

UNIVERSALISM

*Compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, October, 2012
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Scripture is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.*

Universalism is the teaching that God will eventually “save” all of mankind. Some include all created sentient beings, which would mean that Satan and the angels who rebelled with him, will also one day be reconciled to the Father.

Let me state plainly. I do not believe that all of mankind will ultimately be saved.

The question is terribly important. Do we have free will - or not? Can we actually “love” the Lord our God? **Can we resist Him?** Does HE - the omnipotent Creator, allow lesser sentient beings to choose whom they will serve? If not - then **are we simply manipulated** by Him, with stimuli and deterrents, until we respond in His desired way? Are we like trained dogs, of a higher order? I have trouble believing my God would want such a “relationship.”

Universalists post another question. **Does the Creator have the right to destroy sentient beings?** It seems similar to the abortion question, which asks if a woman has the right to destroy a human life growing in her womb - a life which she (by her actions) “created.”

Let’s review a few doctrinal positions which are important to understand as we begin:

First: I believe that death is an unconscious state, during which the Father retains the spirit essence of the person who has died. This spirit essence (like a memory download) is what God will use to resurrect each person with mind intact - the righteous to everlasting life, and the persistently rebellious to judgment and then death without hope of future resurrection.

Second: The end for the persistently rebellious, will be the “lake of fire.” The “lake of fire” is called “the second death.” No future third resurrection is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. This means the “second death” is final and irreversible. I do not believe that human beings will be consciously tormented for eternity. I believe the spiritually hardened will be annihilated.

According to Revelation Chapter 20, at the conclusion of the final judgment, Sheol itself - the abode of the dead, will be consumed completely and forever in the "lake of fire." After Sheol is gone, "there will be no more death"(Rev 21:4). If Sheol is consumed and gone forever, then the spirit essence of every person *in Sheol* will be vanished, rendering future resurrection impossible.

Third: Salvation is based upon a dynamic living relationship with God our Father and His Son, Yeshua Messiah. It is not a forensic transaction, where one is promised eternal salvation because one has said the essential formula words - "I believe. Save me." - unless those words came from a heart overwhelmed by the love of God, with the sincere intent to "follow His ways."

Fourth: God predestined all to salvation. Christ died for the whole world. But the invitation to become part of His kingdom, is individually accepted - one by one. Each person must accept the invitation, and the conditions. No one is forced. No one is coerced.

These positions are set out in several studies at prophecyviewpoint.com.

1. [Where are the Dead?](#)
2. [Hell - What It's Not](#)
3. [Judgment Day](#)
4. [The Book of Life](#)
5. [The Only Way](#)
6. [What Does God Want - From me?](#)
7. [The Unpardonable Sin](#)
8. [Final Judgment - Lake of Fire](#)

Let's consider a few arguments for Universalism.

THE SAVIOR OF ALL

1. **[Universalist argument]** Christ is the Savior of ALL.

1 Timothy 4:9-10 "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe."

ANSWER: Yes. Jesus Christ died for all. He came to "save" all. All are invited. Most will not accept the invitation to "come unto Me," because they love their sin. They do not want to "see" or to "believe" that Christ can heal them, to the point where they will hate what they once loved.

Human beings are not “saved” whether they want to be - or not. God’s spirit is constantly drawing us toward HIM. **To be lost, one must actively resist this drawing.** One must fight it, throwing up one barrier after another. If we do not resist, we will be drawn to search for the One who can heal and fill our hearts completely.

Jeremiah 29:13 “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world (all men) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Loving and saving are two different things. God loves everyone. **God is not able to save everyone He loves.** Why? Because He has allowed us free will, to either accept or refuse. Eternal life is found only in and through Christ Jesus.

2. **[Universalist argument]** If death came upon ALL men because of the sin of Adam, then ALL will be given life because of the victory of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:21-23 “For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man also comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be made alive. Yet each in his own class: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.

ANSWER: All of “those who are Christ’s” - who are “in Christ” - will be “made alive” at the Glorious Return. Paul was writing to believers at Corinth - not to the general public.

ALL have been offered life, through Jesus Christ. There are conditions: believe, confess sins, forsake sins, “love one another as I have loved you.”

