by judgment. The end result of this work is the conversion of the Elect person from being a child of the devil to being a child of God.

1Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.

Heb 9:28 So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

The common understanding of end-time prophecy is completely wrong and comes from a carnal understanding of scripture rather than a spiritual understanding. The events described by end-time prophecy are spiritual events that happen within a person - they are not describing outward one-time events which happen that the literal end of this age.

6. Doesn't the New Testament show that salvation is connected to faith?

Yes, a person's faith is what makes Christ's pathway straight for Him to come and convert a person. For any person to have faith in Christ, they must be given the Holy Spirit. Faith is a gift from God. Without the Spirit, no person can call Jesus "Lord".

1Cor 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.

Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among

you (the church who has been given the Early Rain of the Spirit), not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The verse below applies to people who are not given the Spirit by Christ:

1Cor 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

People (natural mankind) who are not "called to be saints" by being given the Early Rain of the Spirit, will die in unbelief through no fault of their own. They simply were not blessed to be saved in this age. And of the "many" who are called to be saints, only a few of them will also be given the Latter Rain of the Spirit and be converted. This is a very small number of mankind who are being blessed with salvation in this age.

7. What's the historic teaching on final salvation in the major branches of Christendom?

The church became apostate shortly after the death of Paul. If a person wants to know the truth of God, they should not be looking at the historic teachings of "Christendom". Scripture is quite sufficient to teach a person the truth if they have been given the Latter Rain of the Spirit and have had their spiritual blindness healed.

You mentioned 12 questions but I only see that you posted 7.

One more point: God the Father sent Christ to be the Savior of the world.

1John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

If Christ fails to save even one person, He will fail in the mission His Father gave Him to accomplish. If that were to happen, Christ would miss the mark that His Father set and that would be a sin.

The scriptures below clearly teach that Christ will not fail to save the world:

Rom 5:18 so then as it was by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all men for justification of life. 19 For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous.

Phi 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 and that every tongue shall confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1Cor 15:20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the consummation, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Joe

Dear FaithWillDo,

Are you a Universalist?

J

Dear J _____,

I am not a "universalist" in the sense that you probably mean. I do not associate with any denominational churches. All denominational churches are apostate and they mix works with faith - this includes the universalist churches.

I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world just as scripture proclaims over and over again. Jesus Christ came into the world with a plan to accomplish His great work and He will not rest until all mankind has been converted into children of God. Only after Christ as completed His work will the ages come to an end and God be "all in all".

Christ's plan to accomplish the salvation of mankind is at the core of the "great mystery of Christ and His church" (Eph 5:32). None of the apostate churches in the world understand His plan - they are too spiritually blind and under the influence of Satan via the spirit of anti-Christ to "see" it.

This verse applies:

Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Joe

Dear FaithWillDo,

Universalism Refuted:

Universalism is the idea that everyone goes to heaven. This idea is held by some Christians, based on statements in the Bible that God wants “all men to be saved” or that imply that Jesus came to save the “whole world” (1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 John 2:2; etc.). But these statements are qualified by many other passages of Scripture. I will show that universalism is not a biblical doctrine.

In Mark 9:23 Jesus said that “All things are possible for one who believes.” Are literally ALL things possible for the believer? I am confident that Jesus did not mean that just because I am a believer that I could be an Olympic athlete.

In Matthew 8:34 we see that, “All the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw Him, they begged him to leave their region.” It is doubtful that literally every last person, including women and children, left what they were doing and went out to see Jesus to complain. The point of the passage is that Jesus became a controversial figure and well known among many in the community.

In Mark 1:5 the text says that “all” the country of Judea and “all” Jerusalem were going out to John the Baptist to be baptized in the Jordan River, and confessing their sins. The meaning of this passage is certainly not literally “all,” but rather people came from every part of Judea to be baptized.

In Luke 2:1 it is written that “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.” Obviously, that means the Roman World and not the entire globe.

