

# Exegetical Notes for 1 Peter 4:1-6

## KEY

**ACC** = Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament XI (Gerald Bray, Ed.)

**ATR** = Word Pictures in the New Testament (A.T. Robertson).

**BAG** = Bauer Arndt and Gingrich: A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.

**BKBC** = Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: John, Hebrews - Revelation (Craig A. Evans, Gen. Ed.).

**B&W** = Syntax of New Testament Greek (James A. Brooks and Carlton Winbery).

**Barclay** = The Letters of James and Peter: Daily Study Bible Series (William Barclay).

**Bullinger** = Figures of Speech Used in the Bible (E.W. Bullinger).

**Calvin** = Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. XXII (John Calvin).

**DNTT** = The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Colin Brown, Gen. Ed.).

**Fickett** = Peter's Principles: A Bible Commentary for Laymen (Harold L. Fickett, Jr.).

**Grudem** = Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 1 Peter (Wayne Grudem).

**Grudem2** = Systematic Theology (Wayne Grudem).

**Guthrie** = New Testament Introduction (Donald Guthrie).

**Expositors** = The Expositor's Greek New Testament: Volume Five (W. Robertson Nicoll, Ed.).

**Keener** = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Craig S. Keener).

**Leighton** = 1 & 2 Peter: The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Robert Leighton).

**Lewis** = Integrative Theology (Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest).

**MacArthur** = MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter (John MacArthur).

**Maclaren** = Expositions of Holy Scripture: 1 Peter (Alexander Maclaren).

**Metzger** = A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (Bruce M. Metzger).

**Michaels** = 1 Peter Word Biblical Commentary (J. Ramsey Michaels).

**Morgan** = The Westminster Pulpit (Volume VIII) (G. Campbell Morgan).

**NLEKGNT** = New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament.

**Schreiner** = The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude (Thomas R. Schreiner).

**Shedd** = Dogmatic Theology (W.G.T. Shedd), 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

**Kittle** = Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (G. Kittle and G. Friedrich, Eds.).

**Turnbull** = Proclaiming the New Testament: Volume 5 (Ralph Turnbull, Ed.).

**Vincent** = Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament (Marvin R. Vincent).

**Wuest** = First Peter in the Greek New Testament (Kenneth S. Wuest).

### Basic Diagram of 4:1-6

1 Χριστοῦ οὖν

παθόντος

σαρκι

και ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε,

2

ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας

εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις

ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ

τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.

3

ἄρκετος γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος

τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν

κατειργάσθαι πεπορευμένους

ἐν ἀσελείαις,

ἐπιθυμίας,

οἰνοφλυγίας,

κώμοσι,

πότοις

καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις.

4

ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται

μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν

βλασφημοῦντες,

5

οἳ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον

τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι

κρίναι

ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς.

6

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ

καὶ

νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη,

ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκι

ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

## TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

### **GREEK TEXT:**

<sup>1</sup> Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας <sup>2</sup> εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον. <sup>3</sup> ἄρκετος γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοσι, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις. <sup>4</sup> ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν βλασφημοῦντες, <sup>5</sup> οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς. <sup>6</sup> εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη, ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

### **ENGLISH TRANSLATION:**

**1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 for as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God. 3 For the time already past is sufficient [for you] to have carried out the desires of the pagans, while having pursued licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, partying, drinking binges, and lawless idolatries. 4 In this they are ever surprised that you do not run with [them] into the same flood of debauchery, [and] they blaspheme [you]. 5 But they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 [The Gospel] for this purpose has been preached even to the dead: that although they are judged according to the flesh like men, they may live by the Spirit according to [the will of] God.**

**PASSAGE OUTLINE:** None

**INITIAL SERMON OUTLINE:** None

**PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about):** The suffering Christian.

**PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about):** is armed with the attitude of Christ knowing that he will be vindicated by the Spirit.

**PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text):** The believer is to arm himself with an attitude of suffering, knowing that he no longer lives as a pagan, but by God's will, with an eye toward life beyond the grave.

**PURPOSE OF THE SERMON (on the basis of the CPT what does God want us to learn and do?):**

To joyfully endure the pain of suffering even as Christ did so that we might live like Christ separate from the world.

**SERMON SUBJECT/THEME (what am I talking about):** The right kind of suffering

**SERMON COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what am I saying about what I am talking about):** is accompanied by a Christ-like attitude and a focused pursuit.

**INITIAL CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON:** The time for sinning is past, the time for suffering is now, so why not suffer well?

**MEMORABLE CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON:** The time for sinning is past, the time for suffering is now, so suffer well!

**SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE:** "Armed for Suffering"

**FINAL SERMON OUTLINE:**

I. What does it mean to be armed for the purpose of suffering?

- A. We Have Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ (v 1a)
- B. We Have Parted Ways With Our Past Life of Sin (v 1b)
- C. We Are Engaged in the Pursuit of God's Will, Not Our Own (v 2)
- D. We Know the Season for Sinning is Past (v 3)
- E. We Walk Out Of Step With the World (v 4a)
- F. We Endure the Scorn of Men (v 4b-5)
- G. We Live in the Hope of Vindication Beyond Death (v 6)

**Outline for two-part series on universalism from verse 6**

I. Common Threads Among False Teachers

- A. Strand # 1: False teachers mimic truth
- B. Strand #2: False Teachers claim that they have the truth that the church has missed for centuries
- C. Strand #3: False teachers often have their own corrected version of the Bible or they demand adherence to a particular translation
- D. Strand #4: False teachers are almost always corrupt in more than one area of their theology
- E. Strand #5: False teachers deny God's Nature and Sovereignty
- F. Strand #6: False teachers ultimately pervert the Gospel

I. A Reformational Response to Universalism

## HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Verse 1 picks up the thought from 3:18, the suffering of Christ in the flesh. As He had the attitude of the suffering servant, who would suffer apart from sin, so should we.

Everything from the previous passage (3:18-22) is focused on preparing Peter's readers, believers, us, to suffer well. Mainly, to suffer persecution from a hostile world. Suffering unjustly. Cf. 1:6-9; 2:19-23; 4:14-19; 5:6-10.

A key verb is found in verse 1: ὀπλίσασθε (ὀπλίζω - to equip, arm; Aorist Imperative Middle, 2P - Imperative of Command).

Resolving that we are willing to suffer indicates that we have ceased to let sin dominate our lives. We are resolved to suffer so that we can live to the will of God (v.2).

Peter emphasizes that Christians had their time of living like pagans and must not return to that (v.3). Their past is past(v.4)and they shouldn't be surprised that their former friends would mock them. But God will judge( v.5). In fact, physical death is not the last word for believers and those who have died in Christ will live on in or by the spirit/Spirit(v.6).

1 Peter 3:18	1 Peter 4:6
<b>For even Christ suffered once for all concerning sin, the just for the unjust, in order to reconcile us to God--He who was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit.</b>	<b>For this purpose, [the Gospel] has been preached even to the dead, that though they are judged according to the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to [the will of] God.</b>
Christ was crucified and died a real death; but this wasn't the last word as He was vindicated by being raised by the Spirit	Some believers had already died as all men do; but this isn't the last word as their embracing the Gospel ensures that they too will live by the spirit.

### Three Steps of Exegesis

- ❶ Do an initial translation of the entire passage.
- ❷ Do a detailed analysis of the grammar, working verse-by-verse to the end of the passage.
- ❸ Do a detailed exegesis of the passage by way of a "shot-gun" approach, using all the exegetical tools.
  - √ In no particular order:
    - Work from critical commentaries to practical.
    - Word studies and cross-references (analogy of the faith).
    - Applicational analysis - applicational issues arising from the text.
    - Theological analysis - theological issues arising from the text.
  - √ "Blast away" at the passage until I am content with my exegesis, main idea, and outline.
    - Smooth away all of the wrinkles.
    - The process is to yield an accurate "statue" as I chisel away the debris.

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### Parsing Verbs and Declining Nouns

- Verbs: (ἐπακολουθεω - to follow \* Verb: Aorist Subjunctive Active, 2P).  
(ὕπομεινω \* Verb: Future Indicative Active, 2P).
- Nouns: (ὕπογραμμος - model, pattern, example \* Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular).
- Participles: (ὕποτασσω \* Present Middle/Passive Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural).
- Adjectives: (ἐπιεικής - gentle, kind \* Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural).
- Pronouns: (ἐγώ - I \* First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Nominative Singular).  
(σύ - to or for you \* Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).  
(αὐτός \* Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular).  
(τούτο - this \* Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Nominative Singular).

## 4:1 EXEGESIS

### GREEK TEXT:

Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκι και ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἀμαρτίας

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Χριστοῦ οὖν (Χριστος \* Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular). Objective Genitive.  
παθόντος (πασχω \* Aorist Active Participle: Masculine Genitive Singular). Adverbial Causal Participle (hence, "since").  
σαρκι (σαρξ, σαρκικος \* Noun: Feminine Dative Singular). Dative of Sphere.  
και ὑμεῖς (συ - to or for you \* Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Nominative Plural).  
τὴν (ἡ \* Definite Article: Feminine Accusative Singular).  
αὐτὴν (αὐτος \* Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Feminine Accusative Singular).  
ἐννοιαν (ἐννοια, η - thought, knowledge, insight \* Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Adverbial Accusative of Manner (hence, "with").  
ὀπλίσασθε (ὀπλίζω - to equip, arm \* Verb: Aorist Imperative Middle, 2P). Imperative of Command.  
ὅτι ὁ (ὁ \* Definite Article: Masculine Nominative Singular).  
παθὼν (πασχω - to suffer \* Aorist Active Participle: Masculine Nominative Singular). Substantival Participle. Culminative Aorist.  
σαρκὶ (σαρξ, σαρκικος \* Noun: Feminine Dative Singular). Dative of Sphere.  
πέπαυται (παυω - to cease \* Verb: Perfect Indicative Middle, 3S). Consummative Perfect. Reflexive Middle.  
ἀμαρτίας (ἀμαρτία \* Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular). Genitive or Ablative of Separation.

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### ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

### CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

I. What does it mean to be armed for the purpose of suffering?

A. We Have Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ (v 1a)

B. We Have Parted Ways With Our Past Life of Sin (v 1b)

**Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh,** (Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκι)

Emphasized in 3:18. This word also draws a conclusion from the previous verses (3:18-22).



Therefore connects to the previous section. See my notes there ==>

**For Christ has died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God; having been put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.**

The emphasis is on the fact that Christ suffered as a man in the flesh. Cf. Docetism and Gnosticism.

Interpretive Issues and options:

Is this suffering short of death, or is this a euphemism for death itself?

"Suffered in the flesh" can be a euphemism for death. Euphemism, according to Bullinger: "euphemisms or euphemy involves the change of a harsher disagreeable expression for one that is more pleasant." Examples would include the N.T. sleep for death.

In Acts 9 "those who are far off" for the more offensive term "Gentiles." We do the same thing when we talk about someone passing away.

However, Peter's emphasis is more on the fact of Christ's real suffering as a man in the flesh and how that applies to those Christians to whom he writes. Peter's readers were suffering the sort of persecution that fell short, for the most part, of physical harm. Christ was armed with an attitude of suffering unto death. While that thought may be in the distance, that's not Peter's immediate concern. He's not so much concerned with the fact of suffering but for suffering well.

"In the flesh echoes and signifies the transition from living by the passions to living by God's will . . . the eternal aspect is contrasted with the conscience as in Hebrews [The Dictionary of the N.T. Abridged]

Note the NIV that translates both instances of *σαρξ* as "body."

We can always identify with someone who has experienced the same difficulty we have. Survivors of plane crashes have a special bond and they often gather together on anniversaries. If you've survived cancer or a heart attack, and you run into a perfect stranger whom you learn has experienced the same thing, you have an affinity for that person. If you are in the midst of some great time of trial, some challenge, it's nice to have someone come alongside you who has gone through the same thing and has come out the other side. Here's Jesus Christ, our example (cf. 2:21). I know that we say, "Gee, he was God. I can't ID with that!" But, he was also man and as a man knew what suffering as a man was like. He also had complete victory over suffering and focused on his Father's will. That wasn't always easy (note passages where Christ struggles).

Passibility / impassibility quotes from the church fathers?

**arm yourselves also with the same attitude,** (και ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε,)

ἐννοιαν (ἐννοια, η - thought, knowledge, insight \* Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Adverbial Accusative of Manner (hence, "with"). Some translations have "purpose" but we are not to emulate the same purpose for Christ's suffering - namely to atone for our sin - but adopt a similar

attitude in suffering (cf. Phil. 2:5). From the word "νοῦς" meaning "mind" (cf. "nouthetic" counseling). Not so much adopting a purpose as an attitude.

The same attitude as exemplified by JC in the preceding context. Another call to gird up one's mind as in 1:13. We need constant attitude checks, reboot our minds.

ὀπλίσασθε (ὀπλίζω - to equip, arm \* Verb: Aorist Imperative Middle, 2P). Imperative of Command.

Only used here in the N.T. Pauline idea, so Rom. 6:7; Col. 2:6-7; Eph. 6:7; Thessalonians.

"The word was used of a Greek soldier putting his armor on and taking up his weapons. The noun of the same word was used of a heavily armed soldier who carried a pike and a large shield. The word was used of heavily armed as against light armed troops. Peter could have used the latter word. The Holy Spirit selected the former. The Christian needs the heaviest armor he can get to withstand the attacks of the enemy of his soul." [Wuest].

"hapax." "It then means to prepare oneself to train to arm and figuratively to arm oneself with courage. The only N.T. use is figurative. Here the idea is that of arming oneself with a mind or thought in preparation for suffering." [The Dict of N.T. Abridged]

Soldiers are armed with the prospect of facing death. We are to have the attitude of a warrior.

"The martial language indicates that discipline and grit are needed to live the Christian life, particularly in view of the suffering believers encounter." [Schreiner]

Yet too many of us are whiners. We are too wimpy. God doesn't need wimps for the faith! A balance needs to be maintained between whining about the world because it hates us and being salt and light under the providential hand of God.

ἐννοια, ας, thought, knowledge, insight (so esp. in the philosophers: Pla., Phaedo 73c; Aristot., Eth. Nicom. 9, 11 p. 1171a, 31f; 10, 10 p. 1179b, 13f; Epict. 2, 11, 2; 3 al.; Plut., Mor. 900a; Diog. L. 3, 79; Herm. Wr. 1, 1; Philo, but also elsewhere. i.e., in contexts having nothing to do with philosophy: X., An. 3, 1, 13; Diod. S. 20, 34, 6; PReinach 7, 15[II bc]; Pr 1:4; 2:11 al.; Jos., Bell. 2, 517, Ant. 14, 481; Test. 12 Patr.) κ. ὑμεῖς τ. αὐτήν ἐννοιαν ὀπλι arm yourselves also w. the same insight 1 Pt 4:1; ἐννοεῖν ε Dg 8:9. Pl. (Jos., Ant. 6, 37) w. διαλογισμοι 1 Cl 21:3. W. ἐνθυμήσε (Sym., Job 21:27) Hb 4:12; 1 Cl 21:9. W. λογισμοι Pol 4:3. M-M. B. 1212.\*

ἐννοιαν (ἐννοια, η - thought, knowledge, insight \* Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Adverbial Accusative of Manner (hence, "with").

Used of a particular manner or way of thinking. "Way of thinking, disposition, manner of thought, attitude."

In a number of languages it may be necessary to render "way of thinking by a clause or example how people think. In the case of Pe it may be necessary to translate "you too must strengthen yourselves by thinking just like Christ thought." [Luow and Nida]

**for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,** (ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας)

This is the most difficult part of the verse. ὅτι - probably causal rather than intention.

σαρκὶ - as used in this passage, not "sinfulness" (as in Romans or Galatians) but simply humanness (cf. NIV's "body").

Options ==>

- 1) The one who has suffered in this context could be Christ himself.

The sense in which this could be true (of course, He never sinned in a personal sense) would be if sin is understood in the sense of Romans 6:8-10. The power of sin was broken by Christ in his death and resurrection and he no longer has any relationship to it. His cross-work is finished (cf. Hebrews).

However, according to Schreiner, the syntax implies that the one who has suffered is the same one who is to arm himself, namely believers.

- 2) The one who has suffered is the believer, understood in the sense of Romans 6:7 (he who has died is freed from sin).

But this view doesn't do justice to the context of real suffering.

- 3) These are dead believers (cf. MacArthur).

Peter doesn't address martyrdom and that wasn't the kind of suffering his readers were experiencing. It also doesn't make sense with the next verse. Besides, it goes w/o saying....

- 4) The one who has suffered is the believer and relates back to the imperative that he prepare himself for suffering.

An attitude to endure suffering for the sake of Christ demonstrates genuine saving faith. It shows that the believer has counted all things as loss for His sake and that he has broken from his past life of sin. This doesn't imply sinless perfection!

ΠΕΠΑΥΤΑΙ (ΠΑΥΩ - to cease \* Verb: Perfect Indicative Middle, 3S). Consummative Perfect. Reflexive Middle.

Resolving that we are willing to suffer indicates that we have ceased to let sin dominate our lives. We are resolved to suffer so that we can live to the will of God. We have already enough time to live like pagans.

The mortification of sin in my messages on Colossians.

"The words "suffered in the flesh" are in the same construction as the similar phrase "being put to death in the flesh." In the latter expression we found that Peter was speaking of the fact that our Lord was put to death with respect to the flesh, thus suffering with respect to the flesh. This suffering was the result of unjust treatment. The same holds true in where the Christian who has suffered in the flesh is the Christian who has suffered ill treatment from the persecuting world of sinners. The fact that he has been persecuted is an indication of another fact, namely that he has ceased from sin. The world directs its persecution against those who are living lives of obedience to God thus who have ceased from sin. The verb is passive, literally the Christian "hath got release from sin." God broke the power of sin in his life when He saved him. Thus our reaction to unjust suffering should be that of a saint, not a sinner since we have in salvation been released from sin's compelling power." [Wuest]

"Therefore, *whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin* means 'whoever has suffered for doing right, and has still gone on obeying God in spite of the suffering it involved, has made a clear break with sin.'" [Grudem, 167]

". . . the Apostle's thought seems to be that such suffering in daily life after Christ's pattern, and by His help, is at once a sign that the sufferer has shaken off the dominion of sin, and is a means of further emancipating him from it." [Maclaren, 125]

They give evidence that they are regenerate. Someone asked me the other day, "What would you do if something happened to your daughter, like she were to die of some disease?" I said, I would probably drive to the coast of CA and walk up and down the beaches for a year. He asked me, "What would it do to your relationship with God?" My reply was that I would hope it would be strengthened. After all, if something like that would destroy my relationship with Him, I guess it wasn't much of a relationship. It would have more to do with my own selfishness than a real relationship. After all, if it happens to someone else's kid and I don't complain, why should I do so if it is my own? What, is it okay for you to suffer and I'm fine with that, God, but not me? Look at Job (theme of the book - why do the righteous worship God?).

There's nothing that proves motive more than pain. You think someone is a great friend? Then, you do something to disappoint that person and they're through with you. Proves that they weren't such a great friend in the first place. You want to be married? You love that person and would never leave them? What happens after you've been married to that person for 8 years. You're used to them. They no longer are so exciting. Maybe she put on 50 pounds. Maybe he did. Maybe someone looks better. Maybe you're pained to be married. What's your real motive? See this with people who profess X (parable of the wheat and tares). Nothing proves motive more than pain. If I am willing to serve JC when it hurts me, I have demonstrated that I have made a break with sin. He really is my master. I am not my own. "Even though He slay me, I will trust in Him!"

Note greater issues related to harmartiology.

