

Hell Yes or Hell No #2

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[0 : 00] From the responsive reading, I just want to point out a couple of things to you. So if you will once again take that from your bulletin. These verses were selected because they speak of the universality of redemption.

And this is an often misunderstood subject. It has to do with the extent covered through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the gamut is rather wide. It goes all the way from that which our Calvinist friends would endorse. Which says that the death of Christ had its limitations.

That he died only for the elect. And he did not die for the unelect at all. So all for whom Christ died will be saved.

And for those who are not saved, Christ didn't die for them anyway. But I think too many verses of scripture clearly indicate the opposite of that.

[1 : 11] It speaks of the universal application of the death of Christ. And then you can take the other extreme from that of our Calvinist friends and their views regarding limited atonement.

To the extreme of universal salvation. And this is simply the belief that eventually, in due time, even those who went to hell will eventually be released because they will have suffered enough and suffered long enough that they will have come to see the error of their way.

And they will repent there in hell. And God will release them and bring them to heaven. And that, of course, is the teaching of universalism.

That eventually, everyone is going to be in heaven. Even Satan himself. But there are too many passages, and we noted some of them just last week.

Only a pittance of those that could be considered. That indicate quite the contrary. However bad hell is going to be, there is no indication that it will ever be terminated.

[2 : 29] Nor is there any indication that those who are there are going to be completely consumed so that they cease to exist. We do not know the exact nature of this place.

But it is absolutely terrible. And as indicated in your bulletin, it is certainly something to be avoided at all costs. It does not appear to have with it any possibility of remedial aspect or any kind of reprieve or pardon or anything of the nature.

And in these verses that we looked at in our bulletin, you'll see the emphasis on God loving the world. This, of course, means its inhabitants.

Which ones? I think the text indicates the world in general. All. And the all is used repeatedly.

In the very next verse that follows, God did not send his son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

[3 : 37] And, of course, as I mentioned, universalists hop on this. And they say, well, this means that the whole world is saved. No. It means that Christ made provision for the whole world.

The middle verse there that says, And I, this is taken from John 12, 32. Jesus said, If I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.

Commonly, that's interpreted to mean that Christ was saying, I will draw all kinds of men to myself. Well, it's true. He does draw all kinds of men to himself.

But the text doesn't say that. It says, If I'm lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself. What does all men mean?

Maybe it's a rather novel approach, but I think it means all men. I think the Spirit of God is quite capable of communicating in plain and simple language.

[4 : 42] And then the next verse. For it is this, that we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men.

And then, Paul adds, especially of believers. What does that mean? The Savior of all men sounds very general, and very universal.

But then he adds, especially of believers. Is he a Savior of believers?

In some way that he is not a Savior of all men? There seem to be two different classes or categories here. There appears to be the general, just someone in the world.

And then there seems to be the specific believers. They are not to be equated. They are different. I think they are establishing the fact that there are two different categories.

[5 : 50] And then the next. But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them.

Are these believers? Well, it says Jesus bought them. But again, in keeping with what I've been saying, Jesus bought everyone at Calvary.

He died for everyone. And we will see texts in Romans and 2 Corinthians that adequately, I think, reinforce this.

These are individuals who are denying the Master. I would take it that these are unbelievers.

They're bringing in destructive heresies. They deny Christ.

These are not Christians. They're unbelievers. But they've been bought. How can we square that? Only in the same sense that he bought everyone.

[7 : 08] When he died on that cross, he paid for the sins of every man, woman, and child who were born. Because, now follow me closely, because this is really important.

We were all born as children of Adam. We were born under the Adamic curse. We were born under Adam's transgression.

Corporately, we all sinned in Adam. We were all, every one of us, were potentially in the loins of Adam.

And when Christ died on that cross, the sense in which he died for the sins of the whole world, is that his death removed Adam's transgression.

What is left? Your transgression. My transgression. Early on in this message, I want to make clear, so you can have this ruminating in your minds as we consider the texts.

[8 : 24] What I am saying is, the death of Christ, in his substitutionary sacrifice, was every bit complete, and had a breadth and depth of scope to it, that it effectively canceled out the penalty of Adam's transgression.

And what this means is, no one will ever have to stand before God and plead their case using the excuse, I couldn't help it.