In 1 Peter 1:4:7, Peter said that “The end of all things is at hand.” Believers today mistakenly think Peter was speaking of the end of all things in the physical universe, which would be the literal meaning. But since the earth is still here, he must have meant something else. That something else was that the end of all COVENANTAL THINGS were at hand. The Jews did not have a concept of the end of the literal world. Rather, they thought in theological terms. Peter was reflecting the coming end of the visible fabric of Judaism—the great temple and with it the end of ritual animal sacrifices for sin—forever. Jesus had told them that this would happen in their generation (Luke 21:22, 32). This is reflected by all of the biblical writers. For example, the writer of Hebrews said, “In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”

In Revelation 1:7 we find the statement that “every eye will see Him” at his Parousia. Futurists take this statement literally, and read into it that every single person around the entire globe will see Jesus, aided by modern television. But this statement does not demand that every last person

would see Jesus, but rather, the statement is a superlative one about the encompassing majesty of Jesus at his Parousia. There are several things that qualify the statement. Obviously, it is qualified by living persons, not dead persons. Second, it is qualified by “those who pierced Him” and “tribes of the earth” which limit the statement to the Jews of the first century. It is also qualified by other passages such as Matthew 26:64 in which tells the Jewish leaders that is THEY who will witness his coming in judgment. It is still further qualified by history. Josephus related that chariots were seen in the sky over Jerusalem in about AD 66, and stated “those who saw it. . .”—implying that not all saw it. This event was reported by other ancient historians and satisfies the visibility requirement of Revelation 1:7.

In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 we find that God wants “all men to be saved.” However, this does not necessarily mean that all men will be saved. Given the numerous passages on election, obedience, free will, and limitations of those who are saved, this passage is best understood as “all types of people, Jews or Gentiles and whatever their station in life.”

In John 12:14 we find that Jesus will draw “all men to himself.” But such statements as these, which are used by those advocating universal salvation, are qualified by Scripture, as we shall see below.

Salvation is selective and specific. Let’s examine the selective nature of salvation. Salvation is specifically limited to:

those who are the elect (Matthew 24:31; 2 Timothy 2:10, 19; Titus 1:1-3; 1 Peter 1:1-3), chosen since before the beginning of the world (Ephesians 1:3-12), and predestined for salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Peter 2:7-9)

those who are chosen (Matthew 22:14; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17; James 2:5; Revelation 17:14)

those who are appointed to eternal life (Acts 13:48)

those who heard the word of salvation and believed (John 5:24; Ephesians 1:13)

those who believe (Luke 18:14; John 1:11-13; 3:16, 18; 36; 11:25-26; Romans 10:11; Acts 10:43; Romans 1:16; 3:22-26; 1 Timothy 1:16; Hebrews 3:19; 6:12; 11:1-40; 1 Peter 1:5; 2:6; 1 John 5:5; etc.)

those on whom God has mercy (Romans 9:18)

those whom God calls to himself (Acts 2:39; Romans 1:5-6; 8:30; Hebrews 9:15; Revelation 17:14)

those to whom it is granted by God (2 Peter 1:3-4)

those who are known by Jesus (Matthew 7:23)

those for whom a place has been prepared (Matthew 20:23; Mark 10:40)

those to whom the truth is revealed (Luke 10:21-24)

those who receive Him (John 1:12; Revelation 3:20-21)

those who are born again (John 3:4-8; 1 Peter 1:3)

those to whom Jesus gives life (John 5:21)

those whose eyes have not been blinded by God (John 12:39-40) or their minds hardened (2

Corinthians 3:14-18)

those who do not reject salvation (Hebrews 2:3) or harden their hearts (Hebrews 3:7-15)

those who were given to Jesus (John 17:2, 6, 9, 10, 24)

those who call on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13)

those who received the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11)

those who persevere in the faith (Matthew 10:22; Romans 11:17-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 3:14)

those whose names are in the "book of life" (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8-9; 17:8; 20:15)

those who are not deluded and thus condemned (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

those who confess Jesus (Romans 10:9; 1 John 4:15)

those who have the Son (1 John 5:10-12)

those who do not deny Christ and are thus not designated for condemnation (Jude 4,5)

those who are faithful (Revelation 2:10; 17:14)

those who repent (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30-31; 1 John 1:9)

those who love God (Deuteronomy 7:9; Romans 8:28; James 2:5)

those who love others (1 Corinthians 13:2-3; Galatians 5:6; 1 John 4:12, 20, 21)

those who enter through the narrow way (Matthew 7:12-14)

those who do not deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of truth (Hebrews 10:26-27)

those who have not rejected God the Father (Romans 1:18-32), God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-29), or God the Son (John 3:36; John 8:24)

those who are obedient (Deuteronomy 7:9; 9:16-18; Nehemiah 1:5; Psalm 25:10; 103; 11-19; Ezekiel 18; Matthew 5:19-20; 6:19-21; 7:16-27; 10:38; 12:36-37; 12:50; 13:36-43; 16:25-27;