1Pet.4:1(singular in the best texts),lit has been made to cease from sin, i.e.,as a result of suffering in the flesh, the mortifying of our members, and of obedience to a Saviour who suffered in flesh. Such no longer lives in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; sometimes the word

is used as virtually equivalent to a condition of sin, e.g., John 1:29, the sin(not sins) of the world; 1 Cor.15:17; or a course of sin, characterized by continuous acts, e.g., 1Thess. 2:16; in 1 John 5:16(2nd part)the R.V. marg., is probably to be preferred, there is sin unto death, not a special act of sin, but the state or condition producing acts; inver.17, unrighteousness is sin is not a definition of sin (asin3:4), it gives a specification of the term in its generic sense; [Vine's]

An important aspect of this relates to the conscience. We are always exhorted to keep our conscience pure. What does that mean? One of the ways this comes out is in times of suffering. Note Job who knew he was suffering, but not as a result of his sin (I have not defrauded orphan or widow...). Note other verses in Peter on conscience (like 3:15)and the N.T.

ISA 1:16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil,

ROM 6:2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

ROM 6:7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

ROM 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

ROM 13:12-14 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to {its} lusts.

GAL 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the {life} which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

GAL 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

PHI 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

COL 3:3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

CO L 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

HEB4:10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

HEB 12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

Note the following verses:

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Matthew 10:38-39 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.

The cross was a symbol of suffering and death . . .

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the

dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you.

## 4:2 EXEGESIS

### GREEK TEXT:

εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.

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εἰς τὸ (τὸ \* **Definite Article: Neuter Nominative/Accusative Singular**).  
μηκέτι (μηκέτι - no longer \* **Adverb**).  
ἀνθρώπων (ανθρωπος \* **Noun: Masculine Genitive Plural**). Subjective Genitive.  
ἐπιθυμίαις (ἐπιθυμῖαις \* **Noun: Feminine Dative Plural**). Dative of Advantage.  
ἀλλὰ θελήματι (θελήμα \* **Noun: Neuter Dative Singular**). Dative of Advantage.  
θεοῦ (θεος \* **Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular**). Subjective Genitive.  
τὸν ἐπίλοιπον (ἐπίλοιπος - left, remaining \* **Adjective: Masculine Accusative Singular**).  
ἐν σαρκὶ (σαρξ, σαρκικός \* **Noun: Feminine Dative Singular**). Dative of Sphere.  
βιώσαι (βιω \* **Verb: Aorist Infinitive Active**). Substantial Infinitive.  
χρόνον (χρόνος \* **Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular**). Adverbial Accusative of Measure.

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### ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**for as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God.**

### CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

#### I. What does it mean to be armed for the purpose of suffering?

##### C. We Are Engaged in the Pursuit of God's Will, Not Our Own (v 2)

**for as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God.**

(εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον.)

μηκέτι (μηκέτι - no longer \* **Adverb**). Cf. similar use in Eph. 4:17. Here is the purpose. "Flesh," again = "body."

τὸν ἐπίλοιπον (ἐπίλοιπος - left, remaining \* **Adjective: Masculine Accusative Singular**). Time of each person's life. The extent that God grants; you're sojourn (1:17). Cf. Heb. 5:7.

ἐπιθυμίαις (ἐπιθυμῖαις \* **Noun: Feminine Dative Plural**). "Lusts" - same word used in 1:14 (see there). Peter uses the word of sinful desires that pull one away from the holiness of God.

The ancient philosopher, Pythagorus, wrote: "This is the sum of religion, to be like the one you worship." [cited in Leighton, 177] Note the word "Christian". Cf. Eph. 5:1ff.

"The Spirit of Christ dropped into the soul enables it to leap over a wall." [Leighton, 181] Cf. Psalm 18:29.

Why do unbelievers act like unbelievers? Because they're unbelievers! Certainly there's a point where we expect men created in the image and likeness of God to act better than mere animals. But we can't expect too much from common grace. We know that common grace is sometimes dim, such as during times when the influence of the true church is low. Apart from the salt and light of JC sinful men devolve into idolatrous, self-seeking pagans. That's what we're seeing today. Why Christianity gave rise to the whole concept of "civilization" (cf. act civilized). We're not into moralism. You can go to hell just as easily a religious, moral person, as you can a blaspheming atheist. We point people to Christ, not morality, so-called "values," or church attendance. How can you point someone to the church who's not part of the church?

Read a true story about a former seminary professor who taught at a major evangelical seminary here in the US. He was getting a hair-cut and the barber who was cutting his hair was new and didn't know who he was or what he did. And the barber was talking away and complaining about the state of things in the world and was peppering his speech with all sorts of obscenities. The professor sat there patiently. Finally, he couldn't take it any more and grabbed the barber's arm, pulled him around to the side of the chair. He grabbed his own earlobe and pulled on it and said to the barber: "Does this look like a sewer?" Needless to say, the rest of his hair was cut in silence.

We get frustrated with the world. We long for a culture that is steeped in Christian influence. Those days are gone. We live in a pagan nation. The internet has made this more than evident. You can find any sort of vice, viewpoint, or vulgarity on the internet. If you look at websites that allow users to post their own "comments" you will notice two things about those comments. 1) people don't know how to spell or use grammar; 2) profanity.

While we should have basic rules and expectations for men created in the image of God, we cannot be shocked that pagans act like pagans. Such were some of us. So we have to be faithful to the task of sharing the good news of Christ to all who will listen. Yes, most will stay pagans. They will laugh at us in surprise and shout at us with slander. But that's okay.

"To be laughed at is not great hardship to me. I can delight in scoffs and jeers. Caricatures, lampoons, and slanders are my glory. But that you should turn away from your mercy, this is my sorrow. Spit on me, but, oh, repent! Laugh at me, but, oh, believe in my Master! Make my body as the dirt of the streets, but damn not your own souls!" [C.H. Spurgeon]

Am I a soldier of the cross?  
A follower of the Lamb?  
And shall I fear to own His cause  
Or blush to speak His name?  
Sure I must fight if I would reign:--  
Increase my courage, Lord!  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy Word. [Isaac Watts]



"Affliction, when it is borne humbly, encourages the heart to become disentangled from sin and weans it away from the world." [Leighton, 177]

Note the purpose of suffering and trials in our lives, generally speaking. We have within us a tendency to become attached to the things of this world. Suffering loosens the tentacles of worldly-allures. Cf. James and Romans. Hebrews.

This is to be "proven" - "tested" "tempered" "vindicated" (as in James - note exegetical issues related to James' and justification from my earlier study on Romanism).

This is why we don't rest easy upon someone's confession of faith. Esp. true of children. There has to be times of difficulty that prove whether one's faith is genuine.

We are about God's will. We are his slaves. Slaves are concerned with one thing, and it isn't their own self-interests. Slaves are concerned about the will of their Master. It is impossible to please God apart from a knowledge of His will. What is His will? Cf. Rom. 12:1-2. Whose army are you in? You can't serve two masters. You must renounce your allegiance to the enemy. "My Master whom I love wills me to do this; therefore in His strength and for his glory I will. My life is His."

EPH 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh

and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

EPH 4:17 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

EPH 4:22-24 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in the righteousness and holiness of the truth.

EPH 5:7-8 7 Therefore, do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.

EPH 5:17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

TIT 3:3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1PE2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 1PE2:15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

This is a message you won't hear in most churches, especially the mega-churches. Most mega-churches are mega-churches because they don't preach this message. If they did, they wouldn't be mega-churches, they'd be solidly biblical churches!

Note my conversation with Rich Christiano on Thursday. Talking afterward about his struggle against watered-down religious movies that are called "Christian." When in fact they aren't. As we were talking in the parking-lot it dawned on me that there's an interesting parallel between what he does and what I do. His movie budget was about 1/30th of what many Hollywood movies are. His film will play in a fraction of the theaters and bring in a tiny fraction of t/money. Hollywood executives would look at what he does as "child's play." I thought, you know, that's what most churches, including ours, is like compared to the TV-stardom of the mega-church. It's easy to be awe-struck by a church of 2k or 5k or 10k that takes more in in one Sunday that we do in a month. Churches that have multi-million dollar facilities (this one cost 3500 to build in 1825), all the bells and whistles of multi-media, sports parks, eateries, and coffee shops. Kiosks where you can pay by credit card. And, listen, I know that many of these people, if not most, look down on the average church as being sub-standard. I've experienced that first hand! "Oh, your little church? Someday you'll grow up and have a real church." I've said it many times, pastors climb the ladder of larger church after larger church like executives in business. A church of 50 or 100 is a "starter church" for a young man fresh out of seminary, or an older man who isn't very gifted. But, if you're gifted, you will move up after a few years so that you are eventually in a church of at least 500 or 1000 by the time you're 40. It's easy to get a chip on your shoulder! Rich even asked me if I plan on staying here and my response was that I've always been a "stay-put" sort of guy. As long as God wants me to stay put I don't move. Besides, I've been in 1 Peter for 4 years and people want to hear more of the Bible so guys like me guarantee themselves long tenure!

We are pilgrims, but also ambassadors for Christ's sake. An ambassador represents his or her country. What do we represent? We don't live on this earth as care-free tourists. We are ambassador-soldiers who represent Christ and battle for him on pagan soil. It's His soil, he owns it. But it is often unfriendly territory, nonetheless.

"Not to realize that you are in a conflict means one thing only, and it is that you are so hopelessly defeated . . . you do not even know it--you are unconscious! It means that you are completely defeated by the devil. Anyone who is not aware of a fight and a conflict in a spiritual sense is in a drugged and hazardous condition." [D. Martin Lloyd Jones, cited in Swindoll, Hope Again, 168]

We are like the "pied -piper" but we follow Christ. We are sheep who hear his voice . . . We follow him wherever he goes. Like the story of the little dog.

Years ago, a shepherd came in from the country district to the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. He brought with him a little dog. The man died while he was in the city, and was buried in Grey Friar's Churchyard. the little dog made it way in through the iron gates and lay down upon the grave of its master. It didn't lie there merely for a day or a week or a month--it lay there twelve years. Every day, at one o'clock, they fire the gun in the castle in Edinburgh. Then everyone looks at his watch to check the time. The little dog would run from the churchyard as soon as it heard the shot to a local baker who gave it a pie and some water. Then the dog would go back to the grave again. There it lay until he died. "Be faithful unto death." [cited by Walter B. Knight, "Knight's Treasury of Illustrations," 121]

"Years ago, during the Boxer rebellion in China, the rebels captured a missionary training compound. They sealed off every gate that lead out of the compound except for one which they left open. They then took a cross and set it down in the dirt at the center of the gate and said to all of the missionaries and students who were there that if they were to walk out that gate and trample the cross under their feet, they could then go free. The first 7 students did

just that. The 8th student, however, was a young girl who came to the cross, knelt down, prayed for strength, stood up and walked around the cross--right into the firing squad.

92 of the remaining student--all that were left--did the same thing and walked to their deaths rather than to trample the cross of Christ beneath their feet.

"The only growing and thriving life comes through a living contemplation and application of Jesus Christ. You must be constantly studying him and conversing with him and drawing grace from him . . . Do you want great power against sin? Do you desire to increase in holiness? Let your eye be on Christ all the time. Set your heart on him. Let it dwell in him and be still with him. When any kind of sin threatens to prevail, go to Christ, and tell him about the attack and your inability to resist it. Ask him to defeat it. If your heart inclines toward sin, lay this before Christ. His beams of love will eat out the fire of those sinful desires. Do you want your pride, passions, love of the world, and self-love to be killed? Seek the virtue of Christ's death, and it will be so. Seek to imitate his spirit, the spirit of meekness and humility and divine love. Look on Christ, and he will draw your heart toward heaven and unite it to himself and make it like himself. Is this not the one thing you desire?" [Robert Leighton, 1 Peter, 180-81]

## 4:3 EXEGESIS

### GREEK TEXT:

ἄρκετος γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίας, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοσι, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις.

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ἄρκετος γὰρ (ἄρκετος - enough, sufficient \* Adjective: Masculine Nominative Singular).

ὁ (ὁ \* Definite Article: Nominative Masculine Singular). Subject Nominative.

παρεληλυθὼς (παρερχομαι - to pass, pass by \* Verb: Aorist Infinitive Active). Infinitive of Time.

χρόνος (χρόνος \* Noun: Masculine Nominative Singular). Subject Nominative.

τὸ βούλημα (βούλομαι \* Noun: Neuter Accusative Plural).

τῶν ἐθνῶν (ἐθνος \* Noun: Masculine Genitive Plural).

κατειργάσθαι (κατειργάζομαι - to do, accomplish, produce \* Verb: Perfect Infinitive Middle).

Substantival Infinitive Reflexive Middle. Consummative Perfect.

πεπορευμένους (πορευομαι - to move, go, to pursue \* Perfect Middle Participle: Masculine Accusative

Plural). Adverbial-Temporal Participle. Consummative Perfect. Reflexive Middle.

ἐν ἀσελγείαις (ἀσελγεια - licentiousness \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

ἐπιθυμίας (ἐπιθυμια \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

οἰνοφλυγίαις (οἰνοφλυγια - drunkenness \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

κώμοσι, (κώμος - revelry, feasting, partying \* Noun: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

πότοις (πότος - drinking binge, carousal, \* Noun: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

καὶ ἀθεμίτοις (ἀθεμιτος - lawless, unlawful \* Adjective: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

εἰδωλολατρίαις (εἰδωλολατρία - idolatry \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

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### ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**For the time already past is sufficient [for you] to have carried out the desires of the pagans, while having pursued licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, partying, drinking binges, and lawless idolatries.**

### CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

#### I. What does it mean to be armed for the purpose of suffering?

##### D. We Know the Season for Sinning is Past (v 3)

"This passage is a vivid description of the tragic and devastating life pattern of the unconverted, which ends inexorably in judgement." [MacArthur, 228]

**For the time already past is sufficient [for you] to have carried out the desires of the pagans, (ἄρκετος γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι)**

"Arm yourself with this thought: any amount of past sinning is enough. If you sinned a little before you were converted, it's enough. If you sinned a lot and for many years before your conversion, it's enough. You can never sin so little that you could say, "I need some more time to sin." How many people say, "I know I need to get right with God and make a break with sin. But just a little more time. A little more time with sin." Peter says, arm yourself with this thought: the time you've spent sinning is sufficient. Make the break; choose the will of God. And suffer for it if you must." [John Piper, Arming Yourself with the Purpose to Suffer (sermon on 1 Peter 4:1-6), October 2, 1994]

Again, there is where the lines are drawn between the old life and the new.

The word "will/desire" (here βούλομαι - in verse 2 θελήμα) shows a contrast between the will of God and the desires of pagans. There is a marked difference between believers and unbelievers, between the regenerate and unregenerate. One lives for the will of God, the other for the will of self. If you are living for the will of self, you are not a believer (James 4:4).

Sufficient time has past! No time to waste! Life is short, you've spent enough time in sin! For Peter's readers, this was a stark contrast. Clearly, Peter is writing mainly to Gentiles. These weren't "religious" in any Judeo-Christian sense. They were in the world of the pagans and lived like the world of pagans - until X found them and they were saved. For some of you, you really didn't know a pagan life. You were raised in a Christian home. But you likely have tasted of the world's fruit. Even now, we're tempted in that regard. Each minute of your life that remains is going to be spent in the pursuit of God or self. Don't reach the end of life and say, "Why did I waste so much time on nothing!"

Desire of the pagans is in contrast to the will of God in v. 2.

Every so often I hear of a professed believer who chucks the whole thing to go back into a life of sin. I knew of a woman who had a family and small children. She left her husband and her children, started hanging out with pagans, going to the bars and sleeping with whomever. That's not an option for a real believer.

". . . dinners at the homes of patrons and probably those of social clubs lasted far into the night, with heavy drinking and men often pursuing slave women or boys; religious festivals were similar occasions for immorality. Social clubs, household cults and virtually all aspects of Greco-Roman life were permeated with the veneration of false gods and spirits. Although this behavior was not immoral from the general Greco-Roman perspective, Jews and Christians condemned it as immoral. Jewish people rightly regarded this behavior as typical of Gentile men in their day especially, though not exclusively, on pagan festivals." [Keener,718-19]

Note the resurgence of homosexuality in pagan cultures as a historical fact.

1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts {which were yours} in your ignorance,

τῶν ἐθνῶν (ἔθνος \* Noun: Masculine Genitive Plural). Cf.2:12. Probably best "pagans."

Not all of the Gentiles would have approved of the vices listed here. Seneca, for example, devoted a lengthy tract to the evils of drunkenness (Epistle 83).

Cf. Romans 2:21ff.; 3:9ff.; Eph.2:1-3. 2 Peter 2:18. The old life is gone. 2 Cor.5:17. Gal.2:20.

What follows are six forms of sin. Three personal and three social. Again, these are sins that characterized Gentiles, not typical among the Jews (esp. overt idolatry).

**while having pursued** (πεπορευμένων)

πεπορευμένων (πορευομαι - to move, go, to pursue \* Perfect Middle Participle: Masculine Accusative Plural). Adverbial-Temporal Participle. Consummative Perfect. Reflexive Middle.

Note point – pursuing God's will. That marks a believer. Pursuing sin marks the life of an unbeliever.

Non posse non peccare vs posse non peccare.

Here's a list that sounds like the Animal House of a college campus (or most any workplace). Six representative terms follow.

**licentiousness**, (ἐν ἀσελγείαις,)

ἐν ἀσελγείαις (ἀσελγεια - licentiousness \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

No regard for moral restraint. Begs the question, where does moral restraint come from? I saw a car the other day that had a bumper sticker that said, "Man is an Ape." I would like to wait for that person to come out to their car and see if they would mind if I push him or her down to the ground and take their car. After all, we are just apes and that's the sort of thing that happens in the ape world.

Cf. Mark 7:22 2 Cor 12:21 Gal 5:19 Eph 4:19 Jude 1:4; 2 Peter 2:7. Excess.

One writer describes this word as those things which "excite disgust and shock public decency." [Wuest] Thing is, once this genie is out of the bottle, the standard for "public decency" spirals downward. An example is homosexuality (cf. Prager's theses). There are "gay pride" parades in places like San Francisco that should "excite disgust and shock public decency." For many, they don't. Some of this stuff is like a scene right out of Sodom and Gomorrah!

**lusts**, (ἐπιθυμίας,)

Cf. 1:14. ἐπιθυμίας (ἐπιθυμια \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object. Cf. 2:21, 4:2; Mark 4:19. Desires of various kinds. Sexual. Greed.

**drunkenness**, (οἰνοφλυγίαις,)

οἰνοφλυγίαις (οἰνοφλυγια - drunkenness \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

Word only used here. Note the compound of οἶνος and οφλυγια. (boil up, or overflow with abundance). Cf. Gal 5:21 and 1 Kings 21:2; 2 Chron 15:8; Isa 65:4; Jer 16:18; Rev 17:4,5; 2 Sam 13:28

Prov 23:29-35; Isa 5:11, 28:7; Eph 5:18.

**partying, (κώμοσι,)**

κώμοσι, (κώμος - revelry, feasting, partying \* Noun: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

Only here and Gal.5:21; Rom.13:13.

Probably from a "village festival" (from κωμη "a village").

"In the cities such entertainments grew into carouses, in which the party of revelers paraded the streets with torches, singing, dancing, and all kinds of frolics." [Vincent]

These festivals grew into religious observances (or grew out of them).

"Crowds of women, clothed with fawns' skins, and bearing the sanctified *Thyrsus* (a staff wreathed with vine-leaves) flocked to the solitudes of Parnassus, Kithaeron, or Taygetus during the consecrated triennial period, and abandoned themselves to demonstrations of frantic excitement, with dancing and clamorous invocation of the god. They were said to tear animals limb from limb, to devour the raw flesh, and to cut themselves without feeling the wound. The men yielded to a similar impulse by noisy revels in the streets, sounding the cymbals and tambourine, and carrying the image of the god in procession." [Grote, History of Greece, cited by Vincent, 660]

Might compare in that regard city-festivals such as Mardi-Gras (and Brazil's "Festival"). These also have their "religious" bent (Romanism).