This is closely related to the question concerning whether human beings are “saved” til they’re lost, or lost til they’re “saved.” See our studies: “The Book of Life” and “The Book of Life - a Challenge.”

OTHER “all” PASSAGES:

Romans 5:18 “Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

ANSWER: The “free gift” was Christ Jesus. He was made available to “all men.” A gift can be rejected. It’s not a “gift” if it is forced.

Hebrews 2:9 “. . . that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”

He did “taste death for everyone.” What Jesus did - He did for everyone. That doesn't mean everyone will accept His gift.

*Those who believe that Jesus' death somehow literally “**paid for**” our release from death, have **a forensic understanding of salvation**. Jesus paid the penalty - for us, therefore God cannot execute anyone. He must let everyone live.*

I don't understand Jesus' death in that way. I believe that Jesus' death made it possible for the Father to forgive. It did not obligate Him to forgive.

When we say that a soldier “paid the ultimate price for our freedom,” we are not saying there is a book somewhere with a debit column - so much freedom for so much blood - or a divine being somewhere with a cash register, ringing up sins vs payment. We are saying the soldier died while fighting for our freedom.

Jesus died, fighting to regain dominion of this earth. Only by perfect obedience to God His Father, could Jesus regain dominion of this earth. With dominion, comes the right to judge, to rule over, to heal, and to restore this earth. Also the right “to destroy those who destroy the earth.” With dominion comes the right to resurrect - to give life! THAT is what Jesus was fighting for - with His last breath. In the process, Jesus delivered a powerful message. “This is how much God loves you. If God loves you this much. Allow Him to heal you.

John 3:17 “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

The verse does not say that the whole world will be saved. It “might be saved.” It could be saved. All are invited. Few will accept the invitation.

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away [who bears] the sin of the world!”

Jesus carried the sin of the whole world. He carried the sin, as the Lamb of God. He won the right to forgive those who come to God, through Him.

John 12:32 “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw ALL men unto myself.”

ANSWER: All men feel the drawing power of God's love. Some resist and their hearts are gradually hardened. These texts demonstrate that no man was ever predestined for Hell. Jesus fights to save every one. It's just that God has allowed human resistance.

2 Corinthians 5:19 “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.”

ANSWER: God is not reconciled to us. He has always loved us. We are reconciled to Him, when we see His great love for us. Some resist the drawing power of His love, and refuse to be reconciled - to Him. He is the source of ongoing life. To refuse Him is to choose death.

Colossians 1:20 “ . . . and by Him to reconcile ALL things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Once again: God’s will (His desire) is to reconcile all created beings to Himself. He sent His own Son to plead His case. Most will not be convinced. Most will refuse His offer of healing, because they love their sins. Most will be lost.

The angels of Heaven, have also been fully reconciled to the Father, because they have seen the results of the rebellion. Satan was unmasked. Every sentiment in his favor, still held by those beings of the spirit realm, was turned to utter contempt as he inspired men under his control to torture the Son of God hoping to break Him before He died. Satan failed.

3. **[Universalist argument]** God swore by Himself, that “every knee shall bow” before Him.

Isaiah 45:23 “I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.”

*ANSWER: In this text, the LORD is not speaking of “every knee,” in the sense of all mankind. **This passage is about Israel.***

In context, He is telling the prophet that some will escape from the coming destruction and desporia - of Israel. Isaiah is writing during a time of great apostasy in Israel. Many worshiped idols. Few obeyed the commandments. He wonders whether Israel can ever be brought back to oneness with her God.

*The words of the LORD, would have given hope to the prophet, and to the faithful few. Israel would one day be restored. Some would escape. Then every knee will bow and every tongue confess. **The knees and the tongues are those of escaped, redeemed Israelites.***

Remember: Gentile believers are “grafted in” to Israel.

*ANSWER: Romans 14:11 references Psalm 22:29. Every knee will bow before the judgment seat of Christ - of those living and of those who have died. These two verses do not say they kneel because they love the LORD. They will acknowledge Him. The vanquished kneel to the victor. **NOTE: We know those in Christ “will not come into judgment” (John 5:24).***

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

4. **[Universalist argument]** How can our Father God be satisfied so long as even one is lost from Him? Such would be incomplete and imperfect, two things that are incompatible with God's character. The work of God would be unfinished.