It was Adam's fault. It was Adam's sin that got me in all this trouble. And God will say, no, the death of my son removed Adam's transgression.

You are here for your part, not Adam's part. Now, let's go to two texts that I think spell that out more clearly than I can ever begin to.

And the first is in Romans chapter 5, where we have been before, and we have communicated this material before, and I think it's been several months ago, and not only that, but when we went through Romans, but that's been several years ago.

[9 : 53] And I just want to reiterate this now, because in connection with this message, and the subject matter we're talking about, you will also see come into play the accountability of those who have never heard the gospel, who've never been exposed to the name of Christ or the salvation that he provided.

Where are these people? How are they going to be evaluated? Some would say they are completely innocent because they've never heard. And others say they are as guilty as anyone else.

So, God alone is able to judge that. But I want you to begin with me in Romans chapter 5, in verse 12, and it's really, really important to see and to note the inclusiveness of what is being talked about.

Verse 12, Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so, death spread to all men because all sinned.

And if I were to take the liberty of just adding something there, I would say, death spread to all men because all sinned in Adam.

[11 : 24] For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of him, that, of course, referring to Christ, who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the transgression. What is the free gift? The free gift is the redemption provided through Christ.

The free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one, that's Adam, the many, mankind, died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Now, I think that it would be a real disservice to syntax, to the context, and to the English language to make the last word in verse 15, which is many, mean something different than the use of the word at the beginning of the verse when it says, the many died.

The many refers to the same class in both cases. There is no justification that I can see, no warrant at all for making one many mean one group of people, the other many making another group.

[13 : 02] The many means the same in both cases, and in both cases, it is talking about the totality of humanity. In Adam, everybody died because everybody sinned in Adam.

In Christ, everybody is made alive. But isn't that universalism? No.

It doesn't mean everybody is saved because of the death of Christ. It means everybody was made savable. Huge difference.

Christ picked up the tab. He paid the bill in full. He extends an invitation through the gospel to individuals to receive that payment that was made on their behalf.

And when we do, we are saved. We are regenerated. The provision is there for everyone. Let's hasten on. Verse 16.

[14 : 16] Verse 17. For if by the transgression of the one, that's Adam, death reigned through the one, Adam, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

So then, as through one transgression, Adam's fall, there resulted condemnation to all men.

Even so, now here's the balance. Here's the balancing part to the first part. Even so, through one act of righteousness, that's the death of Christ on the cross, there resulted justification of life to all men.

No exceptions. And this all men means all mankind. Doesn't mean all males. Means all of humankind. For as through the one man's disobedience, Adam's, the many were made sinners, even so, through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous.

How so? Through the application of the finished work of Christ to the totality of humanity.

[15 : 50] That is universal redemption. That means that all of Adam's transgression is removed.

And each of us becomes responsible before God for our own behavior and our own sins. Nobody will be able to plead Adam's sin as their excuse.

this is tremendously important. And those who teach as I am teaching now are frequently accused of oh you believe in universalism.

Well that is absolute nonsense. I repudiate it as much as anyone. And for those who would say well you're getting very close to it. I don't care how close it is.

I am not endorsing and do not subscribe to universal salvation for all of mankind. And if those who think so cannot see the distinction that is being made here I am attempting to make it as clearly as I can and if they cannot see that there is nothing that I can do to clarify it any further.

[17 : 01] I think this is speaking very clearly. The many will be made righteous and they are the same as the many who were made sinners. And the law came in that the transgression might increase but where sin increased grace abounded all the more.

That as sin reigned in death even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now while you're turning to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 this is the other passage that figures heavily into this issue let me just remind you by saying that I cannot believe I cannot bring myself to believe at all that the transgression of Adam and the consequences that came there from Adam's transgression I cannot believe that the death of Christ the work that he accomplished on that cross which the father specifically sent him to do I cannot imagine that leaving something of Adam's transgression undone not canceled incomplete can you not agree with me that the death of Christ the payment that he made was more than adequate to offset the offense that was committed

otherwise

I think we have a terribly deficient Christ in what he accomplished I am committed to the idea that he utterly completely thoroughly totally met all that was involved in Adam's transgression removed and removed it completely that's how thorough and complete the finished work of Christ was Adam's transgression is no longer in the picture mine is yours is but never will I or anyone else be able to say I did what I did because I couldn't help it it was Adam's fault that will not fly before the supreme judge of the universe now here in second Corinthians five we have what I think again is a clear indication of a two tier application this is a glorious message one of my very favorite passages of scripture and I'm going to begin reading with verse 14 for the love of