Note also today's "clubbing" or "bar hopping."

**drinking binges, (πότοις)**

πότοις (πότος - drinking binge, carousal, \* Noun: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

PRO 23:29-35 29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine. 31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper. 33 Your eyes will see strange things, And your mind will utter perverse things. 34 And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. 35 "They struck me, {but} I did not become ill; They beat me, {but} I did not know {it.} When shall I awake? I will seek another drink."

ISA 5:11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink; Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!

ISA 28:7 And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink: The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, They are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink; They reel while having visions, They totter {when rendering} judgment.

**and lawless idolatries.** (καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις.)

καὶ ἀθεμίτοις (ἀθεμιτος - lawless, unlawful \* Adjective: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

Only other use is by Peter also, in Acts 10:28.

εἰδωλολατρίαις (εἰδωλολατρία - idolatry \* Noun: Feminine Dative Plural). Dative of Indirect Object.

Used here, and in 1 Cor.10:14; Col.3:5; Gal.5:20.

Parallels the idea of licentiousness. Not lawless idolatries in comparison with lawful ones. Emphasis is on the violation of God's law and sums up the idea that all sin is idolatry in one form or another.

Note Song of Solomon 14:12,22-31 and Romans 1:18-32 on idolatry.

Idolatry had a central place in vice lists because of the first command of the Decalogue (cf. Gal. 5:20; Col. 3:5; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).

Grudem writes: "Lawless here must rather mean 'against the civil laws' -- implying particularly evil kinds of idol worship which involved or incited people to kinds of immorality even forbidden by the laws of human governments." [169]

Rom 1:24-32 24 Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; {they are} gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Gal 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, GAL5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

We have been living in the Northeast now for nearly six years. About 4 years ago Lois and I were driving down the road watching the rusty car in front of us drag along its even rustier muffler. I remarked that it "could go at any time." About ½ mile later it went. The car left its rusty, useless member behind, never to see it again. It was one of those things I've never seen before. I've never seen .....

Picture of our lives as believers. These things are those that we are to drop, to leave behind like a rusty muffler.



"Although you are done with sin, yet there is still fighting, and sin will be molesting you. Although sin is mortally wounded, it still struggles for life and seeks to wound its enemy. It will assault the graces that are in you. Do not think, if it is hit once, it will no longer stir. So long as you live in the body, traces of your natural corruption remain. So you must be armed against it. Sin will not give you any rest as long as there is one spark, of life left in it. This will continue as long as you have life here. This old man is stout and will fight to the death.

God's children often find that this is true, to their grief. The corruptions they thought had been killed and did not stir, and therefore they no longer thought about, revive so much that they attack them and possibly defeat them once again. Therefore, it is necessary to be in a constant state of aler and not to remove any armor until the day you die, until you put off the body and are altogether free of it. You may take the Lord's promise for victory to apply to the end, and it will not fail. But do not promise yourself an easy way, for that will not happen. If you are sometimes under great attack, do not think all is lost. Those who have been wounded in the fight have often won the day. Do not think that just because you will have the victory, there will be no fight." [Leighton, 180]

Christians are different. "Those who walk in these ways of impiety but still want to be called Christians shame the Christians. Thy are enemies of Jesus Christ. They appear to have taken on his name for no other purpose but to shame it and disgrace it. But Christ will vindicate himself and will blot out these impudent people who dare show themselves in God's church as part of it. In reality they are nothing other than spots and blots. They dare to pretend to worship God as his people, and yet remain unclean, profane people. How can you say, "There goes the drunk Christian," or "There goes the earthly-minded Christian?"

Maybe we could add, "There goes the fornicating Christian." Or there goes the homosexual Christian or // adulterous // cleavage showing // string-bikini clad // foul-mouthed.

Cf. 1 Cor. 6:1 ff. 1 Thess. 1:9.

Note unbelievers who have the attitude that they may become a Christian later on, after they have had their fun. They love their sin too much to love JC. I have yet to meet a genuine believer in JC who can say, "You know, I wish I had put off my repentance so that I could have sinned just a little but more." I do know of many that wished they hadn't wasted so much time living for themselves. If you're saved at the age of 50 or 60 I'm sure, while you are thankful for God's mercy to have come upon you before you died, you would have liked to have come to faith when you were 20 or 30 so that you had more time to learn, study, grow, and serve. I know people like that. Humanly speaking, you want to say to them, "You have so much potential to serve JC. I hate to see the years click by while you serve yourself." But again, we know that while we encourage men to believe and God commands them to repent, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to draw them according to His will, not ours. The Spirit is like the wind, Jesus said, He goes where and when He wants. He saves whom He wants when He wants. Thus salvation isn't a result of bloodline, my own will, or the will of others, but solely the will of God (John 1:13).

This admonition can also motivate us toward future obedience. We have wasted enough time with sinning so let's focus on that which is eternal.

Why do unbelievers act like unbelievers? Because they're unbelievers! Certainly there's a point where we expect men created in the image and likeness of God to act better than mere animals. But we can't expect too much from common grace. We know that common grace is sometimes dim, such as during times when the influence of the true church is low. Apart from the salt and light of JC sinful men devolve into idolatrous, self-seeking pagans. That's what we're seeing today. Why Christianity gave rise to the whole concept of "civilization" (cf. act civilized). We're not into moralism. You can go to hell just as easily a religious, moral person, as you can a blaspheming atheist. We point people to Christ, not morality, so-called "values," or church attendance. How can you point someone to the church who's not part of the church?

## 4:4 EXEGESIS

### GREEK TEXT:

ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν βλασφημοῦντες,

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ἐν ᾧ (ὅς - this, that \* Relative Pronoun: Neuter Dative Singular).

ξενίζονται (ξενίζω - to surprise, astonish, entertain, receive a guest \* Verb: Present Indicative Passive, 3P). Perhaps a Gnostic Present.

μὴ συντρεχόντων (συντρεχω - to run together \* Present Active Participle: Masculine Genitive Plural). Perhaps a Gnostic Present.

ὑμῶν (συ - to or for you \* Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Genitive Plural).

εἰς τὴν (ὁ \* Definite Article: Accusative Feminine Singular).

αὐτὴν (αὐτός \* Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Accusative Feminine Singular).

τῆς ἀσωτίας (ἀσωτία - dissipation, debauchery, profligacy \* Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular). Genitive of Description.

ἀνάχυσιν (ἀναχυσίς - a pouring out, a flood \* Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Accusative of Direct Object?

βλασφημοῦντες (βλασφημεῖω \* Present Active Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural). Substantival Participle. Descriptive Present.

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### ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**In this they are ever surprised that you do not run with [them] into the same flood of debauchery, [and] they blaspheme [you].**

### CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

I. What does it mean to be armed for the purpose of suffering?

E. We Walk Out Of Step With the World (v 4a)

F. We Endure the Scorn of Men (v 4b-5)

Note here a two-fold reaction of the world: 1) Surprise; 2) Slander.

**In this they are ever surprised that you do not run with [them] into the same flood of debauchery,** (ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν)

"The Use and Significance of en ōi in 4:4 - It is very plain that the immediately preceding noun (athemitois eidōlatriais) cannot be the antecedent of en ōi in 4:4, for it is plural whereas the pronoun (ōi) is singular. In contrast to 2:12 and 3:16, en ōi of 4:4 is a relative connection in that the statement that follows is occasioned by that which has preceded. Thus en ōi does indeed

function as a conjunction for the two thoughts. The question is: What kind of a conjunction? Of the alternatives suggested by Reicke earlier, only the causal conjunction will fit the context which plainly demands that *en oī* here be rendered "therefore" or some similar translation. The context indicates that the readers had participated for some time in the sins previously mentioned but recently had become converted and had forsaken these sins. Because of this (*en oī*) their former fellows are astounded and think it strange that they no longer engage in such practices." [Grace Journal, J 8:2 (Spr 67) p. 35]

ξεύζονται (ξεύζω - to surprise, astonish, entertain, receive a guest \* Verb: Present Indicative Passive, 3P). Perhaps a Gnostic Present. Shocked. But not shocked in a pleasant way. This is surprised with accompanying anger and scorn. Evident from the response of slander.

μη συντρέχόντων (συντρέχω - to run together \* Present Active Participle: Masculine Genitive Plural). Perhaps a Gnostic Present. The idea of running in a pack. This is to go with the crowd. Cf. Romans 1:26-32.

της άσωτίας (άσωτία - dissipation, debauchery, profligacy \* Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular). Genitive of Description.

άσωτία = "unsavingness." "that state in which a person's mind is so corrupt that he thinks about nothing but evil and how he might indulge his sinful passions." [MacArthur]

In Luke 15:13 the related adverb άσωτως is used. This is where the prodigal is said to be living wastefully (ζωνάσωτως).

Note Eph.5:18 and Titus 1:6 where the word is used and translated "dissipation."

ανάχυσιν (άναχυσις - a pouring out, a flood \* Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular).

I don't like floods. They scare me. I almost drowned in the Salt River when I was 12. I have experienced a real flood while camping a few years back. But as dangerous is a flood of water, an even greater danger is a flood of sin.

In using this word, perhaps Peter is drawing back to 3:20.

This verse is a reminder that we are exiles (see 2:11-12).

"I beheld, then, that they all went on till they came to the foot of the Hill Difficulty; at the bottom of which was a spring. There were also in the same place two other ways besides that which came straight from the gate; one turned to the left hand, and the other to the right, at the bottom of the hill; but the narrow way lay right up the hill, and the name of the going up the side of the hill is called Difficulty. Christian now went to the spring, and drank thereof, to refresh himself (Isa. 49:10), and then began to go up the hill, saying-"The hill, though high, I covet to ascend, The difficulty will not me offend; For I perceive the way to life lies here. Come, pluck up heart, let's neither faint nor fear; Better, though difficult, the right way to go, Than wrong, though easy, where the end is Woe." [Pilgrim's Progress]

We are weird to the world. While our beliefs and behaviors are not illogical, they are not popular and are in some ways outside the box. We follow and love a man who we believe is God, Jesus Christ. We've never seen him, yet we love him (1:8). Cf. those who mocked Paul in Acts (doctrine of the resurrection).

**[and] they blaspheme [you].** (βλασφημοῦντες,)

Back to the slander of 2:12 and 3:16.

Note the noun (βλασφημία).

When the word is directed toward God = blasphemy (cf. Matt.26:65).

Word refers to abusive speech in general; slanderous speech. Gossip; insults; derogatory comments and remarks made toward another person. Cf. "calumnies."

Speech that makes unjust, untrue, unfair accusations against another person. In this case, it's not necessarily untrue (they are surprised at the change of lifestyle).

Sticks and stones.... We know that's not true. Names do hurt!

"This verse is important for understanding the nature of the persecution in 1 Peter. There is little evidence of state-sponsored persecution that robbed early believers of their lives. Instead, unbelievers were at first puzzled and then outraged by the failure of believers to participate in activities that were a normal part of Greco-Roman culture. We see such a reaction in Tacitus when he says Christians have a 'hatred of the human race' (Ann. 15.44). Pagans would feel this way because idolatry was woven into almost every dimension of their lives, from life in the home to public festivals to religious observances and even social occasions. [The] public festivals, in which the gods were venerated, were considered a civic duty in the Greco-Roman world. In particular veneration of the emperor was simply a mark of good citizenship, and the deifying of the emperor was especially pronounced in Asia Minor. Those who failed to participate would be social outcasts . . . We can imagine that those who did not fit in with the mores of society would be discriminated against in daily life and that they would be the object of abuse. . . . [These] readers were being mistreated by being socially ostracized. We should not overlook that criticism and social ostracism often lead to more severe action, that sharp words can easily turn into sharp swords. If Revelation was written around A.D. 95, it is evident that in Asian Minor at least some believers were losing their lives for their devotion to Christ. When 1 Peter was written, however, the penalties were not yet that severe, though Peter wrote to prepare his readers for whatever might come." [Schreiner, 204]

Note how the Lord addressed Paul in Acts 9 - "It is me you are persecuting." Shows that when men ridicule us, they are persecuting our Living Head, Jesus Christ. He will call them to an account, as Peter shows in the next verse. Note Luke 10:16; John 12:48; 15:18-25; Matt. 25:41-46.

"The believer tells them about the danger, but they either do not hear or they do not understand this language or they refuse to believe him. They are content with the ease and delight of their way, and they are not at all suspicious about its end. They think that the believer is the fool, for

he will not share with them and take the way the multitudes go. These unredeemed prefer the narrow way, with its horses, coaches, and all their pomp, to the craggy steep hill that a few poor creatures like Pilgrim take. They do not believe that at the top of the hill is that glorious city, the new Jerusalem, of which he is a citizen. They do not realize that the believer knows the end of both routes . . . . The strangeness of the world's way to Christians, and of their way to the world, though it somewhat unnatural, affects both groups differently. The Christian looks on deluded sinners with pity, while they look on him with hatred." [Leighton]

Hebrews 11:26 and Moses' reward.

## 4:5 EXEGESIS

### GREEK TEXT:

οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας και νεκρούς.

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οἱ (ὅς \* Relative Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Plural).

ἀποδώσουσιν (ἀποδιδωμι - to render, give back, return \* Verb: Future Indicative Active, 3P).  
Predictive Future.

λόγον (λογος - \* Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular). Accusative of Direct Object.

τῷ (ὁ \* Definite Article: Nominative Dative Singular). Dative of Indirect Object.

ἐτοίμως (ἐτοίμως - to be ready \* Adverb).

ἔχοντι (ἔχω \* Present Active Participle: Masculine Dative Singular). Gnomic Present (timeless use).  
κρῖναι (κρίνω - to judge \* Verb: Aorist Infinitive Active). Infinitive as a Modifier (here modifying ἐτοίμως).

ζῶντας (ἔχω \* Present Active Participle: Masculine Accusative Plural). Descriptive Present.  
Accusative of Direct Object.

και νεκρούς. (νεκρος \* Adjective: Masculine Accusative Plural). Accusative of Direct Object

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### ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**But they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

### CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

#### I. What does it mean to be armed for the purpose of suffering?

##### F. We Endure the Scorn of Men (v 4b-5)

**But they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

(οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας και νεκρούς.)

The tables will be turned. Unless they repent (cf. 2:12), they will give an account for their "idle words" (cf. Matt. 12:36). They will stand mute before the One with Whom they have to do.

Living and dead = everyone. Cf. phrase "heavens and the earth" meaning everywhere.

Rom. 12:19; Rev. 20:11-15.

Peter turns his readers eyes back to the coming judgement. This is eschatological. We do such a disservice to the Bible and theology when we think of eschatology as only referring to the events surrounding the second coming of Christ, or worse! Eschatology started with the cross. We live in that tension of the already and not yet.

"And lest we think that death might rescue a person from judgment, Peter says: He is ready to judge the living and the dead. Death is no escape for the sinner. Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed to men to die once and after that the judgment." The evil deed may be long forgotten by men. The repentance which was never carried through may be forgotten by men. Death may have come after a long and comfortable life of sin. But then comes judgment before the all-remembering God." [John Piper, Arming Yourself with the Purpose to Suffer (sermon on 1 Peter 4:1-6), October 2, 1994]

So when you suffer wrongly, and you feel that someone "gets away with murder," leave it in the hands of God. He will judge justly the living and the dead. Arm yourselves with this assurance: it is better to suffer for doing right and to leave judgment to God.

The phrase "give an account" (from ἀποδιδωμι - to render, give back, return and λογος) is reflective of courtroom language (cf. Matt. 12:36; Luke 16:2; Acts 19:40; Heb. 13:17; Cf. Rom. 2:6; 2 Tim. 4:8, 14; Rev. 22:12). This is the final judgement, as evident from the phrase "the living and the dead." Cf. 1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:52. In the creed, we talk about God judging the "quick and the dead."

JAM 5:9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

ECC 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil

EZE 18:30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord God. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.

MAT 12:36 "And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment.

MAT 25:31-37 31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me {something} to eat ; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in, naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. '37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?

16:2 "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

JOH 5:22 "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 5:23 in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him

John 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice,

5:29 and shall come forth; those who did the good {deeds} to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil {deeds} to a resurrection of judgment.

ACT 10:42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.



ACT 17:31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."  
ROM 14:12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Judgement is coming. Cf. Matt. 18:23-34; Rom. 3:19; Matt. 25:31-33, 41-46.

2 Thess. 1:6-9. God has given all judgment to the Son (cf. 1:17; John 5:22-27; Rev. 20:11-15).

On Judgement:

Shedd notes that there is a public and a private judgement. The private judgement will occur for each individual at death (Eccl. 12:7). Note the parable of Dives where the righteous and unrighteous are in conscious torment or bliss following death.

Christ taught that to die in sin was to die lost (John 8:21-24).

"Every penitent pagan is saved; every impenitent nominal Christian is lost." [Shedd, 661]

Public judgment (Matt. 25:32-41; Romans 14:10; Rev. 21:12).

## 4:6 EXEGESIS

### GREEK TEXT:

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη, ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

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εἰς τοῦτο (τοῦτο - this \* Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Accusative Singular). Accusative of Purpose with εἰς.

γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς (νεκρός \* Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural). Dative of Direct Object.

εὐηγγελίσθη, (εὐαγγελίζω \* Verb: Aorist Indicative Passive, 3S). Culminative Aorist.

ἵνα κριθῶσι (κρινω \* Verb: Aorist Subjunctive Passive, 3S). Subjunctive in a Dependent, Subordinate Clause - Purpose Clause.

μὲν (Here in verse 6 μὲν is translated "though;" yet I cannot find that definition listed in BAG or Strong. Interestingly, however, Bullinger states the following on the bottom (footnote) of page 60: "For the importance of this word μὲν (*men*), *although*, compare 1 Pet. iv. 6, where both the A.V. and R.V. ignore it, though it is there in the Greek, thus translating the words:--'For this cause was the gospel preached to them that are dead also, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.' Surely, it cannot be that the gospel is preached in order that men might be judged! And it is unaccountable why the A.V. and R.V. should both altogether ignore the important word μὲν (*men*), *although*, and leave it untranslated!"

κατὰ ἀνθρώπους (ἀνθρώπος \* Noun: Masculine Accusative Plural). Adverbial Accusative of Reference.

σαρκὶ (σαρξ \* Noun: Feminine Dative Singular). Dative of Reference.

ζῶσι (ζαω \* Verb: Present Subjunctive Active, 3S). Subjunctive in a Dependent, Subordinate Clause - Purpose Clause.

δὲ κατὰ θεὸν (θεός \* Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular). Adverbial Accusative of Reference or Respect.

πνεύματι. (πνεύμα \* Noun: Neuter Dative Singular). Dative/Instrumental of Personal Agency.

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### ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

**For this purpose, [the Gospel] has been preached even to the dead, that though they are judged according to the flesh like men, they may live by the Spirit according to [the will of] God.**

### CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

I. What does it mean to be armed for the purpose of suffering?

G. We Live in the Hope of Vindication Beyond Death (v 6)

**For this purpose,** (εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ)

This verse is a footnote to verse 5. Michaels argues that this verse could be excluded and the main thought of the passage remains. Yet Peter is clarifying an issue in light of his persecuted audience. The main idea is that God will vindicate His elect, true Christians, and will hold those who persecute them accountable on the day of judgement. This verse contrasts the thought of verse 5 which points to future judgement. The question may be asked, "If the judgement is future, what about those who have already died? What about those who died in the faith?" What will their lot be?

Note also how verse 7 ties in.

The εἰς τοῦτο "... has as its antecedent the ἵνα-clause that shortly follows. The reason the Christian gospel was preached even to those now dead was the same reason it is preached to those still alive, indeed the only reason it is ever preached--in order that people might be saved (cf. 1:12,25)." [Michaels, 238] So this clause is looking forward, not backward.