Luke 15:4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"

ANSWER: The LORD speaks here of a "lost" animal, meaning one which has simply wandered away and cannot find its way back. We assume that when the animal hears the Shepherd's voice calling, it will run toward the Shepherd - NOT try to get away.

John 10:27 [Jesus said] "My sheep hear My voice,
and I know them, and they follow Me."

"You can lead a horse to water (with a bridle), but you can't make him drink." And you can teach and preach and love, but you can't MAKE human beings believe the LORD when He says that He can give them joy and peace, if they will only surrender to Him. It is well known that some cats will starve themselves to death, rather than eat some new food that their owners bought to improve their health. Some people are like those cats.

*ANSWER: The invitation is extended, but **those invited must respond**. They must come to the Shepherd when they hear His call. They "return" by confessing their sins and then changing their behavior (with the help of His spirit within). **Each one must act**. One is NOT passively swept into the Kingdom, like an infant being baptized.*

NOTE: Infant baptism does NOT gain salvation for the child, who did not understand, or believe, or repent, or consent. Peter said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Zechariah 1:3 "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Return to Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and I will return to you."'"

A day will come when the LORD will say,

Isaiah 5:4 [The LORD speaking of Israel] "What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?"

THE POWER OF GOD

5. **[Universalist argument]** God is all knowing and all powerful. How can the redemption of all humanity be beyond His ability to bring about? It must be within His wisdom to apply just that correction needed to each individual, in order to finally reconcile every single one.

*ANSWER: **God has restrained His own power over human beings.** He will not manipulate minds. He will not overpower the human will. What then, are His options?*

He teaches and informs.

He blesses, showing us that great benefit is to be obtained in association with Him.

He restrains the forces of Satan, thus allowing more time to the individual or the nation.

He demonstrates His great power.

He warns.

He allows the individual to suffer the natural consequences of his own choices (sometimes as a warning to others).

He invites the individual into covenant relationship.

He demonstrates His great love and willingness to forgive.

The incarnation and death of God's only Son, was the greatest love letter of all time!

Beyond this - what is left?

*Love cannot be forced. The demonstration of His power over the gods of Egypt, did not change Pharaoh's heart. The demonstration of His power did not bring Israel to obedience with love, during the wilderness wandering. **Demonstrations of power** may buy time, because of the fear engendered, but they **cannot win hearts.** **Love is awakened ONLY by love.***

1John 4:19 "We love Him, because He first loved us."

This is the bottom line. *There is NO OTHER WAY to win the heart of a human being, than by love. That is how He created us. If love doesn't work, the only other option is a permanent police state, with mind control tactics.*

To believe we were created, takes some study of the evidence for Intelligent Design. To believe the story of the Cross, takes a miracle, and perhaps some study of the historical evidence, or the prophetic evidence. Most times, a desire to know more is awakened in the heart of an otherwise oblivious human being, because a believer showed him real kindness and love and moral character.

6. **[Universalist argument]** God is “**not willing** that any should perish,” (2 Peter 3:9) therefore none will perish - because that is not God’s will. Who can effectively thwart the will of God? Is evil too strong for God?

ANSWER: God’s “will” is not the same as His “word.”

*If God speaks a thing - if He says it will happen - then His word will not come back to Him void (Isa. 55:11). What He has spoken will be. **Where did God say that all men will be saved?** No where! In fact, Jesus said, “it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matt. 7:14 NJB).*

*God’s “will” is **His desire**, and His desire is for every human being to be reconciled with Himself. But He will not overpower the mind or will of human beings, to bring about a universal reconciliation. We are allowed to resist His spirit. We can say, “No!” He will respect - not violate, individual human choice and desire.*

ANSWER: No. Evil is not “too strong” for God. Satan and his fallen angels are not “too strong for God.” He has set limits, beyond which Satan cannot go. The story of Job is a good example. Those human beings who are “possessed” and controlled by Satan’s fallen angels, are persons who are without God’s protection, either because they rejected Him persistently, or because their parents or grandparents did so. Even then, such persons can cry out to God - even if only in their thoughts, and He will hear and provide a way of escape for them. Jesus healed many who were “possessed” by demons (Matt. 4:24, 8:16, 8:28, 9:32, 12:22, Mar 16:9, Acts 8:7).

