**THE UNIVERSALISM MISCONCEPTION**

***Ephesians 2:8-9***

Sunday School Lesson 2

*Answers to Questions & Misconceptions About Salvation*

07/28/2019

**Introduction:** Universalism is a false teaching that is becoming more and more prevalent in our society today. It teaches that every person in the world will eventually be saved. Of course, it’s easy to see how this false doctrine is being used by Satan to pave the way for a one-world faith under the leadership of the antichrist and the false prophet. Within the last year, we have seen false teachers stand and proclaim that Muslims and Christians worship the same God. Some of these teachers have gone so far as to proclaim that atheists will even be saved, in spite of their total rejection of God. *Coexist* bumper stickers and shirts have started to become trendy in our nation. The symbol combines representation for Judaism, Christianity, the Wicca movement (Pagan Witchcraft), atheism, Islam, and the collective religion of China. In a recent survey, 64% of Americans who identify as Christians said that they believed that everyone would eventually go to Heaven! During this lesson, we will look at three major statements that are made by people who believe in Universalism, and we will see how we can combat this foolish belief system.

1. THE UNIVERSALIST SAYS: “EVERYONE IS GOING TO HEAVEN BECAUSE I CAN’T BELIEVE IN A LOVING GOD WHO WOULD SEND PEOPLE TO HELL.”
2. **We can show them that Hell was not made for mankind. God is not the one who condemned man to Hell. Man has condemned himself. (Matthew 25:41; James 1:13-15; Romans 5:12-18).** Using Jesus’ own words, we can show people that the Lord did not make Hell for mankind. Hell was specifically prepared for Satan and the rest of the fallen angels. From there, you can show where the first decision to sin was made by man. Romans 5 deals with Adam’s decision and how he brought condemnation upon all of mankind. God made Adam in perfectness, and He gave him complete liberty to make his own choices. Some may still struggle with this. They will argue that things should have been done differently at creation. In such cases, it is prudent not to engage in conjecture regarding what should have or could have been done. Simply, we were not there. We are not the creator of the world. Help them see that such opinions only serve as a means to attempt to excuse our own behavior. James 1 speaks to the temptation of man and how we are drawn away of our own lusts. We cannot blame God for our own condemnation.
3. **We can emphasize that God does not want anyone to go to Hell (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:3-6).** Now that you have shown them that God did not make Hell for man, you can further emphasize that God does not want man to go to Hell. 2 Peter 3 perfectly shows the Lord’s desire regarding mankind. The Lord is not willing that any should perish. Further, verse 9 tells us that the Lord is intentionally longsuffering in order to allow man plenty of opportunities to escape the judgment of Hell. 1 Timothy 2 reemphasizes that Jesus came so that all men could avoid condemnation. He made Himself a ransom for all. A perfect closing response to this is to point to what Christ did on the cross of Calvary. It was the Heavenly Father’s unwillingness to let man perish that led Him to send His only begotten Son to die on the cross for our sins.
4. **We can show them that God’s love causes Him to hate (Psalm 5:4, 11:5, 19:8; Proverbs 6:16; Hebrews 1:8-10; Genesis 3; Romans 8:21; Rev. 21:27).** There are many people who really struggle to understand how God’s love would allow Him to let people go to Hell. There is an abundance of false teachers today who incorrectly describe God’s love as a quality that allows Him to just accept everyone exactly the way that they are. It is important to show that the magnitude of God’s love does not mean that He is incapable of hatred. In fact, God’s love is so great and pure that it requires Him to hate. An easy example would be to illustrate how any person’s love will naturally cause them to hate the antagonist of their object of affection. For the Lord, He loves what is good and pure. He created the world, and He saw that it was good. He hates sin because it ruined what He created. He loves mankind; therefore, He hates that which would put mankind into bondage. Revelation 21 tells us that the Lord will eventually remove all evil from the entire universe and banish it all to Hell.
5. **We can emphasize that God’s perfect judgment requires a price to be paid for sin (Isaiah 61:8; Colossians 3:25; Psalm 89:14).** There are several verses that show the justice and judgment of God. Simply, we understand that there are consequences for our actions. It is not unloving for a judge to issue judgment upon a wrongdoer. Every nation on earth has some form of law and justice for its people. Parents have law and justice for their children. God’s justice is perfect, unbiased, and beyond fair.