The purpose of preaching the gospel is that men be saved by believing in it. That's the entire focus here.

**[the Gospel] has been preached even to the dead,** (καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη,)

Three options:

1. To those who were once alive and heard the Gospel, but are now dead.
2. To those who are dead and heard the Gospel while they were dead.
3. To those who are spiritually dead (so Augustine and Luther) as in Eph.2:1ff.

"In 1 Pet. 4:6 the thought of preaching the good news to the dead arises from a consideration of the painfulness as well as the glory of being dead to sin. This, says Peter, may well involve suffering for Christ's sake, as Christ suffered for ours(4:1f.). It was this gospel that judged the dead, and gave them the opportunity of sharing God's eternal life(v.6). This may well refer to Christians who have heard the gospel while alive, and died before the Lord's return (so Selwyn, Stibbs and Dalton). Others interpret the dead as meaning those who are spiritually dead; and a third view connects this verse with 3:19, and sees in it a further reference to the spirits in prison. In this case the thought of judgment (=death, here) is subordinate to that of life(the fullness of God's life, denoted by, as opposed to the transitoriness of man's life, implied in 4:2 by the verb *bios* similarly translated)." [New Bible Dictionary, digital version]

Note how cults and false-teachers specialize in taking a vague passage and forming doctrines out of it. That's what happens here (also 3:20). Note Peter's words about how false teachers "twist" Scripture (2 Peter).

"Surely to say that 'the gospel was preached also (or, even) to them that are dead' is not to say that it was preached to them when [they were] dead." [MacLaren, 128]

Note that the NIV adds the word "now" as a clarification.

Note that it doesn't say "who" preached. Simply that the gospel was preached.

What does Peter mean by the word "dead?" Some argue that he means "spiritually dead". But Peter nowhere uses the term "dead" to refer to spiritual death. The context of the previous verse refers to those who are physically dead., No evidence of a sudden shift of meaning.

Others say that the verse speaks of the preaching of the gospel to those who have died physically. This interpretation is often connected with 3:19. But there is no connection to 3:19 as that passage has nothing to do with people who had died (see notes there).

"The interest in a possible correspondence between 3:19 and 4:6 appears motivated more by dogmatic than by exegetical concerns; namely, a desire to find here a biblical expression of the universality of salvation." [Elliot, 1 Peter, 731, cited by Schreiner, 207]

Note, however, the passive is used. ἐὴγγελίσθη, (εὐαγγελίζω \* Verb: Aorist Indicative Passive, 3S). Culminative Aorist. This is not preaching done by Christ, but the preaching of Christ. This is preaching by men (cf. Rom. 10). Note that this is a past-tense. It refers to something that happened in the past, not in the present or in the future.

""The New Testament nowhere else envisions the possibility of repentance and salvation after death, quite the contrary (cf. Luke 16:26; Heb. 89:27). Furthermore, if v. 6 refers to all the dead, then it follows from the rest of the verse that all of the dead will be saved, for Peter said the gospel was preached to the dead so that they should 'live according to God in regard to the spirit.' Nothing is in this verse about any being condemned, but the notion that all will respond positively to the gospel is ruled out by the rest of the New Testament, where the final judgement of the wicked is taught consistently (cf. Matt 25:31-46). Fourth, there is an insuperable problem contextually with this interpretation. In the entire letter Peter exhorted the readers to endure persecution, knowing that they have the future reward of eternal life. Even in this paragraph he presented that very argument, urging them to persevere because 'God will judge those who are sinners (v. 5). It would make no sense at all if he were to shift gears suddenly and promise a second chance to those who have rejected the gospel during this life. If Peter were promising a second chance, the Petrine readers could not be faulted for concluding that they could deny the faith now and then embrace it after death. Apostasy, in any case, would not be the last word, for they would have another opportunity after death to believe the gospel. This interpretation should be rejected, then, because it veers away from the purpose of the entire letter and even contradicts the teaching of 4:1-6." [Schreiner, 207-08]

"Probably one of the ways that the adversaries were maligning the Christians was by saying: "Ha! You say that you have such good news. You say that you escape judgment. You say your God is great and saves you and gives you joy. Well all we've got to say is: you are missing a lot of parties and you die just like everybody else. So if you die and go to the worms, and we die and go to the worms, we say, Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die!" Peter's armor against this slander and his fifth word to help us embrace suffering like Jesus is simply: The gospel was not preached to your dead Christian friends in vain. The reason the gospel was preached to those who have died is so that even though it looks like they have been judged like everybody else, they haven't. They are alive in the spirit. They are with the Lord. And the sufferings that they experienced here are not worthy to be compared to the glory that has been revealed to them (Romans 8:17f.)." [John Piper, Arming Yourself with the Purpose to Suffer (sermon on 1 Peter 4:1-6), October 2, 1994]

Note 2 Peter 3:7 - "the judgement of ungodly men." Other "judgement passages" in Peter's corpus, including references in Acts.

Schreiner concludes that the best interpretation is the one reflected by the NIV. Peter is referring to those believers who had died physically. Death was much more common at varying ages and stages of life than today. Today, we feel like if someone doesn't live to at least 80 they got cheated. No one thought that way until rather recently. There were no guarantees (not that there are today). Death was a common foe that afflicted everyone. Women died in childbirth, infants died, children died, young men and women died. Sickness and disease, not to mention infections from the most common sources, killed indiscriminately. These Christians saw their loved ones die - as Christians! No doubt, unbelievers looked at Christians and said, "Look - they die just like us! They even die young and from accidents just like us. There's no difference and no advantage to being a Christian. Better to party and enjoy life now to the fullest." But they fail to grasp the fact that death is not the last word. It's not like Jack K. who answered the question, "What happens after you die?" with the words, "You rot."

"to them that are dead;" - "Not in a figurative sense, dead in trespasses and sins; though this is the case of all mankind . . . but the word "dead" is used in the same sense as in the preceding verse, where it manifestly signifies such who had been alive, but were now dead in a natural sense, whom Christ would judge as well as those that will be found alive when he comes; wherefore the Gospel has been preached also to them that are already dead, as well as to those who are now alive. And by these are meant, not the dead, whose souls are in hell, for to them, there, the Gospel never was, nor never will be preached, nor they saved, as Origen, and his followers, have vainly thought: nor the deceased patriarchs, before the coming of Christ, whose souls, by the Papists, are said to be in "Limbus", whither Christ, they say, went upon his death, and preached to them, and delivered them; but these never were in any such place, but in peace and rest; nor did Christ, in his human soul, descend thither, but went to paradise: nor the dead in general, before the apostle's writing of this epistle; for though the Gospel had been preached from the beginning, from the fall of Adam, to certain persons, and at certain periods of time, yet not to all the individuals of mankind who were then dead, especially in the Gentile world; nor the Old Testament saints in general, who were now dead, though they had the Gospel preached to them in types and figures, in promises and prophecies; nor the men in the times of Noah, to whom the Gospel was preached by him, and who, some of them, as supposed, though they were judged and punished in their bodies in the view of men, being drowned in the waters of the flood, yet repenting and believing, upon Noah's preaching to them, they live in their spirits in eternal life, according to the free mercy and grace of God; but though the Gospel was preached to them, yet they remained disobedient to it, even all of them, but Noah's family, for anything that appears; and are styled the world of the ungodly, and are now spirits in the prison of hell, and therefore cannot be said to live according to God in the Spirit: but such are intended, to whom the Gospel had been preached, and to whom it had been effectual unto salvation; who had received it in the love of it, had sincerely professed it, and had suffered for it even death itself; such are designed who had suffered in the flesh, or were dead in their bodies, (1 Peter 4:1) who either were dead in the Lord, or especially had suffered death for his sake, as Stephen and others: and this, with what follows, is mentioned with a general view to encourage the saints to patient suffering for Christ; to fortify them against the ill opinion and judgment the world have formed of them; and to assure them, that Christ will judge his people, both quick and dead, and avenge their cause, since the Gospel has been preached to one as well as to another, and attended with the same power . . ." [John Gill]

There is a parallel to Christ in 3:18.

**that though they are judged according to the flesh as men,** (ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκί)

Note Peter's death (cf. John 21:18-19). "Judged according to the flesh as men" simply means that they die as do all men. Cf. 1 Cor. 15. No one gets out alive (unless you are one of the few in history who will be alive when Christ returns). Saving faith in X doesn't mean we escape physical death. It means we escape eternal death!

This is the key. Just as Peter drew from the book of Enoch in 3:18, he draws from another non-canonical source, the Wisdom of Solomon, here.

"But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of Himself; like the gold in the furnace He tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering He accepted them." [3:1-3]

This parallel strongly argues for the above interpretation. We know that Peter drew from outside sources. Again, that's not problematic for the doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

Consolation and hope. Consolation for those who have lost loved ones in Christ. Hope for those yet alive. "Other churches also wrestled with the problem of sisters and brothers who died before Christ's return (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Likely the same thought as in 1Cor.15:29. Cf. Matt.24:9.

This is an historical event. Past-tense. Peter isn't saying that this is something that's happening all the time (contra the "spiritually dead" view). He isn't saying that this is something that will always happen, or will happen in the future (universalists' view). This was done in the past.

εὐηγγελίσθη, (εὐαγγελίζω \* Verb: Aorist Indicative Passive, 3S). Culminative Aorist.

"It is then a remarkable consolation to the godly, that death itself brings no loss to their salvation. Though Christ, then, may not appear a deliverer in this life, yet his redemption is not void, or without effect; for his power extends to the dead." [Calvin]

**they may live by the Spirit according to [the will of] God.** (ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.)

ζῶσι (ζῶω \* Verb: Present Subjunctive Active, 3S). Subjunctive in a Dependent, Subordinate Clause - Purpose Clause.

Note the issue of "spirit" vs. "Spirit" that was addressed in 3:18. Could be translated, "in the spiritual realm" emphasizing that they indeed continue to live.

1 Peter 3:18	1 Peter 4:6
<b>For even Christ suffered once for all concerning sin, the just for the unjust, in order to reconcile us to God--He who was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit.</b>	<b>For this purpose, [the Gospel] has been preached even to the dead, that though they are judged according to the flesh like men, they may live by the Spirit according to [the will of] God.</b>
Christ was crucified and died a real death; but this wasn't the last word as He was vindicated by being raised by the Spirit	Some believers had already died as all men do; but this isn't the last word as their embracing the Gospel ensures that they too will live by the Holy Spirit.
Real death, but resurrection to life	Real death, but resurrection to life.

Cf. Hebrews 11:1 to 12:3 for a powerful parallel. Note specifically how Abraham believed that God could raise the dead, etc. The hope of resurrection is evident throughout and applies here in 1 Peter as well.

Matt. 5:12.

I think of my dear friends who have died in Christ.

We think of some within our own fellowship. The Gospel was preached to Sherry Fox . . . . Betty Gleason . . . This is why we don't grieve as the rest who have no hope.

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## **On the Heresy of Universalism and the Reality of Hell**

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A few years ago, about the time we started this study in 1 Peter, I received in the mail a little booklet that's entitled, "A Proposed Correction of A Source of Misunderstanding in the Westminster Confession of Faith." That's interesting. The Westminster Confession was written in 1646 and has been a doctrinal standard, especially for Presbyterians, for over three centuries. Here's a guy, writing in the beginning of t/21st c. who's going to correct it.

I got this in the mail and started to look it over and it caught my interest because he cites 1 Peter 4:6 to support his contentions. So, even though we were in chapter one at the time (and chapter 4 looked a long way off) I put it aside until the time came that we would be in this passage.

His contentions? Boil it down to a nutshell, he cites the confession's position on unconditional election, that God freely chooses B4 foun. of t/world whom He will save, & he says that, "no, this is wrong, it contradicts John 3:16 and must be changed."

Quite silly. If you're an Arminian and deny t/doctrine of predestination, write your own creed, don't expect the Calvinists' to bow to your theology. Guy even calls himself a "non-calvinist" (Duh!). Maybe I'll propose a correction to the RC Council of Trent, that they recognize that t/Reformers were right. And, I'll let them know that I'm not a RC.

He denies that God has absolute foreknowledge (he's an open theist - God doesn't know all of future events). At least he's being consistent with his denial of God's sovereignty.

He concludes his paper by appealing to 1 Peter 3:18 and 4:6 in saying that these verses prove that those who die o/s the Christian faith will one day get a second chance and be saved. This is his main contention.

"... the WCF doctrine that everyone is condemned to hell who died without having truly come to Christ before their death has been proved to be wrong by [these] Bible passages. The inspired WOG stands forever firm against the shallow human theories that presume that though God is omnipotent, his power of save is nonetheless limited to the earthly lifespan of human beings."

[vi] This is the false doctrine of universalism. In the end every single person who has ever lived (and some would include not only men, but demons) will be restored and saved.



## Westminster Confession of Faith - CHAPTER XXXII

Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead.

I. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

II. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.

III. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

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(2)"Do not err, my brethren.(3) Those that corrupt families shall not inherit the kingdom of God.(4) And if those that corrupt mere human families are condemned to death, how much more shall those suffer everlasting punishment who endeavor to corrupt the Church of Christ, for which the Lord Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, endured the cross, and submitted to death! Whosoever, "being waxen fat,"(5)and "become gross," sets at nought His doctrine, shall go into hell. In like manner, everyone that has received from God the power of distinguishing, and yet follows an unskillful shepherd, and receives a false opinion for the truth, shall be punished. "What communion hath light with darkness? or Christ with Belial? Or what portion hath he that believeth with an infidel? or the temple of God with idols?"(6) And in like manner say I, what communion hath truth with falsehood? or righteousness with unrighteousness? or true doctrine with that which is false?" [1st Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians (107AD), Chapter 16]

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### **Christ Triumphant (book by universalist Thomas Allin)**

HE ALSO WENT AND PREACHED UNTO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON." 1 Peter iii 19.

These words amount to a complete overthrow of the popular view of the state of the sinful dead; for plainly they assert a process of redemption as going on after death. Remark, carefully, who they were to whom Christ took the Gospel, and whom, as the following passage shows, He saved. They were those who had sinned against the greatest light known in their day, and DIED IN THEIR SINS.

"THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED EVEN TO THE DEAD, (IN ORDER), THAT THEY MIGHT BE JUDGED AND LIVE IN THE SPIRIT." 1 Peter iv. 6.

Notice again here the connection between judgment and salvation. Even the (impenitent) dead were evangelized, in order that they should have the benefit of judgment, and thus live to God (see on Judgment ch. vi.) Such a text literally cuts up the traditional creed root and branch.

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## FIFTEEN BOMBS THAT SANK

### MY THEOLOGICAL SHIP

(BY V. E. Jacobson)

<http://www.saviourofall.org/Writings/fifteenbombs.html>

When conducting evangelistic services in a community hall, I visited the home of a man, some of whose children had been saved at the meetings. I asked him if he would accept Christ as his personal Saviour. He looked at the ground, and I hoped he would decide favorably, but when he looked up and spoke he set me thinking. His voice was slow and intense. "If the way you preach is right, then one of my boys is in hell now, and if that is where he is, I want to be there." That man wasn't fooling; he meant it.

My second shock came when a friend in Pennsylvania gave me a book called, "After the Thousand Years," by George F. Trench. Although I could not accept all the views of the author, I became convinced of two things, namely, that there is no word for "eternity" in the Greek or Hebrew Scriptures, and that the plainest teaching of the Word of God has been obscured by incorrect and inconsistent translation of the Greek word *aion*. It cannot possibly mean "eternity," for consistency would force us into such senseless renderings as "the present eternity," and "before eternity" (see 1 Timothy 6:17; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:21. Furthermore, a consistent rendering of the word in Hebrews 9:26 would give us the contradictory phrase: "at the conclusion of the eternity." Yet a note in the Scofield Bible allayed my fears.

My third shock, the one that really jarred me loose from the binding tradition and the fear of men, came when a railroad engineer and a police sergeant who had been impressed with my faithfulness in preaching the Word of God as I then understood it, came to see me. We talked for nearly four hours. When they left I found I had used up all the heavy ammunition I had gathered in college, seminary and twenty years of conformity to the "fundamentalist" and "evangelical" hierarchy. I couldn't seem to be able to find their range, and when I did find it, my big gun, the King James Version, jammed. Fifteen bombs exploded on my deck, wrecking my fine theological system.

### FIFTEEN QUESTIONS FOR SOBER THOUGHT

- 1 If God will have all men to be saved, and if most men are lost, then how can God be supreme (1 Tim.2:3,4)?
- 2 If Christ is the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world, did He die in vain for the lost (1 John 2:2)?
- 3 If God is going to reconcile the universe through Christ, how can some be tormented forever (Col. 1:20)?
- 4 How can God, in Christ, gather all things together as one while billions remain eternally estranged (Eph.1:10)?
- 5 If all die in Adam, and a few are made alive in Christ, how can grace much more abound than sin (Rom. 5:20)?
- 6 If all men are condemned by Adam's offense, why are not all justified by the one just award (Rom. 5:18)?
- 7 If all die in Adam, why shall not all be made alive in Christ (1 Cor. 15:22)?
- 8 How can every knee bow confessing Christ Lord, to God's glory, unless reconciled (Phil. 2:10,11)?

- 9 If Christ only hath immortality, how can any of the dead be alive now (1 Tim. 6:14-16; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54)?
- 10 If the wicked go to hell as soon as they die, why are they raised and judged later (Rev. 20:11-15)?
- 11 Since the lake of fire is the second death, what happens to the wicked when death is destroyed (1 Cor.15:26)?
- 12 If “forever” means “eternity” what does “forever and ever” mean?
- 13 If God is Love and has all power, will He not find away to save all (1 Tim. 4:9-11)?
- 14 If Christ is to reign for ever and ever, what does it mean that He will abdicate His throne (Rev. 11:15; 1 Cor. 15:24)?
- 15 Will God ever actually become All in all (1 Cor.15:28)?

It is amazing that so many doctrines not taught in Scripture have been branded as orthodox. As long as men accepted popery and priestcraft as orthodox, they were ignorant. But a fresh study of the Greek Scriptures at the time of the Reformation convinced believers that God was justifying sinners by faith, and consequently they broke with tradition and sought for a firm basis of truth in God’s Word. You too will find new wonders in the Sacred Scriptures when you are ready to throw off the yoke of tradition and the fear of what people will say, and with a prayerful and teachable spirit, you study His Word and believe God!

#### FACTS TO HELP YOU THINK RIGHT

- 1 The Sacred Scriptures were not written in English but in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek.
- 2 The so-called Bibles we have today are but man’s translations of God’s Word, and are, therefore, imperfect.
- 3 Faulty versions have helped create the many sects and divisions of Christendom.
- 4 Inaccurate renderings have given rise to unjustified hopes, and consequent skepticism.

Example: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1:1, A.V.). Corrected: “The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, which God gives to Him, to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly” (Rev. 1:1, Concordant Version).

The prophecies of Revelation did not shortly come to pass, but when judgment starts, the blows will fall swiftly (compare John 20:4). John ran more swiftly than Peter. The same Greek word is used, in both places.

- 5 Most of the Bible concerns God’s earthly people Israel; things for us to know, though not about us.

Example: James is addressed to the twelve tribes. That is why it is often so discordant with Paul’s epistles. Compare: James 5:14-16 with 1 Timothy 5:23; James 4:9 with Colossians 3:16; James 2:24 with Romans 3:28.

- 6 Truth for the Church which is Christ’s body is found in the thirteen epistles of Paul. Read Ephesians 3:2-9.
- 7 There is no Hebrew or Greek word in all the Scriptures that has the meaning of our English word “hell.”

Hades and Sheol are the Imperceptible. Gehenna is a refuse dump near Jerusalem. The Lake of Fire is the second death. Tartarus is spoken concerning messengers.