*ANSWER: Evil is not an entity - of itself. **Evil is the absence of good. God has allowed humanity the freedom to resist the good, thereby choosing evil**. He will NOT overpower the human mind. He can. But He won’t. **A forced choice, is no choice at all**.*

Some say He “should,” do whatever it takes, rather than allow a single life to be “lost.” What would be the end result? Not love. Just endless engineered obedience. That is not what the Father wants for Himself, or for his human children.

*It is a most amazing revelation of the character of our God - that He does NOT impose His will over the minds of created sentient beings. We can say “no” to Him. **He has actually set the puny “will” of individual human beings, above His own will, when it comes to individual choice - to love and serve Him - or not**.*

The LORD presents evidence. He allows us to experience the consequences of our unwise choices. He uses corrective punishment, when He allows us to suffer without His protection. But He does not and will not overpower human minds.

*If God would ever manipulate human minds,
then He should have done it in the first place
and skipped all this painful mess!*

THE LAKE OF FIRE

7. **[Universalist argument]** Death will be abolished at the end of the ages (eons). That means no one else will die. Those within the “Lake of Fire” are still alive. They will be cleansed of sin. Then God will bring them out of the “fire.” They will be reconciled with Him. **The Lake of Fire is a cleansing fire, not annihilation.**

*ANSWER: Evil is not something to be burned off, or burned up - without touching the individual. **Evil is simply the absence of good.** As darkness is the absence of light. Those who are consumed in the Lake of Fire, have NO GOOD in them, because they resisted and refused the Spirit of God (The Good). Human beings are not “good” (meaning loving) in and of themselves, without God. Without Him, we are “carnal” - self-serving, and our selfishness seeks to control everything around us. Conflict and damage result. Two-year-olds demonstrate this very well. As we get older, we just grow more accomplished at hiding our selfishness.*

We were created to be indwelt - by our Creator. This is the living, saving relationship. Sadly, most will refuse Him.

*ANSWER: **The “Lake of Fire” is called “the second death”** (Rev. 20:14). It is not a portal to everlasting life, for those who died in rebellion against God.*

Matthew 10:28 “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell [*Gehenna*].

The following is the prophecy of the angel messenger to Daniel.

Daniel 12:1-2 “. . . at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book [of life]. And multitudes of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (KJV)

“Everlasting contempt” is a forever judgment!!

Jeremiah 23:40 “And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.”

This was a curse upon false prophets in Israel.

Divine “fire” from the pillar of cloud above the Tabernacle, consumed Nadab and Abihu, and the 250 princes who rebelled against Moses. Those men were not “cleansed.” They died. This “fire” will also consume the Horde of Gog, when that Army comes to attack Jerusalem during the coming Kingdom of Messiah (See Revelation Chapter 20).

On three occasions, “the fire of God” - divine fire, consumed the sacrifice on the alter in the courtyard of the Tabernacle. Psalm 37 tells us that the wicked will all be consumed into smoke by this same divine “fire.”

Psalm 37:9 “For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. 10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

v.20 “But the wicked shall perish; And the enemies of the LORD, Like the fat of (sacrificed) lambs, shall vanish into smoke. They shall vanish away.”

Proverbs 10:25 “When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked is no more, But the righteous has an everlasting foundation.”

Hebrews 10:39 “But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.” (NAS)

The word translated as “destruction” is “apoleia” (#684). It is translated as “utter destruction,” “are perished,” and “are lost,” in other versions.

2 Thessalonians 1:8 [At the Second Coming] “ . . . in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,”

The “vengeance” of “everlasting destruction” does NOT suggest a good outcome for those so punished.

ANSWER: I do not believe that anyone has yet been cast into the Lake of Fire. And I do not believe those cast into the Lake of Fire will remain “alive.”

I believe that death is a state of unconsciousness. The Bible writers called it a “sleep.” Jesus called it a “sleep.” He also said that a young girl who was physically dead, was “not dead.” She was not dead - to God, because Jesus could wake her. He could resurrect her. He will resurrect millions of His own, at His glorious return.