18:23-35; 25:31-46; Mark 8:34-35; Luke 6:46-49; 10:25-37; 11:28; John 5:29; 8:51; 14:21-24; 15:1-6, 10, 14; Acts 5:32; Romans 1:18; 2:1-16; 6:1-23; 8:13; 14:17-18; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15;

6:9-11; 7:19; 9:24-27; Galatians 5:19-21; 6:7-9; Ephesians 5:3-14; Philippians 2:12-18; 2

Thessalonians 1:8-9; 2:10; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:21-22; Titus 1:16; Hebrews 3:6-18;

10:36; 12:14-17; James 1:12-15; 2:17-26; 1 Peter 1:22; 2:1-2; 1 Peter 4:17-19; 2 Peter 1:10-11; 1

John 1:6-7; 1 John 2:29; 3:16-24; 5:2-3; Jude 1:7; Revelation 2:2-11; 3:8-12; 21:5-9, 27; 22:14-

19)

Other points:
Not even everyone who calls Jesus "Lord" enters the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21; James 2:19).

Jesus said He would give his life for "many." Many does not equal all (Mark 10:45).
A certain type of sin is unforgivable (Mark 3:28-29). Theologians teach that the unforgivable sin is a willful and continual rejection of God.

Resurrection to damnation cannot be universalism (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 18:9; John 5:28-29; Jude 7; etc.).

Everlasting destruction cannot be universalism (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10).
Eternal fire for those cursed cannot be universalism (Matthew 25:41).
The wrath of God against unrighteousness cannot be universalism (Romans 1:18).
The fiery lake of burning sulfur cannot be universalism (Revelation 21:8).

Resisting or betraying Jesus is said to lead to a curse worse than if he had never been born (Mark 14:21). Such a curse cannot be universalism.

The “road to destruction” cannot be universalism (Matthew 7:13-14).

Finally, God is a god of love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; etc.). But God hates sin and indeed throughout the Bible we see that God is also a god of wrath (Psalm 2:4-6, 5:4-6, 7:11, 11:5, 89:46, 90:7-11; Proverbs 6:16-19, 12:22, Ezekiel 36:16-21; Hosea 5:10, 9:15; Nahum 1:2-6; Zephaniah 3:6-8; Malachi 1:3; Matthew 21:40-45, 23:29-39; John 3:36; Romans 1:18, 9:22-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12; Hebrews 10:30-31). He is not simply a grandfatherly figure in the sky that gives out candy. While some may hope for a different God than the God of the Bible, God’s nature is one of justice. We must infer that for God to forgive, without repentance and faith before God Almighty, the heinous crimes of Hitler or ISIS, or serial rapists, or child molesters—is contrary to God’s nature—and indeed, contrary to common sense.

J _____

Dear J _____,

Why do you think that salvation is limited to this age?

You should read Joel 2. The setting is the final age when the "lost" of Israel (who are last to be saved) are being judged in the Lake of Fire. And just as Mat 23:23 says, at some point during their judgment, Christ will have mercy upon the "lost".

Joel 2:18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

Christ's mercy will come to the "lost" as the Early and Latter Rains of the Spirit:

Joel 2:23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.

With the Holy Spirit within the "lost", they will have faith which will make Christ's pathway straight for Him to appear. When Christ appears, He will gather the newly born child of God to heaven.

Consider these verses below. They testify to the truth that Christ loves & blesses His enemies.

Mat 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Isa 1:27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

Because Christ will bless all mankind, all mankind will be saved:

Rom 5:18 so then as it was by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all men for justification of life. 19 For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous.

1Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

How can anyone be left out of Christ's free gift of salvation when scripture clearly teaches that all who have died in Adam will be made alive in Christ? That leaves no room for you to play games with defining the word "all".