- 8 It is nowhere stated in the Bible that man has an immortal soul. We put on immortality in the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:53). Christ alone has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16)
- 9 Of course we do not wish to insinuate for a moment that the son of stubbornness will escape judgment All the dead, great and small, except those who are Christ's at His presence, will have to stand before the Great White Throne to be judged. They will be judged according to the truth (Rom. 2:21; according to deeds (Rom. 2:6; Rev. 20:12,13); and, according to the light they have had (Rom. 2:12).

#### MY TESTIMONY

Many of my friends, after reading the first printing of this tract, jumped to hasty and unwarranted conclusions; namely, that I had lost the faith, and that I had quit preaching, and that I have "changed." I cheerfully acknowledge the half truths in each of the three statements. **I have lost the faith Christendom has in three gods and I now believe in one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ** (1 Cor. 8:6). I have quit preaching certain doctrines that are unscriptural, such as "everlasting torment" and "the immortality of the soul." I have changed but in the same way as a grammar school boy changes when he goes to high school.

In the last five months, through the concordant method of Bible study, the Sacred Scriptures themselves have answered questions that neither college and seminary professors nor commentaries could or would try to answer. I am amazed and fascinated by the Word as never before. It sets forth one God Who is just, loving and loveable; for Whose person and work there is no need of apology for One Who is operating the universe in accord with the counsel of His will. I glory in being His slave and in being deemed worthy to suffer reproach for His Name's sake.

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## **Tony Campolo Speaking My Mind**

### Chapter 6 - "Is there a second chance for those who die without Christ?"

Speaks of facing Jerry Falwell on "Crossfire". Was asked if those who did not know Jesus could go to heaven. Answer - "My mind immediately went to all those parents who had lost babies at childbirth. Would a simple 'no' not turn them against God? While I have not biblical support for my belief, I am inwardly convinced that He does not send such infants to hell." (77)

Turning them against God is the wrong basis for an answer! Men are inherently "against God." Note that Campolo grounds his thoughts in his being "inwardly convinced" and no "biblical support." He goes on to speak of those with Down's Syndrome (and others who are unable to reason) in his effective building of a straw man that enables him to avoid the plain intent of the question.

He skirts biblical exegesis on the matter, and instead appeals to George MacDonald and C.S. Lewis! When he does appeal to Scripture, he cites these 1 Peter passages and says that they are "clear references to the claim that Jesus goes to preach to those how are imprisoned . . . ."

Quotes and supports MacDonald to the effect that to contend that God sends men to hell makes God a tyrant and that "theologians have done more to hide the Gospel of Christ than any of its adversaries." God is an unfair judge. God will give a second chance to everyone.

All based on a God who is not sovereign  
Pelagian heresy  
Misuse of Scripture  
A doctrine that equates to purgatory  
Was George MacDonald Roman Catholic?

After quoting 1 Cor. 3:13-15 ==>

" . . . until we are purified . . . we will not know or be the person God mean for us to be when He created us. The identities to which the lost cling so desperately are false identities. The lost will never know their true selves until the lies about themselves are burned away. All that is in them that should be destroyed will be destroyed if only they will surrender to 'the consuming fire.' They would then become the actualized sons and daughters of God that He predestined them to be (Rom. 8:29-30)."

"For those who live in hell, MacDonald believed that they will eventually come to a desperate state wherein they will do anything to escape their painful condition of total alienation from God. He asserted that though they endeavor to flee from God's presence, they will learn the hard way that there is no escape from Him . . . They will learn the truth of Paul's declaration that no one can separate them from "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39). . . . Then . . . the consuming fire will begin to do His work. At that desperate point in the afterlife, not only will the lost yield to the purging, but they will surrender to the One who once said "If I be lifted up, I will draw a ll men unto myself." . . . I find myself drawn to MacDonald's theology about the destinies of the lost. That sort of thinking appealed to me before I ever read his novels or his sermons." [82-83]

"If salvation is by grace isn't it right to believe that there is nothing that anyone has to do to gain it?" (Eph. 2:8-9). How can we turn around and say, "There's something we have to do to be saved," right after we say that salvation is a free gift that we can do nothing to earn?" [87]

Campolo quotes Karl Barth - Barth moved toward universalism because he needed something to console people with how lost loved ones who were not believers in Christ and universalism was the only means he could think of to do that.

"It is very enticing to be a universalist. First of all, universalism delivers Christians from having to answer the question of how a loving God could punish people endlessly for sin that was limited to time and history." [88]

In answering the question, "Why evangelize?" ==> we evangelize because we ought to declare "the good news of what God is doing in this world. Even today . . . people can, through faith in Christ, find deliverance from the devastating effects of sin and the fear of death. . . . the evangelist can claim that the salvation experience is essential for anyone who wants to become what Abraham Maslow called 'a Self-actualized human being.'"

You can see how heresy is a slippery slope to nowhere. Note the Universalist / Unitarian church. (born in colonial America). Those that deny the doctrine of salvation and promise heaven to all, also deny the reality of who God is in His Triunity.

After quoting the favorable nature of universalism, Campolo goes on to say that as much as he would like to be an "evangelical universalist," he cannot because of the Bible's teaching on hell. Hell is necessary because men must be able to make choices (Pelagianism again). But even his admission of hell is tainted by doubts and in the end you're really not sure what it is he believes. That's no surprised since his beliefs are molded more by human reason than biblical revelation.

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## **A Brief Systematic Look at Universalism (Eric Landstrom)**

[<http://www.ovrInd.com/Universalism/universalismalook.html>]

Universalism proposed first by Origen (185-254), Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa. Greek background. Proposed by the heretical Gnostics. While there were a few others who thought it a possibility, it was by no means the accepted view of the church and was condemned as heresy at the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (553 AD). It didn't arise again until after the 16c Reformation with a small group of radicals, spiritualists and fringe Anabaptists, that espoused forms of it. Again, it was condemned in 17th chapter of the Augsburg Confession (1530) the first major Protestant Confession. It was revived again in the early 19th c. by Schleiermacher, the German theologian who is considered the father of theological liberalism. Schleiermacher argued that the sovereign love of God is bound to save all eventually and that heaven would be less than heaven if others were suffering perpetually. It was adopted by the Universalists who later merged with the Unitarians (twice heretical) - themselves descendants of the Socinians.

"In the present century universalism has spread further, partly due to a relaxing of biblical authority."

Recently, universalism has either been championed or proposed as an alternative by men such as Pope John Paul II, C.S. Lewis, Karl Barth, George MacDonald, Tony Campolo.

The Bible on hell. Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15. Matt. 10:28, 13:40, 25:41; Mark 9:43; Luke 16:23-31.

"Furthermore, the Bible unmistakably teaches that there is an eternal hell and that human beings will go into it (see, for example, Matthew 25:41; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15). Jesus had more to say about hell than He did about heaven. He warned, " And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). He added of those that reject Him, " As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world" (Matthew 13:40). In the Olivet discourse, Jesus declared, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). Elsewhere He stressed the horror of hell with the statement, "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" (Mark 9:43). One of His most vivid stories was about the rich man and a beggar named Lazarus. Since this story uses an actual name, most Bible teachers distinguish this from a parable and believe it refers to people who really lived. The description of hades speaks for itself."

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## TMS 9/2 (Fall 1998)

*Hell: Forever, Never, or Just for Awhile? [Dr. Richard Mayhue, Senior Vice President and Dean, Professor of Theology and Pastoral Ministries, The Master's Seminary]*

"A belief in the eternal, conscious torment of the lost in hell has been the almost unbroken testimony of the church, as has been the doctrine of the certain immortality of mankind." (131)

"As regards the fate of the wicked ..., the general view was that their punishment would be eternal, without any possibility of remission." [J.N.D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," 483]

"Everlasting punishment of the wicked always was ... the orthodox theory." [Philip Schaff, "The History of the Christian Church," Vol. 2, 273-74]

"The punishment inflicted upon the lost was regarded by the Fathers of the Ancient Church, with very few exceptions, as endless." [William G.T. Shedd "A History of Christian Doctrine," Vol. 2, 414]

"The major exception to this doctrinal unanimity in the early church, was Origen (ca. 185–254) in *De Principiis*. Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 300–374) and Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330–395) might also have followed Origen's thoughts. However, by the fifth century, the doctrine of everlasting punishment in hell was not seriously challenged." (132)

Immortality of the soul. Is the soul of man eternal? Some have contended that the belief of an immortal soul comes from Platonic thought, but W.O.E. Oesterly (no Christian) documents that the belief in immortality predated Plato. In fact, immortality has been common to most cultures (cf. Egypt).

From the 5th c. to the latter half of the 19th c., no orthodox leader seriously challenged the doctrine of hell.

There are degrees of punishment in hell (Matt. 10:15; 11:22,24; Luke 10:12,14, 20:47).

"It is doubtful that there is a doctrine in the Bible easier to prove than that of eternal punishment." [S. Lewis Johnson]

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## Shedd, Dogmatic Theology (pages 884 ff.)

"The denial of endless punishment is usually associated with the denial of those tenets which are logically and closely connected with it: such as original sin, vicarious atonement, and regeneration. Of these, vicarious atonement is the most incompatible of any with universal salvation, because the latter doctrine, as has been observed, implies that suffering for sin is remedial only, while the former implies that it is retributive. Suffering that is merely educational does not require a vicarious atonement in order to release from it. But suffering that is judicial and punitive can be released from the transgressor only by being inflicted upon a substitute. He, therefore, who denies personal penalty must, logically, deny vicarious penalty. If the sinner himself is not obliged by justice to suffer in order to satisfy the law he has violated, then, certainly no one needs suffer for him for this purpose." [885]

Shedd cites Matthew 7:22-23; 10:28; 11:23; 13:41-42, 49-50; 23:16,33; 25:31-33, 41, 46; 26:24; Mark 8:36; 9:43; Luke 9:25; 12:9-10, 46; 16:22-23; John 5:58-29; 8:21.

After citing the above texts, Shedd writes:

"Let the reader now ask himself the question : Do these representations, and this phraseology, make the impression that the future punishment of sin is to be remedial, and temporary? Are they adapted to make this impression? Were they intended to make this impression ? Is it possible to believe that that Holy and Divine Person who uttered these fearful and unqualified warnings, eighteen hundred years ago, respecting the destiny of wicked men and devils, knew that a time is coming when there will be no wicked men and devils in the universe of God, and no place of retributive torment ? Did Jesus of Nazareth hold an esoteric doctrine of hell : a different view of the final state of the wicked, from that which the common and natural understanding of his language would convey to his hearers, and has conveyed to the great majority of his readers in all time ? Did he know that in the far-off future, a day will come when those tremendous scenes which he described - the gathering of all mankind, the separation of the evil from the good, the curse pronounced upon the former and the blessing upon the latter - will be looked back upon by all mankind as " an unsubstantial pageant faded," as a dream that is passed, and a watch in the night?

Jesus Christ is the Person who is responsible for the doctrine of Eternal Perdition. He is the Being with whom all opponents of this theological tenet are in conflict. Neither the Christian church, nor the Christian ministry are the authors of it. The Christian ministry never would have invented the dogma ; neither would they have preached it in all the Christian centuries, like Jeremiah, with shrinking and in tears, except at the command of that same Lord God who said to the weeping prophet, 'Whatsoever I command thee, thou shall speak,' Jer. 1:7." [891]

"The New Testament makes a fuller revelation and disclosure; and it is principally the Redeemer of the world who widens the outlook into the tremendous future. The suffering in Hades and gehenna is described as 'everlasting (aionios) fire' (18:18), 'the fire that never shall be quenched' (Mark 9:45), 'the worm that dies not' (9:46), 'flaming fire' (2 Thess. 1:8), 'everlasting (aiodios) chains' (Jude 6), 'eternal (aionios) fire' (Jude 7), 'the blackness of darkness forever' (Jude 13), 'the

smoke of torment ascending up forever and ever' (Rev. 14:11; 19:3), 'the lake of fire and brimstone' in which the devil, the beast, and the false prophet 'shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever' (20:10)." [891-92]

"It cannot be inferred from the mere use of metaphors, that the duration of either is temporary. Figures are employed to describe both temporal and eternal realities. The Psalmist describes God as a " rock," a " fortress," a " shield," etc. ; and man as a " vapor," a " flower," etc. A figure by its " form," as the rhetoricians call it, indicates the intention of the writer. No one would employ the figure of a rock to denote transiency, or of a cloud to denote permanence. Had Christ intended to teach that future punishment is remedial and temporary, he would have compared it to a dying worm, and not to an undying worm ; to a fire that is quenched, and not to an unquenchable fire. . . . None of the figures employed in Scripture to describe the misery of the wicked are of the same rhetorical " form " with those of the " morning-cloud," the "early dew," etc. They are invariably of the contrary "form," and imply fixedness and immutability. The " smoke of torment " ascends forever and ever. The " worm " of conscience does not die. The " fire " is unquenchable. The "chains" are eternal. The "blackness of darkness" overhangs forever. Had the sacred writers wished to teach that future punishment is for a time only, even a very long time, it would have been easy to have chosen a different species and form of metaphor that would have conveyed their meaning." [892]

"In reference to man and his existence, the Scriptures speak of two and only two aiones or ages: one finite and one infinite, one limited and one endless, the latter succeeding the former. An indefinite series of limited eons with no final endless eon is a pagan and Gnostic, not a Biblical conception. The importation of the notion of an endless series of finite cycles, each of which is without finality and immutability, into the Christian system, has introduced error, similarly as the importation of the Pagan conception of Hades has. The misconceiving of a rhetorical figure, in the Scripture use of the plural for the singular, namely, *tous aionas ton aionon* for *ton aiona*, has also contributed to this error.

The two aeons, or ages, known in Scripture, are mentioned together in Matt. 12:32, 'It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (aion), nor in the world (aion) to come;' in Mark 10:30, 'He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time (kairos), and in the world (aion) to come, eternal life;' in Luke 18:30, 'He shall receive manifold more in this present time (kairos), and in the world (aion) to come, life everlasting;' in Eph. 1:21, 'Above every name that is named, not only in this world (aion), but also in that which is to come.' The 'things present' and the 'things to come,' mentioned in Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22, refer to the same two ages. These two aeons, or ages, correspond to the two durations of 'time' and 'eternity,' in the common use of these terms. The present age, or aeon, is 'time;' the future age, or aeon, is 'eternity.'"

An incidental proof that the adjective *aionios* has the unlimited signification when applied to future punishment is the fact that the destiny of lost men is bound up with that of Satan and his angels: (Matt. 25:41). These are represented in Scripture as hopelessly lost (Rev. 20:10). The Jews to whom Christ spoke understood the perdition of the lost angels to be absolute. If the positions of the restorationist are true in reference to man, they are also true in reference to devils. But Scripture teaches that there is no redemption for the lost angles: Christ took not on him the nature of angels (Heb. 2:16).

Cited in Shedd (Shedd cites Stuart's Evangelical Essays, 13,16):

"Aionios is employed 66 times in the New Testament. Of these, 51 relate to the future happiness of the righteous; 7 relate to future punishment (Matt. 18:8; 25:41, 46; Mark 3:29; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 6:2; Jude 6); 2 relate to God; 6 are of a miscellaneous nature (5 relating to confessedly endless things, as a covenant, invisibilities; and one, in Philem. 15, to a perpetual service). In all the instances in which aionios refers to future duration, it denotes endless duration; saying nothing of the instances in which it refers to future punishment. Hebrew olam is translated in the Septuagint by aion 308 times. In almost the whole of the instances the meaning is time unlimited: a period without end. In the other instances, it means aion in the secondary limited sense; it is applied to the mountains, the levitical statutes, priesthood, etc." [897]

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"That it not only has never been condemned by the Church, but is, far more than any other view, in harmony with the ancient catholic Creeds." [universalist, Thomas Allin, Christ Triumphant] FALSE, IT WAS CONDEMNED !!!

Universalists see "universalism" because they have been conditioned to function under the presupposition that hell is illogical and immoral and a loving God cannot possibly send men to an eternity apart from Him. That presupposition colors how they read the Bible. It's like a pair of magic spectacles that they put on. You and I aren't wearing the spectacles, so we see their arguments and go, "Huh?" That doesn't mean that.

Comes down to a contention that the world "all" always means "everyone without exclusion"  
The word "world" means everyone without exclusion

"Thus, He comes in order that ALL men may believe --- S. John. i. 7 --- that the world through Him may be saved -- S. John. 3:17. His grace brings salvation to all men -- Tit. 2:11. He takes away the sin of the world -- S. John. 1:29. He gives His flesh for its life -- S. John. 6:51. Because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (are irrevocable) -- Rom. 11:29, He gives life to the world -- S. John. 6:33. He is the Light of the world -- S. John. 8:12. He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world -- 1 John. 2:2. He is the Savior of all men -- 1 Tim. 4:10. He destroys the works of the devil, not some of them only -- 1 Jno. 3:8, and the devil himself -- Heb. 2:14. He abolishes death -- 2 Tim. 1:10. He is manifested to put away sin -- Heb. 9:26, and thus subdues all things unto Himself -- Phil 3:21 (the context clearly shows this subjugation to be conformity to Himself). He does not forget the dead, but takes the gospel to Hades -- 1 Pet. 3:19, of which He holds the keys -- Rev. 1:18. He is the same (Savior) for ever -- Heb. 13:8. Thus, even the dead are evangelized -- 1 Pet. 4:6, and death and Hades destroyed -- Rev 20:14. All are therefore made alive in Him -- 1 Cor. 15:22. Christ finishes, completes His work -- S. John. 17:4, restores all things -- Acts 3:21, and there is no more curse -- Rev. 22:2,3. Every knee of things in heaven and earth, and under the earth, bends to Him -- Phil. 2:10. The creation is delivered from the bondage of corruption -- Rom. 8:21, and every creature joins in the song of praise -- Rev. 5:13. So comes the END, when He delivers up the Kingdom to God, Who is then ALL IN ALL -- 1 Cor. 15:24-28." [Allin, ]

"THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED EVEN TO THE DEAD, (IN ORDER), THAT THEY MIGHT BE JUDGED AND LIVE IN THE SPIRIT." 1 Peter iv. 6. Notice again here the connection between judgment and salvation. Even the (impenitent) dead were evangelized, in order that they should have the benefit of judgment, and thus live to God (see on Judgment ch. vi.) Such a text literally cuts up the traditional creed root and branch." [Allin]

For so long as sin lingers in a single heart, so long as a single child of the Great Parent perishes eternally, whether annihilated, or sent to Hell, so long is the Cross a failure, and the Devil practically victor.

Based on an unbending allegiance to a wooden literal translation of a small handful of passages. Let me ask you, "How many of you hate your parents?" What's wrong with you!! How many of you greet one another with a holy kiss? How many of you women have your heads covered? How many of you have engaged in foot washing? How many of you have been baptized for the dead?

Quote Origen (who was a universalist) and quote a few others who say things like, "Yes, we believe that one day all things will be reconciled in Christ" and say, "See, they're universalists!" Even though these

same ones speak of an eternal hell, but I'm going to interpret eternal hell my way, and they agree with me after all. It's like dealing with RC apologists on the Fathers. If you quote them favorably, they say, "Sure, I believe that. he was a RC. But you have to read all the Fathers." Circular argument and the fact is, you can prove a lot of things from the fathers. Their writings are extensive. Many are not translated into English as of yet. They are not infallible.

The punishment inflicted upon the lost was regarded by the Fathers of the ancient church, with very few exceptions, as endless. Clement of Rome (Ep. ii.8) affirms that 'after we leave this world, we are no longer able to confess sin, and to turn from it.'" Shedd quotes Justin Martyr, Cyprian to the same effect." [Shedd, A History of Christian Doctrine, volume 2, 414]

Always some sort of a conspiracy. The church highjacked the Bible translations. Modern versions are all about defending the status quo of Christendom.