I believe that God retains a memory of each mind, at the moment of death. (Like a memory download from a computer.) He will use that memory to resurrect each one with mind intact. Those who are Christ's, He will resurrect to everlasting life. Those who died in rebellion or hardened resistance against Him, He will resurrect to judgment and then everlasting death.

See our study: "[Where are the Dead?](#)"

No future THIRD RESURRECTION is mentioned in the Scriptures. There will be a resurrection at the Glorious Return, and a resurrection at the 8th millennium. That's it.

Those who "stand" before God at the final Great White Throne Judgment, ARE physically DEAD (Rev. 20:11-14). They will "stand" only in the sense that the records of their lives will come up for review. They are not made alive again. They will not be conscious when God's retained memory of them, is destroyed in the special Lake of Fire.

This review of the records is closure for the redeemed, not another life opportunity for those who rejected God's love. At the conclusion of this judgment/review, God's retained "memory" of the wicked - their spirit/mind essence - will be consumed in the special Lake of Fire. They will no longer exist after this death. This is spirit death.

See our study: "[Final Judgment - Lake of Fire.](#)"

NOTE: The only beings described as tormented "to the age of the ages" in the Lake of Fire, are Satan and his fellow rebellious spirit beings. The Lake of Fire was created to contain them and destroy them (Matthew 25:41). They are not mortal human beings. No one has clearly defined the Greek words translated as "the age of the ages." We really don't know how long they will last in that "fire."

8. **[Universalist argument]** God said He would "bring one-third through the fire." Doesn't that mean He will save some from out of The "Lake of Fire?"

Zechariah 13:9 [God speaking to Zechariah about Israel] **"I will bring the one-third through the fire,** Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

ANSWER: The LORD would bring one-third of Israel, through the "fire" of dispersions, persecutions and trials. Zechariah is NOT writing about the "Lake of Fire." He is writing about the "fire" of testing and trial that all believers must all pass through as Israelites and followers of Christ.

Peter used "fire" as a metaphor for persecution. He called persecution, "the fiery trial which is to try you" (1Peter 4:12).

Satan deceived one-third of the angels into open rebellion against the Father. This verse suggests the LORD will save one-third of Israel - of those who claim to believe in God. Some would say this means God lost the war. I disagree.

God will loose billions of His created children, but He will not loose the war. His Son will ultimately destroy Satan and those angels who do his bidding. Satan wanted to control all of mankind. Short of that, he wanted to destroy them. Jesus denied him that victory.

Yes. Only “few” will be “saved” from this age. But there is an age to come - The 8th Millennium. Many of those raised to life at that day, will come to know the Lord as Savior. See our study: “[The Rest of the Dead.](#)”

Isaiah 38:18 “For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.”

Isaiah 43:2 “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.”

ANSWER: This is a promise to the righteous - not to the wicked!

Isaiah 33:14-15 “The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? [Answer] He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:”

ANSWER: God Himself IS “the everlasting fire” (Deut. 4:24, Heb.12:29). His glory consumes that which He does not indwell or especially protect. God said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live” (Exo. 33:20). Jesus said, “No one has seen the Father” (John 6:46). Only those whom He indwells, will survive His presence at the Day of Judgment, and dwell in His presence for all eternity.

9. **[Universalist Argument]** God is our Father and any punishment must therefore be for the ultimate improvement of His children - not for punishment only, or for annihilation.

Job 5:17-18 “Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but he binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.”

ANSWER: It is true. The LORD allows the wayward to experience the painful results of their own choices, and patiently waits, hoping they will “see the error of their ways.”

*Does this prove the Lord will continue His appeals forever? **The Bible says a time will come when hearts have become “hard.” Further appeals would be useless.** The story of Pharaoh is a good example.*

Should the LORD allow the pain to continue forever? The wicked persecute the righteous and wreck havoc upon the lives of the weak, the helpless and the ignorant. They constantly deceive, leading millions upon millions to hate, to pain, and to destruction.

The LORD will finally remove His people from this earth. The wicked will stand before Him to hear judgment pronounced. Those left behind will destroy each other, along with all life on this planet. A fire - more terrible than the flood of Noah - will consume the heavens and the earth - with the bodies of those left behind. They will die without hope of resurrection.

See studies: “[Judgment Day](#)“ and “[Millennium](#)“ and “[Cursed](#).”