Christ controls us having concluded this that one died for all therefore all died who is this one who died for all Christ Christ died for all therefore all died what does that mean it means exactly what it says Adam sinned and who died everybody in Adam's transgression now Christ died and as a result of Christ's death who is it that died with him everybody everybody died spiritually in him everybody what that means is

Adam's transgression Adam's sin was cancelled in the mind it should have been in the mind but in the life and in the reality of every individual who was ever born on the face of the earth as long as they qualified for human being they died in the death of Christ what does that mean that means the penalty is paid by way of a surrogate Christ died for us and everybody died in him now that is tremendously significant this is talking about the conclusive nature of the payment and the effects of it all died and he died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died and rose again on their behalf well we know that all of humanity lives that way don't they not on your life it's difficult enough just to get

[22 : 31] Christians to live that way therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh even though we've known Christ according to the flesh yet now we know him thus no longer if any man is in Christ he is a new creature now wait a minute didn't he just say that Christ died for everyone then in what sense is everyone in Christ and why does he qualify it with an if if any man is in Christ he is a new creature old things have passed away behold all things become new now all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation and here it is namely to be specific that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself now perhaps it would be a lot simpler and a lot stronger argument for some who want to make it if the text would say that God was in

Christ reconciling Christians to himself but it doesn't say that we're right back to the universal aspect again the totality of humanity God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and he has committed to us I think Paul is saying himself and his fellow laborers and other believers committed to us the word of reconciliation therefore or this is why we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were entreating through us we beg you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God do you not see some kind of a problem some confusion here when in verse 19 he clearly says

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself accomplished fact done deal God was in Christ Christ died on that cross Christ reconciled the world everyone in it to himself in his death then why does he go on in verse 20 and say we beg you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God well I thought we already were the whole world was what then is this personal appeal where does that come in that I think at least and I must admit as I have had to about a number of other things I do not begin to understand this as clearly as I would like but this is the only way I can see it we have to have a two tier operation here there are two things taking place at once one of which has to do with the reconciling of the whole world to himself which he did in his death burial and resurrection the other has to do with the proclamation of this gospel to individuals to personalize what God did through Christ on Calvary now if all men all human beings were reconciled to God through the death of Christ then this means we were born that way we were born in a state of paid for redemption I'm not saying we were not born with a proclivity towards sin and self centeredness and all that goes with the human nature because we were but we were born with a balance sheet that was not negative to our account we were born neutral we were born redeemed and as I pointed out to you in the past this provides the basis the only biblical basis that I can see for infants and children babies under the age of accountability dying they are under the redemptive work of Christ they never reached a point in their life where they were capable of engaging in sinful behavior so as to accrue a negative balance sheet against them and there is just something within

us that insists that these little babies children mentally defective whom we regard as not responsible for their behavior and not accountable we cannot conceive of any end for them other than heaven itself now the basis for this personal appeal to be reconciled to

[28 : 47] God is predicated upon verse 21 God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him so this is our gospel message and we preach we proclaim to people that you need as an individual you need to personalize the redemption that Christ has made available to you and you do that as an act of your will what we are saying is because Jesus Christ died for your sin the barrier is removed and you are free to come to God on your own as an act of your own will you can receive Christ as your personal savior based upon the fact that Christ died for your sin now let us go back to a passage that I think is often overlooked but is very key to this and it's in

Romans chapter 7 back just another book and this to me is is really quite startling what the apostle has to say and I don't know I don't know how else to take this other than the way I am going to tell you so you will have to evaluate it yourself and see whether you think it has merit but if this isn't what Paul is talking about I just don't understand this at all verse 7 of Romans chapter 7 what shall we say then is the law sin may it never be on the contrary I would not have come to know sin except through the law for I would not have known about coveting if the law had not said you shall not covet but sin taking opportunity through the commandment produced in me coveting of every kind for apart from the law sin is dead now please listen very carefully get all of your mental gears meshed and running because this is pretty heavy