Reminds me of the time that I heard a so-called gay evangelical Christian (complete oxymoron) claim on the radio that the modern versions translations have deceived us by mistranslating the word "homosexual" in 1 Cor. 6. The word doesn't mean homosexual at all, it means male cult prostitute. Most people don't own a standard Greek Lexicon. I do. I looked the word up!

Heresy rarely occurs in a vacuum. If you're heretical in one area of your theology, you are going to be heretical in other areas. Reason for that. Satan is the master of all false teaching even as the Triune God is the master of all truth. There's a reason why millions of genuine Xns believe in heaven, hell, the trinity, sin, the authority of the Bible, salvation solely by grace through faith in JC, the virgin birth, the resurrection. We tend to focus on all of our disagreements. We may not agree on the end times, on predestination, on church government. But we are in vast agreement on so many other things, those things that must be believed if one is a real Christian. That's by God's sovereign design.

On the other hand, Satan is an angel of light. Those who follow him don't realize it and they may think they are following God. They may have a warm and fuzzy testimony.

I have found this principle to be gnomic, a truism. You really can't be an orthodox universalist. You're going to deny the Trinity.

So I read about one leader in the universalist camp who proudly declares that since he became a universalist he no longer believes in Christianity's three gods (he's unitarian). That would be like me saying, "I used to be a democrat, but I no longer believe in an autocratic monarchy." Huh? Democrats don't believe in monarchy as a form of government. It's an illogical statement. It's false because the premise is false. Just as saying, "I no longer believe in Christianity's three gods" as if that's the definition of the Trinity. That's just plain stupid.

Heresy rarely occurs in a vacuum. It's like a bad apple. What did your mother tell you when you were a kid: "One bad apple spoils the bunch." When one area of someone's theology is rotten and heretical, you can be sure that there are other areas that are rotten as well.

I'm old enough now to have developed some personal opinions that have become truisms for me. For example, I'm a fanatic when it comes to loyalty and the ability to make and stick to a decision. Another one of those truisms is that people will believe what they want to believe. That's especially true for those

who are unregenerate. No amount of logic, teaching, biblical scholarship, is going to overthrow heresy and cults once for all. IOW - as bad and illogical and non-scholarly and unbiblical as some cult may be, I'd be fooling myself if I thought I could simply get the greatest biblical scholars in the world to write a book then that cult would be gone once and for all time. There will always be those who will "twist the scriptures." Satan is behind them.

In many ways, this is a matter of presuppositions. My presupposition is that the Bible is God's inspired, inerrant Word and that all of reality is informed by Scripture. If I were to have a presupposition that the RC Church is the true church and cannot err, then I am pressed to rewrite history and engage in lots of Scripture twisting to support that presupposition.. We can take that to the complete other side of the fence. If my presupposition is that God does not exist and we therefore live in a closed universe, it won't matter what kind of evidence you show me to the contrary. I will reinterpret the evidence to fit my immovable presupposition. So it's a matter of what we presuppose. That's foundational. That's what I means when I say, "People will believe what they want to believe." If my immovable presupposition is that Mormonism is the true restored church of Christ, it won't matter what kind of evidence you throw my way. Anything that contradicts my foundational philosophical presupposition must be wrong by virtue of that presupposition.

That is a dangerous place to be IF your presupposition is false. If your presupposition is false, everything you build upon it is going to be false as well.

This is the nature of heresy. There are those who presuppose that Jesus Christ isn't God incarnate. No amount of evidence is going to change their mind.

There are also those who presuppose that a loving God cannot possibly condemn men to an eternal hell. There have been those t/o history who have operated under that presupposition.

If that's my presupposition, and I believe that all men will one day be saved (universalism), then I have to force my position into the Bible like stuffing square pegs into round holes.

Sin will continue in hell and thus hell will continue to punish sin.

Clark Pinnock, contemporary open-theist, says t/traditional doctrine of hell is like people watching a cat trapped in a microwave oven squirm in agony while people watch with delight [Modern Reformation, May-June, 2002, 17]

German RC Theol. Hans Kung asks: "What would we think of a human being who satisfied his thirst for revenge so implacably and insatiably? . . . torturing people forever is an action easier to associate with Satan than with God, measured by ordinary moral standards and/or by the gospel. And what human crimes could possibly deserve everlasting conscious torture?" [Modern Reformation, May-June, 2002, 17]

Add other quotes

This sort of reasoning is based on a strawman argument. Bloodthirsty revenge, torture, sadism, none of this describes the biblical doctrine of hell. Not about God being ..... God's eternal justice against sin

on display. We never base an argument on our human revulsion to an aspect of God's judgement. Paul warned us about that very thing in Rom. 9.

"The horror that Christ endured on behalf of sinners is meaningless if we as sinners are not in ourselves worthy of suffering the same fate [of hell]. [Michael Horton, *Modern Reformation*, May-June, 2002, 18]

The church father Anselm replied to his friend, Boso, who questioned the reasonableness of infinite punishment for sinners: "You have not yet considered the greatness of your sin." [Modern Reformation, May-June, 2002, 19]

God's motive is justice. Hell is the eternal abode of sin and unredeemed sinners

"This is our season for enjoying the sweetness of the Gospel. Others heard it before us in places where we now stand. And now they are taken away, and we will also soon be removed and leave our places for others to speak and listen. It is about time we were considering what we do here, to what end we speak and listen. It is high time to lay hold of that salvation that is offered to us. We must cling to it and let go of our hold on sin and of those who are perishing." [Leighton, 193]

"Be more serious in the matter of listening to the Gospel every day. Consider why it is sent to you and what it brings, and think, 'For too long I have slighted its message. Many who have done so are now dead and will hear it no more. Once more it is inviting me, and this may be the last invitation I receive.' And with these thoughts, bow you knee to the Father of spirits, that this one thing may be granted you, that your souls may find at last the living and mighty power of God's Spirit upon you as you listen to the Gospel. Then you will be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit." [Leighton, 193]

"The North American Review engaged Dr. Shedd to write an article vindicating eternal punishment, and also engaged Henry Ward Beecher to answer it. The proof sheets of Dr. Shedd's article were sent to Mr. Beecher, whereupon he telegraphed from Denver to the Review: 'Cancel engagement, Shedd is too much for me. I half believe in eternal punishment now myself. Get somebody else.' The article in reply was never written and Shedd was never answered." [cited in Augustus Strong's *Systematic Theology*, 1052-53]

Christ never refuted the doctrine of endless punishment which he would have if it didn't exist. Both Jewish schools, Shammai and Hillel, upheld the doctrine of endless punishment for the wicked. Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim writes that "These schools represent the theological teaching in the time of Christ and his apostles, showing that the doctrine of endless punishment was held in the days of our Lord . . ." [cited in Shedd, The Doctrine of Endless Punishment, 14]

No condemnation for those in Christ Jesus  
I lay down my life for my sheep  
We don't grieve as the rest that have no hope



Wayne Grudem in my oral defense.

"this makes sense to me" - "I don't understand how" - "I think it's reasonable" - "How could we enjoy heaven if . . . "

Note that there is a difference between universalism and annihilationism. Addressing the former, not the latter.

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## I. A Reformational Response to Universalism

### A. It is theologically false

1. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of total depravity
  - a. Based on a pelagian understanding of sin and free-will
2. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of predestination

The Universalists, organized in 1795, stressed theological universalism, the idea that salvation is universal and therefore everyone will eventually be redeemed to heaven. The Unitarians, organized in 1825, stressed the unity of the nature of God as opposed to His Trinitarian nature. Historically the two groups were divided by social and theological differences, and it was only after an arduous, painful road towards unity that the two merged in 1961. One historical factor in the growth of Unitarian Universalist thinking was opposition to the theological doctrines of election and imputation, the latter referring to man's inherited depravity and legal condemnation in Adam (Rom. 5:12-19). [<http://www.ankerberg.com/Articles/apologetics/AP0106W2B.htm>]

3. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of perseverance
  - a. Revelation 14:8ff.
  - b. Perseverance passages in 1 Peter
  - c. Warnings in Hebrews
  - d. Colossians 1:23
4. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of hell
  - a. Turns hell into Roman Catholic purgatory

### B. It is exegetically false

1. Based on the eisegesis of a few select passages and words

a. Passages:

(1) 2 Peter 3:9

(2) 1 John 2:2

Context - God so loved the world that he gave his Son. . . . In John 17 he says that he doesn't pray for the world and that I am not of the world. If I am not of the world, then I guess God doesn't love me and didn't give his Son for me. Note use of "world" (Gospel preached to the entire world; the whole world has gone after Christ; etc.).

(3) 1 Timothy 4:10

(4) Romans 5:18-19

From these verses the universalists infer that Christ's death for all guarantees salvation for all. This conclusion, however, is contrary to the context and certainly to the message of Romans as a whole. This explicitly in the context of being justified by faith (5:1), not automatically. In the preceding verse Paul declares that salvation comes to those "who receive the gift of righteousness" (5:17). The rest of Romans makes it unmistakably clear that not everyone will be saved. Romans 1-2 speaks of heathen, who "are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Upon them the wrath of God falls (Romans 1:18). It declares that "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (Romans 2:12). At the heart of his argument, Paul concedes that, apart from justification by faith, the world is "guilty before God" (Romans 3:19). Speaking of the destiny of both saved and lost, Paul affirms that, "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Likewise, Paul recognized that, in spite of his prayers, not all of his kinsmen would be saved (Romans 11) but would be "accursed" (Romans 9:3). The whole point of Romans is to show that only those who believe will be justified (Romans 1:17; 3:21-26). Romans 9 leaves no doubt that only the elect and not everyone will be saved. The rest are vessels of wrath prepared for destruction (Romans 9:22).  
[<http://www.ovrind.com/Universalism/universalismalook.html>]

(5) 2 Corinthians 5:19

Universalists also use 2 Corinthians 5:19, in which Paul told the Corinthians "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." It is argued that "the world" was reconciled to God by Christ's work. Thus, all are saved on the basis of Jesus' work on the cross.

The context clarifies the meaning of "the world." First, reconciliation is regarded as a process according to God's purpose, not an accomplished universal fact. God desires to save all (2 Peter 3:9), but not all will be saved (Matthew 7:13-14; Revelation 20:11-15). Second, the context indicates that actual reconciliation is only for those "in Christ" and to "plead" with the world to "be reconciled to God" is senseless. They already are reconciled. All are made savable by Christ's reconciliation, but not all are thereby saved. "Was reconciling" implies the time when the act of reconciliation was being carried into effect (verse 21), viz, when God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us.

It is quite obvious that Christ was made a sin offering at His death. So whatever this reconciling involves in these verses, it was already accomplished at the time of Christ. Therefore these verses cannot be used to support an "ultimate reconciliation" doctrine. Some Universalists will say that the reconciling of the world includes all people, because all people are in the world. But so are plants and animals. How or why are they reconciled? It is more than evident that all people in the world are not in harmony or friendship with God. In fact, most are not. All are not reconciled in the world by Christ, since John speaks of many "antichrists" in the world after the cross (1 John 2:18,22; 4:3). Christ was still to have enemies in the world (Matthew 22:44; 1 Cor. 15:25; Philip. 3:18; Hebrews 10:12,13). There are still tares or children of the wicked one in the world (Matthew 13:38). The great red dragon which persecutes and makes war with Christ and His elect was still in the world after Christ's death (Revelation 12:3-17). There is much in this world which is at odds with God and which was never reconciled to God by Christ's death. This tells us that this reconciling was not a universal act. The message in 2 Corinthians 5 is "that God reconciled the believers to Himself through Christ," not everyone in the world. The "them" of this verse is the same as in Romans 11:15, i.e., Israel. [http://www.ovrln.com/Universalism/universalismlook.html]

b. Words

(1) Gehenna; Hades

(2) עולם

Since, until, the most distant time, unlimited time, incalculable, eternal. From remote time to distant time to eternity. Cf. El Olam (Gen 21:33). Limit of the language. Sometimes to emphasize that eternal is meant, the writer will repeat the word: "forever and ever." [cf. Theological Wordbook of the OT]

(3) αἰων / αἰώνιος (aiōn, aiōnios)

1. Context strongly determines the meaning of eternity/eternal, whether it be "for an extremely long time" or "forever."
2. With rare exceptions (e.g., Rev 19:3), the plural is always used in the sense of "forever."
3. Would not Rev 14:11 indicate an eternal experience not just eternal results, as also the lake of fire experience (Rev 20:10)?
4. The use of the plural αἰώνια (aiōna) in Jude 13 to describe the experience of "black darkness" is utterly unexpected and unnecessary if annihilationism were in view (cf. 2 Pet 2:17 where aiōna is not used). MSJ - Vol. 9, Page 138

This was the only word from which they had to draw. There was no other word that they could use. The word etymologically, the word means an age and was often used as "age upon age" to indicate eternal. The word was used of eternity and contrasted with another Greek word, "Chronos" (time)

"The Bible writers speak of eternity in terms of time and make the impression more vivid by reduplicating the longest time words they had (eg. εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων - unto the ages of the ages). Plato contrasts χρόνος and αἰων as we do time and eternity, and Aristotle says that eternity [αἰων] belongs to God. . . . The Scriptures have taught the doctrine of eternal punishment as clearly as their general style allows. The destiny of lost men is bound up with the destiny of fallen angels in Matt 25:41 -- 'depart from

me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.' If the latter are hopelessly lost, then the former are hopelessly lost also." [C.F. Wright, cited by Strong, Systematic Theology, 1045]

Plato distinguished αἰών as timeless, ideal eternity, in which there are no days or months or years. [Kittle]

Semantic range for the use of words. Words have different meanings in keeping with their context and grammar. Words are not monolithic.

Take the word "day." It can be "day" as opposed to "night." It can refer to a 24 hour solar period. It can also refer to an indefinite period of time. We speak of back in the day of horses and wagons. It can refer to a climactic event, "Wait until that day comes." Kittle - "only in the light of the context can it be said whether αἰών means 'eternity' in the strict sense of simply 'remote' or 'extended' or 'uninterrupted time.'"

Kittle adds: "The full significance of 'eternity' is perhaps to be found in passages like Lk. 1:55; Jn. 6:51; 12:34; 14:16; 2C. 9:9; Hb. 5:6; 7:17, 21; 1 Pt. 1:25; 1 Jn. 2:17; Jd. 13."

Cf. Rev. 16:26.

Bible affirms sin that will never be forgiven. Note Matthew 12:32 (this age or the age to come) and Mark 3:29 (eternal sin).

Same words are used of the eternal nature of God (1 Tim. 1:17; Romans 16:26; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 1:18). And for eternal life.

(4) ἀπώλεια / ἀπόλλυμι / ὄλεθρος (apōleia/apollymi/olethros)

1. These words for destruction/ruin are never translated "annihilation" in the NT.
2. These words are used in a temporal sense without the meaning of annihilation, e.g., Acts 8:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Pet 3:6. Therefore, why should the meaning of annihilation be attached to them in an eternal sense?
3. Since ὄλεθρος (olethros) and ἀπώλεια (apōleia) are used together in 1 Tim 6:9, would this not strongly militate against apōleia meaning annihilation? MSJ - Vol. 9, Page 138

(5) βασανίζω / κόλασις / ὀδυναόμαι (Basanizō/kolasis/odynaomai)

1. Would not the idea of everlasting punishment demand the experiencing of hell, and not annihilation (cf. Matt 25:46)?
2. Do not the descriptive terms in Rev 14:10, 11 and 20:10 ("torment ... forever," "no rest day and night," "tormented day and night," and "forever and ever") associated with torment/punishment point decidedly to an eternal experience?
3. If βασανίζω (basanizō) is used of ongoing torment temporally (cf. Rev 9:5, 11:10), then would it not be reasonable to expect it also to describe continuous torment eternally? MSJ - Vol. 9, Page 138

2. Neglects the weight of Scripture to the contrary

a. Matthew 25:46 (same word for "eternal" is used of life and punishment)

Note universalist heretic T. Allin's explanation of this verse:

"This text, if fairly translated, seems to require an interpretation quite distinct from that of the popular theology, and opposed to it. (a) "Everlasting" and "eternal" represent *aionios*, and mean "of or belonging to an age" - aeonian. (b) If a punishment absolutely endless were intended it seems unaccountable that a word should be used which habitually does not mean endless, but the opposite. (c) The word translated punishment means pruning, i.e., corrective punishment, and should be so rendered. (d) So that which is threatened seems the opposite of our popular hell; it is a corrective process, "proper to the age" - or "ages." (e) And of this beneficent purpose there is a hint, often unnoticed, in the term applied to those on the left hand, it is properly "kids" or "kidlings," a diminutive, implying a certain affection. And so for the paschal offering a kid was eligible (Ex. xi. 5) equally with a lamb; and in the Catacombs the Good Shepherd is at times depicted as bearing home on His shoulders A KID, not a lamb, i.e., a GOAT, not a sheep. (f) Nor must we forget that, in Rev. xx. 11, the throne of judgment is WHITE - the sign of peace and amity. But it is said that the same word is applied to the happiness of the saved and to the punishment of the lost; and that, if it does not mean endless in the latter case, the bliss of the redeemed is rendered uncertain. I reply (I.) even were it so, we are not at liberty to mistranslate, but (II.) in fact it is certainly not so. True, the text does assign an aeonian penalty and an aeonian reward, but this leaves perfectly open the whole question of the precise duration of either. For the term aeonian is quite indefinite, it does not touch the question of the limit of time; it simply teaches that both reward and penalty go on to a future age or ages. The question what will happen after this age or ages is not raised in this passage. (g) I have in these comments made two assumptions both very doubtful, and both favorable to the traditional creed.

\* It must be noted that the endlessness of the happiness of the Redeemed depends, not on any meaning we assign to *aionios*. but on its own intrinsic nature, as resulting from union with Him, Who is endless life; and on texts easily to be found elsewhere, e.g., he that does the will of God abides for ever, 1 Jno. ii. 17; Because I live you shall live also, S. Jno. xiv. 19; If a man keep My saying he shall never taste of death. - S. Jno. viii. 51, cf v. 35. Compare Ps. cii. 28.

"The significant passage in support of eternal conscious punishment is Matthew 25:41–46. The usual argument is that just as Jesus was promising believers everlasting life, unending bliss with Him, He was also threatening unbelievers with everlasting punishment. In an extensive argument Fudge attempts to show that when applied to nouns that speak of a resulting condition (such as punishment), *αἰώνιος* does not denote eternity as it does when modifying nouns that refer to activities (such as punishing). Yet he does not discuss the matter of parallelism in verse 46, namely, that if in the one case (life) the adjective *αἰώνιος* means eternal, it must also mean eternal in the other phrase (punishment). The parallelism requires that if life for believers is of everlasting duration, punishment for unbelievers must be also." [Millard Erickson, *Is Hell Forever?* Bib Sac 152 (July-Sept 1995)]

On Matt. 25:41 - "If both things are alike *αἰώνιος*, then the term must be interpreted to mean either that both are transitory, or that both are everlasting. Eternal punishment and eternal life are contrasted with each other. To say that eternal life will have no end, but that eternal punishment will have an end is absurd." [Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, volume 2, 415]

b. Mark 9:43 (unquenchable must be endless or it would be quenchable)

c. 2 Thess. 1:8-9

d. Revelation 20:7ff.

e. Revelation 22:15

Context - God so loved the world that he gave his Son. . . . In John 17 he says that he doesn't pray for the world and that I am not of the world. If I am not of the world, then I guess God doesn't love me and didn't give his Son for me. Note use of "world" (Gospel preached to the entire world; the whole world has gone after Christ; etc.).