Matthew 24:37 “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”
(NIV)

Job 22:16-17 [In the days of Noah] “Who were cut down before their time, whose foundations were swept away by a flood? They said to God, ‘Depart from us!’ What can the Almighty do to (for) them?”

Without God’s spirit, there can be no life.

10. **[Universalist Argument]** Because God is a loving Father, He will use only beneficial corrective punishment. Jesus used the Greek word “**kolazo**,” meaning “to prune” as one would a tree, when He spoke of punishment.

ANSWER: It is doubtful Jesus used much of the Greek. He almost certainly spoke Aramaic, the common dialect of His day. The disciples did likewise. And of course they all knew the Hebrew. Paul on the other hand, was a master of the Greek.

Yes. Jesus spoke of pruning. He also used other terms, when He described the judgment of the wicked.

***His treatment is different** for branches that bear fruit, and of those that do not. He described those who “bear fruit” as those who “remain in Me.”*

*“**The fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5:22-23 NIV).*

Those who Bear Fruit - Those who Do Not

John 15:2 [Jesus speaking] “Every branch which is part of me but fails to bear fruit, he **cuts off** (#142); and every branch that does bear fruit, he **prunes** (#2508 kolazo), so that it may bear more fruit.” (CJB)

There’s a big difference between a pruned branch, and one that is completely severed from the tree. The first will go on living. The second will die. It will then be “thrown into the fire” to be consumed.

John 15:6 “If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” (NIV)

To “prune” a tree or vine or branch, is not the same as to “cut off” the entire branch, or to “cut down” the entire tree, and burn it up.

Matthew 3:10 “And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matt. 7:19, Luke 3:9).

Romans 11:22 [Paul writing to a Gentile convert] “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.”

(No Once-Saved-Always-Saved taught here.)

Jesus used analogies containing words for “cut off” and “cut down,” because the Hebrew word for “cut off” (karath #03772) was used throughout the Old Testament to describe God’s judgment on those hardened in rebellion against Him. This was not a “corrective punishment.” This was death at the judgment of God. Those so “cut off” from Israel were regarded as already dead.

Leviticus 18:29 [God speaking to Moses] “For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people.” (NAS)

To be “cut off” from Israel, from the pillar of shade, from miraculous water and manna from heaven, from the protection of clan and tribe, in the middle of the desert - was TO DIE. To be “cut off” was to be separated from God.

Genesis 9:11 [God to Noah] “Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” *Those “cut off” by the flood, died by drowning.*

Psalm 37:22 “For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth, But those cursed by Him shall be cut off.”

*The word translated as “cursed” means “doomed to destruction.”
See our study: “[Cursed](#).”*

Psalm 37:38 “But the transgressors shall be **destroyed** together; The future of the wicked shall be cut off.”

Proverbs 2:22 “But the wicked will be cut off from the earth, And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.”

*ANSWER: **Of course God uses “corrective punishment.”** The Scriptures are filled with examples. See Job 5:17, Proverbs 3:12, Hebrews 12:6-7, Revelation 3:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:32. **He will also exact “vengeance” at the Day of Judgment.***

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 [Paul writing] “. . . WHEN the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, WHEN He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints.”

*The word here translated as “vengeance” is the Greek word “**ekdikesis**” (#1557) meaning a revenging, vengeance, or punishment. The word translated as “punished” is “**dike**” (#1349), meaning condemned or punished or executed per judicial decision.*

Hebrews 10:29 [Speaking of someone who once believed, but then turned away] “How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace?” (NET)

*The word here translated as ‘punishment’ is the Greek word ‘**timora**’ (#5098). It means ‘punishment’ and is used only once in the New Testament.*

A FEW OTHER GREEK WORDS:

I know that word studies can be tedious. Sorry. I wanted to demonstrate that God really does lethally punish. He does destroy. And He will annihilate those hardened in rebellion against Him.

The word '***kolasis***' (#2851) - meaning: 1) correction, ***punishment***, penalty
Used only twice:

Matthew 25:46 [Christ speaking] "And these will go away into **everlasting punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life." (Also 1Jo 4:18)

NOTE: I do not believe the punishment will be continuing conscious torment. I believe the punishment is simply irreversible - for all eternity. See our study: "[Hell - What it's Not](#)."