Paul says and he's talking he's giving a personal testimony here and he says and I Paul was once alive apart from the law isn't that a strange expression for him to use I was once alive well of course you were once alive you were alive from the time you were born who doesn't know that what are you talking about I was once alive all throughout scripture particularly by our Lord and here as well by the apostle Paul there is the spiritual and the material constantly coming into play because we are not just physical we are spiritual beings as well there is a spiritual dimension to existence not just the physical and when

Paul says I was once alive apart from the law but when the commandment came sin became alive and I died well now that gets even foggier doesn't it what in the world if you keep in mind what I've been saying about spiritual life and spiritual death this is what Paul is talking about folks this is the important stuff compared to spiritual life physical life is a distant second yet like everything else we tend to reverse the value system that God poses on anything and we tend to just turn it around and you know what man says well spiritual life we're not even sure that there is such a thing physical life that's what it's all about that's where everything is so we spend all kinds of time and effort and money on this physical body primping it preparing it clothing it adorning it feeding it caring for it because this is all there is well no it isn't this physical life this body of clay this tent this tabernacle that is as I stand before you being disorganized and going to ruin even as I speak and so is yours but that spiritual component which is part of our being when that dies that's separation from the maker when this physical body dies it's just separation from my human spirit but that's not the end of me so

Paul is talking here about the spiritual and I think he is probably with the spirit of God laboring under the assumption that people are going to be able to figure that out when they read it I mean we're not a bunch of dummies so what could he possibly mean when he says sin became alive and I died well it ought to be intuitively obvious to us that he didn't collapse as a corpse and pass away that's not what he's talking about he's saying that the spirit part of my being died when did it die it died when sin became alive in me says Paul when was that I haven't a clue he doesn't say it may have been it may have been when

[35 : 23] Paul bar mitzvahed what is that bar mitzvah is part of the Jewish lifestyle when a young man reaches the age of about 12 or 13 they hold a ceremony and by the way the Bible and the Jewish people they make no provision and no recognition of adolescence and teenage years like we do we take our teens and we say well they're not they're not children and they're not adults they're in between so we call them adolescents or teenagers there's no such provision for that in history and certainly not in Jewish history you move from childhood to adulthood just like that and it was at a ceremony of everybody would get together at the synagogue and they would have a bar mitzvah service what that meant was that this young man or if it was a girl it could be bat mitzvah but this young man is officially being recognized as a son of the law he is now responsible for

himself and his own actions and that takes place as

I've said in the Jewish economy at about 12 or 13 you will find Jews attending bar mitzvahs for family members relatives friends and they never go to the synagogue never go to the synagogue except they're at a bar mitzvah they'll go for that that's a really big deal it may have been that that's when Paul died I don't know the text doesn't say it may have been when he was five or six years old what I am saying is God has an age that only he knows that is assigned to each and every one of us as to when at what point in our life we become personally accountable to God for our actions it may be as early as age who knows four or five years of age it may be as late as some teenage years

I don't know God knows and I think this is one reason that scriptures does not give any such age for reaching that accountability because people are different you know as well as I that there are that there are boys and girls who are responsible enough and mature enough at the age of 12 you could give them a driver's license and they would drive responsibly there are others who at the age of 32 have never been responsible and you wouldn't want to give them a driver's license they would have three DUIs under their belt before 30 days is up so what do you do well you only issue driver's license to those whom you know to be responsible no you can't do that so you have to make this big blanket and you have to deny a driver's license to a whole lot of children who would be responsible enough to handle it and you have to give driver's license to somebody who reaches the prescribed age because it's their right but

God doesn't have to operate that way because God in his wisdom and in his knowledge in his omniscience he knows exactly when you became accountable he knows the day the hour and the month when you became accountable and he's not going to forget it and he doesn't even have it written down someplace so he needs to be reminded he just knows everything God knows he knows intuitively he doesn't know it because he looked it up he doesn't know it because he learned it he knows it because he's God it's part of his job description he knows everything intuitively we are talking about an infinite being and that just completely escapes me I can't even remember where I put my car keys half the time he doesn't forget anything he knows everything and he knows it intuitively so what

Paul is saying is when sin revived in me and he does not say when that was sin revived and I died spiritually my redemption that Christ purchased for me as a member of corporate humanity expired when I personally became accountable I still derived the benefit of his having died for me but now the monkey is on my back now it is my decision what will I do how can I personalize what Christ did for me and I think Paul did that either on the Damascus road when he encountered