Note the universalists' response ==>

"BUT THE FEARFUL AND UNBELIEVING \* \* SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE THAT BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE \* \* WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH." Revelation xxi. 8

It will be necessary to consider the entire context of this verse, if we desire to understand its purport. It opens with the vision of the great white throne, ch. xx. 14., and we find that after the judgment of that Great Day, so far from death and hell (Hades) continuing, they are "cast into the lake of fire" - very unlike, nay, contradicting the popular view. Then comes a declaration that God is to dwell with men - not with the saints - but with men as such, and that as a consequence, they shall be His people, and God shall be with them and be their God.

It is distinctly said, there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain. Is this not a denial of an endless hell rather than an affirmation of it - nay, an emphatic denial of such a doctrine?

Then comes a voice from the throne with a glorious promise, "Behold I make all things new," not some things. Note, too, this promise is remarkably emphasized, it opens with the word "Behold," to draw attention to it: it closes with the command to write it, "for these words are true and faithful." Was there no reason for this? Is there not thus attention drawn to this as the central point of the whole vision, i.e., all things made new? But this again is a denial of the popular creed.

In close connection with such promises come the highly figurative threats of the lake of fire. It is perhaps possible to argue that this may imply (although I do not think so) the destruction of those cast into it; but it is wholly impossible to understand it as teaching endless torment in the face of what has just been promised - (no more crying nor pain, v. 4.) Therefore, I conclude, looking at the repeated promises (see "c" and "d") of this very passage, which contrast in their perfect clearness with the highly figurative language of its threats, looking at the true meaning of God's judgments and at the whole spirit of Holy Scripture - nay, its express declaration of universal restoration- that what is here taught,

is a fire that purifies while it punishes, a fire that is, in God's mysterious way, an agent in making all things new. - On the second death, see ch. vi., p. 188.

"How little can we build dogmas on such metaphors as the devil being cast with the Beasts (NERO and the Roman world powers) and the false Prophet - ch. xx. 10-14 - into the lake of fire and brimstone \* \* into which also are to be cast two such abstract entities as 'Death' and 'Hades.' At any rate this lake of fire is on the earth; and immediately afterwards we read of that earth being destroyed, and of a new heaven and a new earth, in which there is to be no more death or curse." - Canon FARRAR.

We thus see that the Apocalyptic visions lend no support to the dogma of endless torment. That doctrine is not, I believe, to be found in a single passage of Scripture if translated accurately and fairly interpreted. And here I would ask those who honestly believe that with this dogma of hellfire is bound up the sole force able to deter men from sin, to remember that to assert this is to contradict the weight of human experience. For in every age experience has shown decisively, that it is not the magnitude of the penalty that deters men from sin or crime, it is its reasonableness and the certainty of its infliction, p. 26. On the contrary, few doctrines have done so much to shake the belief in any real punishment of sin hereafter as has that of an endless hell. For, see p. 57, nobody can be found who, by his acts, shows that he in fact believes it.

Hence, so long as it is taught, the whole subject of future punishment becomes, for the mass of mankind, doubtful and unreal. Thus a tone of secret incredulity is fostered, an incredulity which, beginning at this particular dogma, assuredly does not end there, but affects the whole of revealed religion. It is not merely that those who still teach the popular creed thus furnish the skeptic with the choicest of his weapons, by enlisting the moral forces of our nature on the side of unbelief. They do more than this. They thus, unconsciously I admit, but most effectively, teach men to profess a creed with the lips, to which the spirit and the life render no vital allegiance. By this means the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ is lowered and discredited, for if men see a doctrine of this kind maintained, in words, but in fact denied (because in practice found to be wholly incredible) they will assuredly apply the lesson, so learned, of professed belief and real skepticism, to the whole system of Christian truth.

I have, I trust, not shrunk from the appeal to Scripture; that appeal, I repeat, we court in the interests of the larger hope. But should some doubt still linger some objections seem to be not wholly answered, then I would remind the wavering that, to ask for mathematical certainty on these points, is to ask for that which they never can obtain. No reasonable person expects mathematical proof of the existence of God. No great theological question exists that is not open to some questionings, more or less plausible, on scriptural grounds. To ask for a demonstration of the larger hope that shall leave no room for any plausible objection is to ask for that, which no reasonable man asks in any similar case.

Before closing, I would dwell on a significant fact which often escapes notice. Even assuming, for argument sake, the accuracy of the interpretation placed by the traditional creed on the passages just discussed, even that wholly fails to prove endless punishment:

that might be a reasonable ground for saying, "there are in Scripture two seemingly contradictory sets of passages. I must wait and pray till all becomes clear; and meantime lean formulate no conclusion." But it would furnish no fair ground for saying, "I must expunge from the Bible those passages that teach universal restoration." This is often forgotten, but it is not to be denied. And even this way of putting the case strains many points in favor of the traditional creed.



## **The Way of Salvation**

### **Part III: The Problems of Universalism**

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[Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of articles entitled "The Way of Salvation," which were the W. H. Griffith Thomas Memorial Lectures given by James I. Packer at Dallas Theological Seminary on April 11–14, 1972. Scripture passages are translated and/or paraphrased by the author.]

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"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved," said Paul to the Philippian jailer. What if he had added, "And if you don't believe you will be saved anyway, but it will hurt badly, and I would like to spare you that"? This would have been an assertion of universalism in the terms adumbrated by such writers as J. A. T. Robinson and the late Nels Ferré. Had Paul said this, would it have been true?

#### **A Major Issue**

Contemporary universalism, defined somewhere by C. H. Dodd as the belief that "as every human being lives under God's judgment, so every human being is ultimately destined, in God's mercy, to eternal life," expresses the conviction, not that no man is bad enough to be rejected, but that God's power and love are such as will secure the salvation of all sinners eventually. It is thus an optimism, not of nature, but of grace, and it presents a strong challenge to evangelical faith today.

For, in the first place, the universalist position, asserted as either very probable or quite certain, is rapidly advancing throughout the Christian world. Whereas till recently its status was that of a discredited speculation, nowadays, it is widely regarded as belonging to orthodoxy. Missionary leaders and major theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, assert more or less explicitly that all will be saved, or at least that the question of their salvation should be left open with the scales of expectation tilted in the universalist direction, and those who question the scripturalness of this find themselves looked on with increasing disfavor. Universalism, it seems, has come to stay; but should such a guest be welcomed?

Boldly and without hesitation, the protagonists of universalism make a most momentous claim: namely, that they alone do justice to the reality of God's love and Christ's victory on the cross. Belief in any form of the doctrine of eternal loss and punishment for some (so they say) makes God out to be a failure, if not indeed a devil. Universalism is thus necessary for a valid theodicy. Such a claim cannot be ignored: it cuts too deep. Is it true? If not, why not? We need to know.

Moreover, the implications of universalism are as far-reaching on the practical and pastoral front as on the theological. If all men are, in the words of a last-century tract title, "doomed to be saved," then present decision is no longer really decisive, and the urgency of evangelism

is taken away. The way is then open to argue that other methods of loving one's neighbor than seeking to win him to faith in Jesus Christ should take priority, and thus to advocate a shift from seeking conversions to giving social aid and relief. (It is a fact that universalism was, and is, the common presupposition of Christian socialism in its various forms.) But if one took this line in interpreting the Christian mission, one would be parting company not only with all the great evangelists and missionaries of history, but with all those millions, past and present, who have carried a burden of prayer for others based on the conviction that unless they were converted in this life they would go irretrievably and irrevocably to hell. The question presses: were they all wrong? Universalism affects not only what we say to people, but how we pray for them as well. Where on this issue should we take our own stand?

The personal appeal of universalism is unquestionably strong. It is true that evangelicals have traditionally execrated universalism as morally weakening and spiritually deadly—a latter-day version of Satan's lie to Eve, "Thou shalt not surely die;" a delusion tending to false hope and eternal ruin. Yet in days like these, when hundreds of millions have never heard of Christ and great political forces stand arrayed to ensure that most of them never will, denying universalism is painful, just as the thought that friends and relatives of our own may be heading for eternal torment is painful. Here is a burden and a tension of which we all would gladly be rid. But does the Bible allow us to entertain the universalist hope? We would like to—but may we? Is our present preference a sure guide to truth? That is the question before us now.

### **The Universalist Case**

The task facing would-be universalists is to circumvent the seemingly conclusive witness of Scripture concerning the fate of men who never come to faith, those whom Paul describes as "separate from Christ...having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). In Romans Paul says that these are under Law, in the sense both of having to keep it and of being exposed to judgment by it (3:19); they are under sin, that perverse power which propels them in rebellion against God (3:9ff); they are under wrath, God's retributive reaction to a world which has transgressed his law (1:18—2:16; cf. 2 Cor 5:10); and so they are under death, which means not cessation of being, but continuance in a state in which one has lost what is essential for true life, namely fellowship with God (5:12, 21; 6:23; 8:6, 13). The deepest dimension of death is not biological but spiritual, and in this sense sinners are dead already (cf. Eph 2:1), though they face a deeper death hereafter. Paul is emphatic that the principle of divine judgment is just retribution for sin (Rom 2:5–12), and so cautious a scholar as the late O. C. Quick wrote that "two texts...seem to be quite explicit" in affirming that for some the final state will be unending existence under conditions of retribution. Quick's two texts are Matthew 25:46 and Revelation 20:10 (cf. v. 15). The first text speaks of the "goats" (those rejected at the judgment) going away into *kolasis* (punishment) which is eternal, while the "sheep" enter *zōē* (life) which is eternal. The word for eternal in both cases is *aiōnios*, which means relating to the age to come, the final order of things which shall not pass away. It is hard to argue that *aiōnios* does not imply fixity, or that eternal punishment is not unending in the same way that eternal life is. The second text, which speaks of the lake of fire where the devil, the beast, and the false prophet are tormented forever, and where those not written in the book of life will join them, links up with the imagery of the fires of judgment which Jesus and Paul used repeatedly (as the synagogue and the apocalyptists had done before them) to signify a prospect not of annihilation but of pain (cf. Mark 9:43–48; Luke 16:24; 2 Thess

2:6–9): pain caused by knowledge of one's own ill-desert, of God's displeasure, of the good that one has lost, and the hopelessness of one's state.

Two facts should be underlined as we weigh this grim and somber teaching. First, it is a fact that, as W. G. T. Shedd said, "The strongest support of the doctrine of Endless Punishment is the teaching of Christ, the Redeemer of man.... Jesus Christ is the Person who is responsible for the doctrine of Eternal Perdition. He is the Being with whom all opponents of this theological tenet are in conflict." Second, the New Testament, like the Old, views God's retributive judgments, present and future, not as raising moral problems but as solving them, by manifesting justice in a situation where it had seemed that the wrongdoer would get away with it. Thus in Revelation 18:20; 19:2 the saints rejoice at the righteous judgment which God inflicts on Babylon, the great harlot. The thought of eternal judgment is the reverse of embarrassing to the Bible writers; on the contrary, it is fundamental to their theodicy, their gospel, and their knowledge of God.

The universalist wishes to turn the flank of all this teaching. How does he propose to do it? By a speculation (for so we must call it) about hell. Hell is real, but temporary. Unbelievers will for a time taste the bitterness of retribution for sin, but this will be what Emil Brunner calls "a pedagogic cleansing process." a means of grace whereby they are brought to their senses. Then, somehow, Christ will encounter them afresh (and in some cases for the first time) and their response to him will be positive. So hell is not the ultimate but the penultimate state, having salutary effects on unbelievers comparable to those which Roman Catholic teaching supposes purgatory to have on believers; and salvation will come to many, perhaps most, through and out of the condition which Scripture describes as perdition, eternal destruction, and eternal punishment.

### **Universalist Arguments**

Universalists have sought to support the above view by arguments of two kinds, exegetical and theological. The exegetical arguments ring the changes on the following three groups of texts: 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:20ff; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2, which are held to teach that the cross ensured universal salvation; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9, which are held to teach that God intends universal salvation; Acts 3:21; John 12:32; Romans 5:18–19; 1 Corinthians 15:22–28; Philippians 2:9–11; Ephesians 1:10, which are held to predict universal salvation explicitly. But these exegetical arguments are inconclusive, for the following reasons:

- (1) All the texts admit of another explanation, more germane to their context; see the commentaries.
- (2) Many of these texts are juxtaposed with other affirmations of which the only natural sense is that some do perish finally, so that the effect of opting for the universalist exegesis is to accuse New Testament writers, and indeed the Lord himself, of intellectual schizophrenia! For example, Peter certainly speaks of "the restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21), but two verses later he is found warning that whoever "will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23). Paul certainly says that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow (Phil 2:9), but in 3:19 he speaks explicitly of some whose end is destruction. Our Lord certainly says, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto

myself" (John 12:32), but he had already said that the day was coming when at his word some would rise from the dead in the resurrection of condemnation (5:29). Surely it is clear that an exegetical hypothesis which denies, not just the coherence of one biblical book with another, but the internal consistency of the books themselves and of Christ's own teaching in the bargain, is too disastrous to take seriously.

- (3) The key point in the theory is the "second chance" (for some, the first chance) whereby after death Christ encounters unbelievers in such a way that they come to faith, and there is no scriptural support for this whatsoever. First Peter 3:19 cannot be pressed into service here, for the statement that after his death Jesus preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed in the days of Noah (a particular limited group, therefore) cannot be held to imply that there is a preaching from that time on to every soul in hell, let alone that the preaching will invariably produce a positive response.

Wrote Robert Mackintosh, himself a wishful universalist, in 1908:"The question is generally argued as one of NT interpretation. The present writer does not think that hopeful. He sees no ground for challenging the old doctrine on exegetical lines." Most universalists today would agree, and therefore present their case not so much as the direct teaching of particular texts but rather as an irresistible inference from the main thrust of the New Testament—that is, its proclamation of God as love, and the cross as the redemption of the world. Whether it is permissible to isolate the "main thrust" of the New Testament in this way, and draw inferences from it which cut across what some New Testament passages actually say, is indeed a question; but, leaving that aside, let us look at the arguments themselves. What strength have they?

Certainly, the New Testament declares that God is love, and loves rebel man with saving intent. Universalists develop this by saying that His love in redemption must be as wide as His love in creation, and because He is omnipotent His redeeming purpose cannot fail. So Nels Ferré says, "God has no permanent problem children," and J. A. T. Robinson says that God's justice must be conceived as a function of His love, so that all thought of some sinners justly perishing is excluded by the criterion that such views "cannot preserve the absolute identity of the divine love and justice." To Ferré, however, the reply is surely this: it is in Christ that God is definitively revealed, and the particularizing limitations of the love of God as seen in Christ are inescapable. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph 5:25); He declined to pray for the non-elect world (John 17:9). To Robinson, the reply surely is that it is unbiblical to represent the attributes of God as being attributes of each other; this is to overlook the mystery of God's being, and to scale Him down to human proportions. We are told, certainly, that God is both light and love (1 John 1:5; 4:8), but not that the two qualities are identical. The biblical position appears to be that God in holiness manifests both redeeming love, whereby He saves believers, and glorious justice, whereby He condemns unbelievers. Universalists sometimes say that for any rational creature to suffer eternally would be hell to God, and Robinson echoes this; but where does the Bible say any such thing? Such speculations lose touch with the God revealed in Christ, and run off into a new gnosticism.

The argument from the cross as a victorious achievement of redemption is no more successful. Certainly, salvation is available for every man through the cross, but it is found only through faith. The gospel is God's power unto salvation "to everyone that believeth" (Rom 1:16). "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). God's gift of reconciliation through the cross is not ours till by faith we receive it (Rom 5:11). Hence Paul's reply to the jailer: "believe on the Lord Jesus, and [then, in consequence, and thereby] you shall be saved." In the New Testament, faith is not a matter of discovering that through the cross you are in a state of salvation already, but of receiving salvation through receiving the living Christ who brings it. Thus, lack of faith excludes from salvation in the nature of the case. Without faith one continues without Christ and without hope. And if a person like Judas, to whom the grace of Christ is displayed in this life, is not brought to faith here, what scriptural ground is there for expecting a different reaction hereafter? Certainly, the cross was a victory; but God has established a link between salvation and faith, and he who lacks one lacks the other also.

### **Arguments against Universalism**

The arguments for universalism are not cogent. The arguments against it, however, seem to me unanswerable. I confine myself here to three, which I formulate as questions.

First: Does Not Universalism Ignore the Biblical Stress on the Decisiveness of this Life, and its Decisions? Why did Jesus warn the Jews that the issue of unbelief would be that they would die in their sins (John 8:21, 24)? Why did He specifically warn against sin against the Holy Spirit, which has no forgiveness here or hereafter (Mark 3:28–29; Matt 12:32)? Why did He include in the story of Dives and Lazarus the detail about the great gulf fixed between those in joy and those in torment (Luke 16:26)? Why did He say of Judas: "woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good it were for that man if he had not been born" (Matt 26:24)? None of these statements is explicable, save on the basis that, for better or for worse, the choices and commitments made in this life have abiding consequences for the life to come, and he who does not lay hold of life here will certainly not enjoy it hereafter. And when Paul spells out the principle of retribution (Rom 2:5–11), and warns that we must all be made manifest before Christ's judgment seat that each may receive the things done in the body, whether good or evil (2 Cor 5:10), and lays it down that what a man sows he will also reap (Gal 6:7), he is making the same point. "Second-chance" speculations, of whatever form, would seem to be absolutely excluded.

Second: Does Not Universalism Condemn the Preaching of Christ and His Apostles as either Inept or Immoral? Evangelicals have sometimes been censured for preaching hell and the wrath to come, and counseling their hearers to flee from it, and so avoid a lost eternity. But Jesus and the apostles did the same! Now, if universalism is true, and the founders of Christianity did not know it, their preaching stands revealed as ignorant and incompetent; and if universalism is true, and they did know it, their preaching stands revealed as bluff, frightening people into the kingdom by holding before them unreal terrors. I leave it to the universalists to choose which of these options to settle for. "We must preach hell," says Ferré, "as having a school and a door in it." But why did not Jesus preach hell that way? The question presses.

Third: Is Not Universalism Rejected by the Honest Christian Conscience? Wrote James Denney: "I dare not say to myself that if I forfeit the opportunity this life offers I shall ever have another; and therefore I dare not say so to another man"—nor, therefore, of another man. How can I without hypocrisy encourage in others a hope which my own conscience tells me would be a false hope if I relied on it?

Why do we smile at the story of the preacher who took as his text "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb 2:3) and announced two heads: (1) the greatness of Christ's salvation and (2) advice on how to escape if we neglect it? The universalist, when you pin him down, is the preacher in that story! But conscience forbids us to go this way. "Believe on the Lord Jesus"—that is the way of salvation, and no form of post-mortem second-chance speculation (let alone the universalist, which is the most extreme and optimistic version of this fancy) can justify itself to a man's conscience, any more than it can support itself from the Bible. To say this is not to slight the love of God or the victory of the cross, but simply to keep standing under the gospel in which this love and victory are made known, "from faith for faith" (cf. Rom 1:17)! And where else should one want, or allow oneself, to stand? "Some one said to him, 'Lord, will those who are saved be few?' And he said to them, 'Strive to enter in by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able'" (Luke 13:23–24). Can we doubt that this really is the last word on our subject?

# The Case For Definite Atonement

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## Introduction

It is with special joy that I accept this invitation to present a brief paper sketching the case for definite atonement. A professor of Systematic Theology in an interdenominational conservative school must naturally feel constrained to afford a fair representation not only to his own convictions but to the various views to which some evangelicals are committed. Under those circumstances I seldom have occasion to make a direct plea for particular redemption. At this time, however, the case for universal atonement is in the hands of two scholars who hold to it and set it forth in two papers appearing in the present issue of B.E.S.T. With zest, therefore do I undertake the task to express and vindicate the doctrine of definite atonement.

## I. Precise Point at Issue

In order to dispel misunderstanding frequently prevailing in spite of clear and emphatic statements (which inexplicably remain unheeded), it may be wise at the outset to specify precisely what is in view here.