The word '***timoreo***' (#5097) and '***timoria***' (#5098) - meaning: to take vengeance, to avenge honor, to punish
Examples:

Acts 22:5 [Paul writing of his former life, before he knew Christ] "as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there, to Jerusalem to be punished."

Acts 26:11 [Paul writing of his life before conversion] "Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities." (NIV)

*The word '***paideu***' (#3811) - meaning:*
1) to train children 1a) to be instructed or taught 1b) to cause one to learn 2) to chastise 2a) ***to chastise*** or castigate with words, to correct 2a1) of those who are moulding the character of others by reproof and admonition 2b) of God 2b1) to chasten by the affliction of evils and calamities 2c) ***to chastise with blows, to scourge*** 2c1) of a father punishing his son 2c2) ***of a judge ordering one to be scourged***

Translations into the English include punish (Luke 23:16; 1 Cor. 11:32; 1 Tim. 1:20; Heb. 12:6-7; Rev. 3:19), correct (2 Tim. 2:25), instruct (Acts 7:22; 22:3; Titus 2:12) and scourge (2Cor. 6:9). I can agree that God does use this type of punishment, though I have not read that God ever commanded Moses to scourge anyone.

ANSWER: Ultimately, there is only life or death. To refuse the LORD is to choose death.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

John 3:16 “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.” (To “perish” is to die.)

Deuteronomy 30:19 [Moses speaking to Israel] “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;”

11. **[Universalist argument]** The LORD advises us to forgive and forgive and forgive. How can the LORD stop forgiving? He is love. He is forgiveness. His patience is infinite.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

ANSWER: **God’s forgiveness is conditional.** To find forgiveness and reconciliation with God, one must certainly acknowledge that He exists, and that He has been wounded by our sins. Just as in any fractured or strained relationship, one must acknowledge past wrongs. It is part of the process of reconciliation. **One must also acknowledge that God’s Son died, to make forgiveness possible.** True heart confession is made from a humble heart, with the intention to change the offending behavior. The desire is that one’s life will be cleansed of the sinful behavior, not just from the guilt.

ANSWER: The LORD invites. He pleads. He waits. He continues to bless - hoping that His message of love will provoke a response. **Finally a point is reached, beyond which He will wait no longer - because He knows that the sinner is hardened, and will never respond.** We are told to forgive and forgive, because we cannot know the heart. We cannot see whether the point of hardness has been reached. God does know. That is why He can stop forgiving.

Yes. He knew from the beginning that this person would not respond. Why does He then exhaust every divine means (short of mind manipulation)? Answer: Because the redeemed must see that He tried.

ANSWER: **While the LORD “waits” for a rebellious person to “see” and believe and respond, and repent, that stubborn person is causing a lot of damage and pain, not just to himself, but to many others. He may lead others to commit greater sins. He may lead some to doubt God’s love or very existence. When does the suffering end? Must it continue forever - so that God can wait for the stubbornly rebellious? No.**

12. **[Universalist argument] Annihilation is unjust.** Mankind did not ask to be created and had no hand in the creation process, except to beget children at the command of God (“be fruitful”). Eve was deceived by a spirit being far superior in power and intellect. Men live a very short time, compared with God, yet the individual who does not respond, within his short lifetime to the influence of God’s Spirit - must be annihilated?
It is unjust.

*ANSWER: How many years of life should be granted for an individual who continues to act in selfish and rebellious ways? All life flows from God. Created beings draw life from God. **For the LORD to prolong the life of the selfish and rebellious (unless He were to isolate them completely) would be to prolong the pain of those they continue to harm.** How “just” would that be?*

ANSWER: A lifetime of 40, or 80, or 300 or 999 years, seems “short” compared with the life of God or the life of an angel. Can a human being “know” the difference between right and wrong within this span of life? Can he recognize the influence of a higher power - the call of God. Yes. He need not reach perfection, just be heading in the right direction.

I believe that all those who died in ignorance of God (who were unable to choose because of life circumstances or immaturity) will be resurrected at the 8th millennium. They will then have the opportunity to know, and to then choose, whether to serve the LORD, or refuse. Those of us redeemed during this age, will teach and govern those resurrected at the 8th millennium. We will become “priests of God and of Christ” (Rev 20:5-6). Priests were mediators. There is no reason for a future priesthood, if the number of the saved is complete at the Glorious Return.