[41 : 07] Christ or shortly thereafter in the household of Ananias when he sat there trying to figure out what had happened to him and he neither ate nor drank for three days he was in complete shock it may have been then because Paul was born like you and I he was born in a state of redemption and when he reached the age of accountability he became responsible for his own sin he needed to personalize the effects of the death of Christ and you do that as an act of your will that makes it your sin is your responsibility and your decision to trust Christ as your savior is your responsibility this is why I think the scriptures so often referred to the phrase that we have seen a number of times the obedience of faith the obedience of faith man has a responsibility to believe on

Christ not just an opportunity but a responsibility and what we are doing when we do not we are denying the Lord that bought us we say Christ died on the cross you're saying Christ died for me no big deal I didn't ask him to die for me that doesn't mean anything to me get out of here I'm not interested in that do you realize that's the response that many take the only responsible response is Christ died to remove Adam's transgression to make the way to him open and available and accessible and all I have to do is put my faith and trust in what Christ did for me that is my response to the work of Christ and

I receive a free gift of salvation and eternal life that's why it's called good news so we have a gospel to preach what is it Christ died for your sin therefore trust him receive him as your savior put your confidence in him rather than in yourself or something else and when you do you become regenerated by the spirit of God this I think is precisely what Paul needed and this is what Paul did but he was just carrying out what he thought was the behavior of a good faithful Jew had no idea how wrong he was and he was already dead spiritually he thought he was alive to God because he was a

Pharisee because he thought he was keeping the law because he thought he was stamping out this riffraff who claimed that Jesus was the Messiah and we know of course that he was not and I was trying to rid Judaism of these people he thought he was doing everything that God would be pleased with and God was pleased with none spiritual bankruptcy even as a religious man he had to do a 180 and he put his trust in the Christ he was once trying to destroy so everyone is savable we have a gospel to proclaim to all the world and we can tell everyone and anyone Christ died for your sin believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved apart from him there is no salvation as

I pointed out before I do not know other than what the scriptures say and Christ said it more than anyone about the description of hell I've got more questions about hell than I have answers got more questions about heaven than I have answers but I know this I know hell is not a joke it is no fun it is something to avoid at all costs someone might say well the way you put it it looks like Jesus is just a fire escape from hell well he is that that's why he died so that men and women won't go there but he is not going to override someone's volition if they insist he will let them have their way [46 : 34] I only know of two ways that God can deal with man if there is a third or more it's never occurred to me and I can't find it in scripture just two ways that God can deal with human beings one is with justice and do you realize that every person in hell separated from God will be receiving pure absolute total unadulterated genuine pure justice which means they have no basis whatever for complaint they will know I am not getting something

I don't deserve I'm getting just exactly precisely what I deserve that's justice that's the least that God can do but in his mercy and in his love God has made something else available to us apart from justice and it's called grace grace is God receiving us who do not deserve to be received but he receives us on the merits of Jesus Christ and what he did for us and all we do is just place our simple trust and faith in Christ that he did what he did and he did it for me and my trust is in him I receive God's eternal life as a free gift of his grace none of which is deserved so those who reject God's grace will face God's justice and no one will receive one smidgen more of punishment than what they deserve and they will know that they deserve it meanwhile all of us who are going to be in heaven know we don't deserve it and we are there anyway on the basis of his grace what a gospel what a God what a redeemer what a salvation amazing amazing grace how sweet the sound saved a wretch like me our father we are so grateful for this incredible grace there is much that we've talked about that we certainly don't understand as well as we like but we are grateful for the clarity with which it is revealed and we pray for more and better insight as we continue to live for you and to study your word father if there is anyone here today boy or girl man or woman who perhaps has never really understood this issue before we pray the spirit of god might be pleased to open their minds and their hearts to the truth and to recognize that all that is preventing them from enjoying your presence your forgiveness your eternal life is that they be reconciled to you and they can do that by simply acknowledging what you did for them and as an act of their will say Lord Jesus I want you as my savior I thank you for doing for me what you did because I could never do that myself for making available to me on the basis of your free grace this wonderful salvation I want to be bathed in it I want Christ as my savior and I want Christ to take me thank you for doing for me what you did Christ wonderful name amen