The doctrine is not concerned with the intrinsic value of the sacrifice of Christ. It is freely granted by all parties to the controversy, and specifically by the Reformed, that the death of our Lord, by virtue of His divine nature, is of infinite worth and therefore amply sufficient to redeem all mankind, all angels and the whole world, even a thousand worlds besides, if He had so intended. Rather the point at issue here concerns the chief purpose of the Father in sending the Son and the chief intention of Christ in laying down His life in sacrifice.

The Reformed as well as others admit, yea are eager to acknowledge, that there are certain blessings short of salvation, which are the fruits of the work of Christ, which may terminate upon any and all men, and which do in fact benefit substantially some who will never attain unto salvation. The point which is here in view, however, is whether salvation itself, involving all its integral elements, reconciliation, forgiveness, justification, sanctification, glorification, etc., has been actually secured and purchased by Christ for all men, or for the elect only.

It should be well understood that among evangelicals there is no major contention as to whether all will in fact be saved. With deep sorrow at the thought of the destiny of the lost, all parties here in presence confess that the Scripture makes it patently plain that ultimately some men will be saved and others will be lost. Thus it is important to emphasize at the outset that even those who assert a universal intent for the death of Christ do not go so far as to say that all men will in fact attain unto salvation.

The point at issue here is simply this, whether the Father is sending the Son and the Son in offering Himself did intend to, provide salvation for all men and every man, or whether they

intended to secure the salvation of all those and those only who will in fact be redeemed. The Reformed position unapologetically asserts the latter.

This may be an appropriate time to advert briefly to the terminology used on this topic. It has been customary, at times even in circles committed to the Reformed faith, to speak of “limited” atonement. This, it should be urged, is a misnomer, for the paramount question is really not one of “limit” or “limitation”. It has been remarked with truth that all evangelicals assert some limit here:

We are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ, because we say that Christ has not made a satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now, our reply to this is, that, on the other hand, our opponents limit it: we do not. The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, “No, certainly not.” We ask them the next question—Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer “No.” They are obliged to admit this, if they are consistent. They say “No; Christ has died that any man may be saved if”—and then follow certain conditions of salvation. We say, then, we will just go back to the old statement—Christ did not die so as beyond a doubt to secure the salvation of anybody, did he? You must say “No;” you are obliged to say so, for you believe that even after a man has been pardoned, he may yet fall from grace, and perish. Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, you. You say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of anybody; We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ’s death; we say, “No, my dear sir, it is you that do it. We say Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ’s death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it.

The terms “definite atonement” or “particular redemption” are much better suited, and we should discipline ourselves to use them exclusively. Let us now state some of the arguments which militate in favor of definite atonement and proceed thereafter to consider objections frequently raised against it.

## **II. Arguments for definite atonement.**

1. The Scripture emphasizes the definite relation of the mission of Christ, and specifically of His death to those whom He actually redeems. Christ gave Himself for His people (Mt. 1:21), for His friends (John 15:13), for His sheep (John 10:15), for his church (Eph. 5:23–26, Acts 20:28), for many (Mt. 20:28; 26:28; Mk. 10:45), for us (Tit. 2:14), for me (Gal. 2:20). These expressions need not be construed as exclusive of others not explicitly mentioned—(this is quite manifest in the case of Gal. 2:20)—but the specific reference in all these passages certainly indicates that the relationship of the work of Christ to those who are saved is different from that which it bears to those who are lost.

2. The Scripture teaches that the definite purpose of the Father in sending the Son and of the Son in coming into this world was to “gather into one the children of God who were scattered,” (John 11:52), to save those “who were given to Him,” (John 6:38, 39), to redeem “us from



every iniquity,” (Tit. 2:14). These and similar passages make it plain that the redemptive purpose is specifically oriented toward those who are in fact redeemed.

3. The Scriptural language concerning the work of Jesus Christ does indicate more than a general intention which would await the fulfillment of additional conditions before effectuation could be achieved. Specifically the Scripture represents Christ’s work as redemption (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24; I Pet. 1:18, 19; Matt. 20:28, etc.): this implies that the people in view are actually redeemed. The Scripture speaks of propitiation (I John 2:2, 4:10; Rom. 3:24, Heb. 2:17): this term implies that God is actually appeased and that He does not deal any further in terms of His righteous anger with those who are under the benefit of propitiation. The Scripture speaks of reconciliation (Col. 1:21, 22; Rom. 5:10; II Cor. 5:18–20, etc.): this term implies that those who were estranged are actually brought back into a relationship of friendship and fellowship. What kind of redemption would this be where the redeemed are still under the power of the enemy? What kind of propitiation, where God still deals in wrath? What kind of reconciliation where estrangement continues to exist and is even sealed for eternity? These three terms, severally and jointly, bear witness to the fact that the Scripture views the work of Christ as bringing about the effectuation of salvation.

4. The question must be raised whether the purpose of the work of Christ is to effect divine reconciliation and human redemption, or merely to render God reconcilable and man salvable. If the former, definite atonement follows as indicated above under 3; if the latter, a human ingredient is to be superadded to the work of Christ. It is this human ingredient which determines the difference between the saved and the lost, and the conclusion follows that the work of Christ by itself actually saves no one. This would appear derogatory to Christ and repugnant to Scripture. A conditional impetration is really no impetration at all.

5. Saving faith, being the gift of God (Acts 13:48; 18:27; Phil. 1:29, etc.), is granted to man as a fruit of the saving work of Christ. If this work is universal in its scope, it is difficult to see why faith is not conferred upon all men. Yet it is patently plain that all men do not believe, and the conclusion follows that the work of Christ, as well as its fruition in faith, is designed for the redeemed.

6. Particular redemption is an inevitable implicate of a recognition of the penal substitutionary nature of the atonement. Now this vicarious nature is a common tenet of the evangelical faith. And if we want to avoid the shoals of outright universalism, definiteness involves that the work of Christ was intended to terminate redemptively upon a part only of mankind, variously named His people, His Church, His body, His sheep, the elect. In this view the remainder of mankind is related to Christ differently, both as to the divine intention and as to the actual implementation of salvation.

If we do hold that Christ died substitutionally for all mankind bearing the divine penalty for the sins of all men, it would appear that at the day of judgment there will remain nothing to be punished, and consequently all men should be saved. But in fact all men will not be saved, and except for the elect whose sin will be forgiven in view of the work of Christ, men will have to answer to divine justice for their deeds (Mt 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Col. 3:25; Rev. 20:12, etc.). Here the classic formulation of John Owen may well be quoted:

God imposed his wrath due unto, and Christ underwent the pains of hell for, either all the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men, or some sins of all men. If the last, some sins of all men, then have all men some sins to answer for, and so shall no man be saved....If the second, that is it which we affirm, that Christ in their stead and room suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the world. If the first, why then, are not all freed from the punishment of all their sins? You will say, "Because of their unbelief; they will not believe." But this unbelief, is it a sin, or not? If not, why should they be punished for it? If it be, then Christ underwent the punishment due to it, or not. If so, then why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which he died from partaking of the fruit of his death? If he did not, then did he not die for all their Sins.

7. The intercession of Christ appears explicitly restricted to the saved in John 17:9, where Christ prays "not for the world but for those whom Thou hast given me; for they are Thine." As Du Moulin remarked, "Would He have refused prayers for those for whom He shed His blood?" Consistency demands that the priestly work of Christ be viewed as harmonious and that oblation and intercession be co-extensive. They are in any case frequently conjoined (Is. 53:12; Rom. 8:34; I John 2:1, 2).

8. At the time of our Lord's death on the cross, the eternal destiny of many reprobates had already been sealed in death (for instance that of some sinners at the times of the Flood and of the ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.). Can we suppose that our Lord died with the intent of bearing the sins of those who were then and there in Hell? If not, He did not die for all.

If we reflect furthermore, that the knowledge of our Lord, as to His divine nature, is not subject to any limitation by virtue of time, the same reasoning would apply to all reprobates, past, present, and future. In as much as the question in view relates to the eternal design both of the Father and of the Son in the death of Christ, this argument, grounded in the Divine omniscience, appears to have validity and can in no wise be called into question in terms of possible limitations of the human knowledge of Christ.

9. One should not be slow in acknowledging that the advocates of universal redemption mean to exalt the greatness of God's love by viewing its scope as inclusive of every member of the race. Yet, in this design they appear to fail in two respects.

First, even in their view, Christ's love is not unlimited, since it does not embrace fallen angels (Heb. 2:16). Thus all creatures in need of redemption are not encompassed in any case.

Secondly, while appearing to extend the range of divine love, these friends by the same token curtail its power, depth and effectiveness. We do worthily magnify the majesty of God, not if we represent His love as frustrated and defeated by the obduracy of the creature, but rather as finding its glorious fulfillment in a victorious overcoming of all obstacles, even those raised by man himself. As stated above, the choice here is not between limited and unlimited atonement, but between an effective atonement limited in breadth to the redeemed, and an universal atonement limited in depth to the point of ineffectuality.

10. To proffer a blessing contingent upon the fulfillment of an unrealizable condition is altogether futile. On the hypothetical-universalists' own showing, since no one has faith but those to whom it is efficaciously given by God, a universal redemption on condition of faith is not a blessing which issues in any concrete advantage to the non-elect. In this light the vaunted benevolence of God toward all mankind appears as nugatory.

11. To attempt to combine universal redemption with particular salvation is to introduce an intolerable disjunction in the divine purpose. This disjunction is so serious as to threaten the very unity of God in the Trinitarian relationship: how could Christ intend to die for those whom the Father has not given Him, and whom the Holy Spirit will not regenerate? Unity and harmony in the Trinitarian articulation of the divine purpose demand a redemption which is precisely co-extensive with election on the one hand and effectual application on the other. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this consideration.

### **III. Brief considerations of Objections Raised against Definite Atonement**

Obviously it will not be possible here to deal with these at any length but we shall merely sketch the lines of approach pursued.

1. The opponents of definite atonement quote biblical passages asserting a universal saving will of God (Ezk. 8:23; 33:11; I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9; John 3:16, etc.) These passages do not necessarily imply that God wills the salvation of each member of the race. They do show indeed the general benevolence of God, who, takes special delight in the salvation of the sinner, but really prove no more. In II Peter 3:9, the word "us" may suggest that the reference is specific to those who, as Peter, are among the redeemed. In I Tim. 2:4 the words "all men" may mean, as Augustine and Calvin construed them, "all kinds of men," "men of all categories," including even rulers who seem to be such unlikely objects of divine grace. John 3:16 may well be construed to indicate the general worldward direction of the love of God, rather than to imply that every man in the world is uniformly the object of saving love. The passages here quoted do not singly or jointly produce conviction in relation to a universal design.

2. The opponents of definite atonement quote passages which are construed to teach that some for whom Christ died may perish: Rom. 14:15; I Cor. 8:11; Heb. 10:29; II Peter 2:1. In Romans 14:4 the context shows that those in view as "weaker brethren" will not in fact ultimately perish, but Paul reproves those who would be callous enough to be indifferent to the serious problems of conscience that their free use of Christian liberty would produce for those of weaker faith.

In Hebrews 10:29 and II Peter 2:1 the reference seems to be to what the apostates professed to have, rather than to what they had in fact: to argue from these Scriptures in favor of universal redemption appears out of keeping with the context, for the seriousness of this apostasy is due to the SPECIAL relationship which these men professed to Christ and the Holy Spirit. If it be claimed that the terms "bought" and "sanctified" refer to real benefits conferred rather than to external profession, great difficulties will arise with the doctrine of perseverance as well, which many hypothetical universalists are eager to maintain.

3. The opponents of definite atonement quote some Scriptures which are thought to imply that the work of Christ was designed for all men (Is. 53:6; Rom. 5:18, 8:32; II Cor. 5:14; I Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:11); for everyone (Heb. 2:9); for the world (John 3:16, 4:42; I John 2:2). These terms need to be considered carefully in their context, however: each of them has a scope which is not necessarily co-extensive with the human race but which the context alone can reasonably determine. If I write "Let all keep this issue of the Bulletin of E.T.S.," it must be quite apparent that the word "all" relates to the members of the Society or at most the readers of the Bulletin, not the totality of mankind. Now several of the passages quoted appear in a context which emphasizes specific particularism, and this is bound to qualify the apparently universal statements.

Take Is. 53:6, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The ones in view here are those who attain unto peace ("the chastisement of our peace was upon Him") and who are healed ("with His stripes we are healed"). We furthermore observe the following expressions: "The transgression of my people" (vs. 8), "He bore the sin of many" (vs. 12), He shall justify many and he shall bear their iniquities (vs. 11). To assume that Is. 53 teaches an indiscriminate universal redemption is to go counter to the express statements of the text.

In Rom. 8:32 ("He delivered him up for us all") a similar situation is in view. The "us all" mentioned are those who "also freely receive all things." They are God's elect (vs. 33) who are justified, (vs. 33) whom nothing can separate from the love of God (vss. 35–39). It would be very difficult in fact to find in all of the Bible a more strongly particularistic context than Rom. 8:28–39. To interpret Rom. 8:32 as applying to mankind at large is to fly in the face of this Scripture.

In II Cor. 5:14 the statement "One died for all" is immediately followed by the clause "therefore all died," which Paul develops by showing that those for whom He died do now live regenerate lives unto their Savior. Thus this passage cannot but by a strained application be referred to the generality of mankind, but must concern those who are viewed as saved, regenerated (vs. 17) and entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (vss. 18–19). In this same place we encounter the word "world" with a scope restricted by the context: indeed, the statement "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" is illumined by the comment "not reckoning unto them their trespasses." The world that is reconciled is identical with the group to whom trespasses are not imputed: but these are only the redeemed, and not mankind at large.

The construction of Titus 2:11 is in doubt. The words "to all men" may indeed indicate to whom salvation has been brought: "Grace bringing salvation to all men"; but they may just as well indicate to whom salvific grace "hath appeared." In any case, the reference of the context emphasizes not the world at large but the redeemed, as is amply abundant from the development in vss. 12–14. It is even specifically stated here that Christ gave Himself for those who are purified as a special people for His own possession (14).

In Heb. 2:9 we read that Christ tasted "death for every one." (The King James version and others supply here the word "man," which is not in the original). The context indicates that the "every ones" for whom our Lord tasted death are also those who are brought as sons into the glory, who are sanctified (vs. 11) who are called His brethren and His children (13), who are delivered from their bondage (vs. 15), who are at the benefit of propitiation with respect to

their sins (vs. 17). Once again the context makes it plain that “every one” in view here is among the redeemed.

I John 2:2 however, yet remains. The passages previously considered should surely have taught us to be on our guard about entertaining the view that the words “all,” “world,” etc. must automatically receive a sweeping application to the whole of mankind. Even though the thought is made plain both by affirmation “those of the whole world,” and by negation “not for ours only,” the question may well be raised as to whether this implies a complete universality of propitiation. It may be possible to hold that the apostle John had in view not only a small group, perhaps of Jewish Christians, to whom He was addressing his letter, but the universality of the redeemed elected out of every nation and category. Then again he may have meant to indicate that the work of Christ is not confined to one generation but is perennial in its efficacy. Still further it may be held that John’s statement was intended to emphasize the exclusiveness, of Christ’s work as a means of salvation; there is no Savior or propitiation in all the world other than Christ. We should feel the more inclined to have recourse to some such explanation since in the very same context John speaks of the intercession of Christ, which, as we have seen above II, 7, is particular. Furthermore, the term propitiation, as also noted above, is so strong in implying the actual attainment of salvation that the choice here does not appear to be between definite atonement and hypothetical universalism, but rather between definite atonement and universal salvation. Fortunately from this latter part of the alternative even our worthy opponents recoil, but they should not be permitted to forget that the universalistic passages they advance, including I John 2:2, are so sweeping in their assertions that if it be granted that this scope applies indeed to the totality of mankind, then outright universal salvation ensues. If the texts prove anything at all, they prove too much.

4. The critics of definite atonement often urge that this doctrine inevitably undermines the sincere offer of grace to all men. How, they ask, can an honest invitation to salvation be addressed to people for whom no provision has been made by God in Christ? This objection is frequently thought to have great weight, but it appears to rest on the premise that a co-extensive provision is necessary for a sincere offer of any kind. This premise is palpably false even at the lowly level of many of our offers. For instance, most advertisers who offer some objects on the pages of a newspaper do not feel that honesty in any way demands of them to have a stock co-extensive with the circulation figures of the newspaper. If this be true even at the humble level of our finite lives, on what basis shall we presume to say that a co-extensive provision is necessary for a divine offer? Really the only requisite for a sincere invitation is that if the conditions stated in the offer be fulfilled that which is proffered be actually granted. But this is precisely what the supporters of definite atonement are asserting. Jesus said “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37), yet, “No man can come to me except the Father...draw him.” (John 6:44, cf. 65). Many strong believers in particular redemption have been enthusiastic and winsome proclaimers of the indiscriminate offer of grace to all men without distinction and without exception. Indeed they are the ones who have a real and complete salvation to offer, not something which must be supplemented by the human consent in order to be at all effective. Emphatically they should be foremost in missionary and evangelistic zeal: gratitude for salvation received in Christ cannot permit them to become resigned to anything less.

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Sin will continue in hell and thus hell will continue to punish sin.

Clark Pinnock, contemporary open-theist, says t/traditional doctrine of hell is like people watching a cat trapped in a microwave oven squirm in agony while people watch with delight [Modern Reformation, May-June, 2002, 17]

German RC Theol. Hans Kung asks: "What would we think of a human being who satisfied his thirst for revenge so implacably and insatiably? . . . torturing people forever is an action easier to associate with Satan than with God, measured by ordinary moral standards and/or by the gospel. And what human crimes could possibly deserve everlasting conscious torture?" [Modern Reformation, May-June, 2002, 17]

Add other quotes

This sort of reasoning is based on a strawman argument. Bloodthirsty revenge, torture, sadism, none of this describes the biblical doctrine of hell. Not about God being ..... God's eternal justice against sin on display. We never base an argument on our human revulsion to an aspect of God's judgement. Paul warned us about that very thing in Rom. 9.

"The horror that Christ endured on behalf of sinners is meaningless if we as sinners are not in ourselves worthy of suffering the same fate [of hell]. [Michael Horton, Modern Reformation, May-June, 2002, 18]

The church father Anselm replied to his friend, Boso, who questioned the reasonableness of infinite punishment for sinners: "You have not yet considered the greatness of your sin." [Modern Reformation, May-June, 2002, 19]

God's motive is justice. Hell is the eternal abode of sin and unredeemed sinners

"This is our season for enjoying the sweetness of the Gospel. Others heard it before us in places where we now stand. And now they are taken away, and we will also soon be removed and leave our places for others to speak and listen. It is about time we were considering what we do here, to what end we speak and listen. It is high time to lay hold of that salvation that is offered to us. We must cling to it and let go of our hold on sin and of those who are perishing." [Leighton, 193]

"Be more serious in the matter of listening to the Gospel every day. Consider why it is sent to you and what it brings, and think, 'For too long I have slighted its message. Many who have done so are now dead and will hear it no more. Once more it is inviting me, and this may be the last invitation I receive.' And with these thoughts, bow you knee to the Father of spirits, that this one thing may be granted you, that your souls may find at last the living and mighty power of God's Spirit upon you as you listen to the Gospel. Then you will be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit." [Leighton, 193]

Christ never refuted the doctrine of endless punishment which he would have if it didn't exist. Both Jewish schools, Shammai and Hillel, upheld the doctrine of endless punishment for the wicked. Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim writes that "These schools represent the theological teaching in the time of Christ and his apostles, showing that the doctrine of endless punishment was held in the days of our Lord . . . " [cited in Shedd, The Doctrine of Endless Punishment, 14]

No condemnation for those in Christ Jesus  
I lay down my life for my sheep  
We don't grieve as the rest that have no hope