Only after Christ saves the last person of mankind will this scripture below be testified to be true:

1Tim 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; 4 who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

The scripture above is correctly translated as "will have" because for something to be testified to be true at some future time, something must happen. If the scripture were translated as "desires to have", the scripture would not need anything to happen in the future. "Desires" is an emotion and can be proven in the present - no future event is required to prove it to be true. But for the sake of argument, suppose the verse does say "desires to have". If that were the case, the salvation of all mankind would still be a certainty because of what these verses teach:

Job 23:13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, that will he do.

Isa 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Your understanding of Christ and His power to save mankind is wrong. Christ is NOT like mankind who frequently is disappointed in life. But with our God and Creator, Christ always accomplishes everything that pleases Him. He is that powerful:

Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

One reason you won't accept Christ as being mankind's Savior is because you have elevated

mankind's "will" to be more powerful than God's "will". But this is not true as Paul says below:

Rom 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

The implied answer is no one has resisted God's "will". Mankind is saved because it is God's "will" to save us all. He will not be denied this pleasure as you incorrectly believe.

Joe

Dear FaithWillDo,

The many will be constituted righteous-- the free gift came to all men, -- What Christ did had a bearing upon all people. As the tendency of the one was to involve the race in condemnation [death, separation from God], so the tendency of the other was to restore them to acceptance with God [and eternal life, see Rom_5:21].

gift of righteousness -- Salvation, Rom_5:17, reigns thru Christ in the covering of offence (sins).

condemnation -- death, separation (spiritual and/or physical) death.

resulting in justification of life -- God's grace provides justification through Christ's death. Vs. 18 **however does not teach universal salvation.** [However, as in Adam all died, so in Christ all will be resurrected Joh_5:28-29; 1Co_15:22; **Some** to eternal life with God, and **some** to eternal damnation with the Devil Mat_25:41; Rev_20:12; Rev_20:14-15.]

Even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life (Romans 5:18). The righteousness of Christ is freely imputed without works, just as it is to all those who belong to the second Adam, the new humanity in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22). This imputation of righteousness entitles them to eternal life, for as Scripture says, "**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God**" (Ephesians 2:8).

The sentence of justification was conceived in the mind of God from eternity, as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5), ordaining His elect to eternal life on the basis of His Son's righteousness. This justification was declared upon Christ at His resurrection from the dead, for He was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). It also passed to all His people, who were quickened together with Him at their own conversion, as it is written, "**God... made us alive together with Christ**" (Ephesians 2:5).

When a sinner believes, this justification passes upon their conscience, and they should reckon themselves "**alive unto God in Christ Jesus**" (Romans 6:11). It is this justification that gives the believer a right and title to everlasting life and glory, as those justified by His grace become

"heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

This is only true for those who are quickened by the Holy Spirit, whose "eyes of understanding" are enlightened (Ephesians 1:18), as they are God's chosen ones who are called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

"A small amount of yeast works through the entire batch of dough" @joe

J _____

Dear J _____,

Faith is a free gift that only comes from God. If God doesn't give faith to a person, they will never have it. The natural man is just too carnally minded to ever produce their own faith in Christ.

Rom 3:10 As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

1Cor 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

With your beliefs, you have turned a person's faith into a work of man which steals from Christ and His work. Can't you see that?

Your false belief of mixing works with faith is the lie that Satan uses to kill the saints. Paul and John call it the "sin that leads to death". It is the reason why Christ will say to apostate believers (who are "many") "I never knew you".

God's Word says that the ONLY way a person can have faith is by Christ giving a person the Holy Spirit. And Christ gives a person the Holy Spirit solely because of His own decision to do so. The person's "will" plays no part in it.

1Cor 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.

Prov 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

One final point: Scripture teaches that Christ will save all mankind. In this age, Christ is only

saving the Elect whom He chose to be the "first fruits" of His harvest of mankind. They are said to be blessed and the heirs of Abraham. The balance of mankind will be saved in the final age during their time of judgment. They make up the main harvest that occurs at year's end.

Exo 34:22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

Your beliefs say that Christ is not a good farmer but that He will leave the main harvest of mankind to rot and die in the field. Can't you see that this is wrong?

Joe