I believe that IF further knowledge of any kind would reconcile an individual - one who has already died, the LORD will resurrect that person at the 8th millennium, and will give him further instruction, until every avenue is exhausted. Only then - if that individual continues in rebellion, will he be judged as hardened. The wicked of the 8th millennium will form an army to attack Jerusalem where Christ is reigning. Fire from Heaven will consume them.

See our studies: “[The 8th Day](#)” and “[Gog and Magog](#).”

***In the final judgment, the Father and the Son must demonstrate that everything divinely possible was done to reconcile each individual.** Only then will the redeemed be able to put the loss behind them, and go on into eternity, fully reconciled to God.*

ANSWER: The creation of Adam and Eve followed the rebellion in heaven. Every angel of heaven was forced to choose between God the Father and Lucifer. It seems only right that every human being ALSO should have to choose.

Adam and Eve had a very limited knowledge of the character of God. (The true character of Satan was not fully unmasked until He murdered Christ.) Eve was deceived by Satan. Adam could not bear to loose Eve. Because of these things, the pair (and their descendants) were granted time for learning and healing and reconciliation, rather than separated immediately from God forever.

13. **[Universalist Argument]** God created this problem. He created Satan, and then allowed Satan to deceive Eve. Satan dug the pit, and the LORD allowed it. Satan is the “violent bull.” The LORD did not keep him penned, so he could not kill anyone. **God is responsible for the problem of sin, therefore He *should* rescue everyone.**

ANSWER: In the Scriptures, **God always accepts responsibility for the outcome, even when Satan and evil men cause the damage.** There are dozens of examples.

Exodus 7:3 [God said to Moses] “I will harden Pharaoh's heart.”

1 Kings 22:19-23 God allowed Satan (“*a spirit*” v. 21) to lie through false prophets.

2 Thessalonians 2:11 “God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”

Compare the following two verses.

2 Samuel 24:1 “He [God] moved David to number Israel.”

1 Chronicles 21:1 “Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel.

God accepted responsibility for allowing Satan to tempt the king. To take a census of the fighting men of Israel, was forbidden by God through Moses.

Isaiah 13:5,6,11,17 God himself takes responsibility for the destruction of Babylon by the Medes.

Jeremiah 6:8,11-12; 7:14-16,20,34 God takes responsibility for the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of its people. He says “I make thee desolate” (Isaiah 10:5-6).

Isaiah 45:7 “I form light and create darkness: I make peace and create calamity:
I the Lord do all these things.”

There are 500 similar texts in which God takes responsibility for what happens to those people who forfeit His protection and become victims of Satan or of evil men under Satan's control. Ultimately God is responsible, because He gave free will to His created beings. He knew this would someday result in suffering.

The LORD has accepted the responsibility. *It is morally His responsibility to provide for the deliverance of those enslaved by the sin problem. He has “provided a way of escape.” Christ is that “way” of escape. The individual must accept the “way.” Universalists are demanding that God provide a different way, with a guaranteed outcome for ALL.*

***God has provided equal opportunity - NOT equal outcome.
That is left to personal choice.***

Has God paid a penalty? Yes. He has suffered the greatest penalty - one beyond our capacity to fully understand. *His Son, who was equal to Himself in power and presence and knowledge, incarnated to become a human being. Such is beyond our comprehension. HE then had to watch, as demons and evil men tortured His only Son - until He died. I would say **the LORD has paid the greatest price imaginable**, for creating angels and human beings - with FREE WILL.*

*And there is another aspect to all of this. **God feels our pain.** “In all their affliction He was afflicted (Isa. 63:9). He knew - before He created us, that He would feel our pain. He created us **knowing what we would cost Him.** He felt we would be worth it.*

Isaiah 53:11 “He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.”

THE ULTIMATE QUESTIONS:

Does God manipulate minds?

Do men (and angels) have FREE WILL?

My personal belief is that our God does NOT manipulate minds.

Some will choose to accept the gift of life provided. Most will not.

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
Prophecy Viewpoint*

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