6. THE UNIVERSALIST SAYS: “IT DOESN’T MATTER WHICH GOD MAN WORSHIPS, AS LONG AS THEY BELIEVE IN SOMEONE.”
7. **We must show them that the Bible is plain that there is one true God, and there are many false gods. The Lord does not accept any worship that’s not directed at Him (Exodus 20:3-4, 23:13, 34:14; Romans 10:13).** It is hard to understand how people can believe that all worship by mankind is acceptable unto God. The Bible is so overwhelmingly plain regarding this topic. The reality for most is that they just do not want to make a decision regarding whom they believe in. They’d rather just have a non-specific form of worship that removes itself of expectations. This allows them to live however they want to live and yet still feel good about themselves. The only way to combat this is just to show them plainly what the Bible says. From there, they have to choose whether they will believe it or not.
8. **We can emphasize the necessity of identifying Who the Lord is by examining a New Testament story on the topic (Acts 17:23-34).** In Acts 17, we have an account where Paul confronts people who were worshipping what they called an “unknown god.” Their hope was that worship of this god would help them avoid his judgment. It was their way of covering themselves in case they were wrong about their faith in their other gods. Paul stood and preached to them and told them the importance of knowing Who the true God is. There were presented with a choice. They could not continue to just generically worship. God would not accept this. Some came to believe, while others still rejected.
9. THE UNIVERSALIST SAYS: “HELL IS NOT A LITERAL, ETERNAL PLACE.”
10. **We can show them that the only conclusion based on the Bible is that Hell is a very literal place (Revelation 19:20; 20:13-14, 21:8; 2 Peter 2:4; Luke 12:5, 16:23; Matthew 10:28, 25:46; Mark 9:48).** It is only natural that universalists reject the notion of a literal and eternal Hell. Of course, there are some who may believe that this place exists, but they don’t believe that people are going there. They may believe that it is only for the Devil and his demons. Others believe that Hell is only a temporary place and that all men will ultimately be redeemed back to Heaven. Some think that the fire and torment of Hell is only meant in a metaphorical sense to show how painful it will be to be separated from God. It shouldn’t be surprising that the unbeliever rejects the idea of Hell. Over forty percent of Americans do not believe in a literal Hell with fire. To admit to the existence of such a place would be to acknowledge that they may be going there. Sadly, there are even people who profess to be saved who don’t believe in a literal Hell. It’s likely true that many don’t believe in Hell because they don’t personally believe that they have done anything bad enough to deserve such a punishment. All we can do as believers is show them what the Bible says. Based on a host of Bible verses, it would be very difficult for someone to come to the conclusion that Hell is not literal.
11. **We can emphasize that Jesus mentioned Hell in the New Testament more than any other person found throughout the Bible (Luke 16:19-31; Matthew 13:42; 25:30).** During Jesus’ earthly ministry, He mentioned Hell more than He mentioned Heaven. He described it in more details than what was previously given in the Old Testament. People like to often relegate certain teachings in the Bible to the Old Testament as a way to downplay their significance and value. When it comes to the topic of a literal Hell, no such relegation is possible. Jesus taught very clearly about Hell, and He gave the story of the rich man and Lazarus as a means to further clarify that Hell is a real place. While there are certainly things we do not know or understand about Hell, we have enough of a description to get an idea of how terrible this place is and will be for the lost. Of course, if a person still is not prepared to accept that there is literal fire in Hell, they should be able to at least acknowledge that this place is terrible. Just the idea of separation from God should be enough to cause a person to want to spend eternity in Heaven.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion of this week’s lesson, it is important for us to know how to answer these common statements made by people today. We must be diligent to combat the false hope that universalists have been given through the teaching of false prophets or through their own reasoning. Universalism is especially attractive to the lost world because it allows them to live however they want. There does not have to be repentance. They don’t even have to believe what the Bible says. Consequently, the heart of a universalists may be especially hardened to the Gospel message. Nonetheless, we must stay faithful to present the Truth and allow God to convict them of their need of salvation through Jesus Christ.