

The BBI BULLETIN

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Training Workmen that Need Not Be Ashamed

THE INSTITUTE UPDATE

Dear Ones in Christ,

I recently came across a quote from Martin Luther that challenged my heart and caused me to think anew about what it means to preach the Gospel and to defend the faith. I would like to share that quote with you.

"If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefields besides, is mere fight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

—Martin Luther

Of course, **Berean Bible Institute**, while holding to the foundational doctrines of the faith, takes a particularly strong and consistent stand for the dispensational view of the Bible and the "revelation of the Mystery" given by the Lord Jesus to the Apostle Paul. This is important and we will not be swayed from our position. But we must never lose

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

UNIVERSALISM AND ANNIHILATIONISM

By Dr. W. Edward Bedore

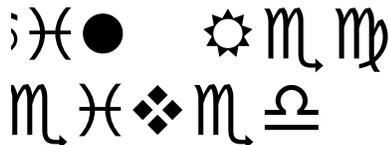
Two false doctrines that believers need to be aware of are Universalism and Annihilationism as they come to the forefront of theological debate from time to time. And when they do they usually find their way into the pulpit as well.

Universalism teaches that every human being will eventually be saved from the penalty of sin to live eternally in personal communion with God. Annihilationism, on the other hand, believes that those who die in their sins will at some point completely cease to exist as their soul will be annihilated after suffering the appropriate punishment for their sins in Hell. While these two views seem to be complete opposites, they have much in common in regards to the basic premise that they are built on. Proponents of both views claim that a God of love would never condemn anyone to everlasting punishment in such a horrible place as the Lake of Fire. One has chosen to believe that eventually everyone will be saved, the other that the souls of unbelievers will eventually be eradicated, thus ending their existence. Both deny that the Lake of Fire, or Hell, is a place of everlasting punishment.

A LOOK AT THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSALISM

We can understand why people would want to believe in Universal Reconciliation because it is troubling to think about individuals suffering in Hell forever. But, it is hard to understand how those who claim to believe in the authority of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God can come to the conclusion that the Scriptures teach it. When one

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FROM CALIFORNIA:

"I saw a web site for the **Institute** and am interested in receiving more information on the ministry training program. Would you send me literature on the **Institute** and an application?"

FROM WISCONSIN:

"I trust things are going well in Slinger, WI as preparations for the Fall 2008 Semester are underway. I was excited to hear of the plan to start a Timothy/Macedonian Fund. I will be sure to announce this as an option for those attending my church."

FROM THE NETHERLANDS:

"As a non-US citizens can I receive your *BBI Bulletin*?" (We send our *Bulletin* anywhere free of charge!)

FROM FLORIDA:

"The gracious Lord has put it on my heart to move up there, please send me a handbook and application. Thank you for your faithful service in the Lord's finished work."

FROM GEORGIA:

"Praise the Lord! Can you please send me free copies of your publication to help me study *God's Word*?"

THE BULLETIN BOARD



*Spring Semester at **Berean Bible Institute** begins January 19th, 2009. Register now for classes!*

For more information



*Don't forget to check out our website! You can order or download charts, class schedules, our handbook & course catalog, applications, pictures, **BBI** news, and more at: <www.bereanbibleinstitute.org>*



IMPORTANT NOTICE
Date Change



BBI'S 3RD ANNUAL GRACE MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Location: **BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE**

Dates: **March 20th & 21st, 2009**

Contact: BBI at: (262) 644-5504

Please take notice that the dates previously announced for this conference have been changed from the 13th & 14th to the 20th & 21st!!!



If you are planning to visit the Slinger, Wisconsin area, we would like to extend an invitation to come tour the school, and if time permits, stay for chapel which is held every night that school is in session from 7:10-7:30. Our class times our 5:30-9:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We would enjoy

*Only one life; 'twill soon be past.
Only what's done "in Christ" will last.*

reads the Bible and simply takes it at face value, it is obvious that there is a vast difference in the final condition of those who die in faith and those who die in their sins.

Ignoring or changing clear statements that teach otherwise, Universalists search for verses that they think teach their view and go to great lengths in their word studies to try to prove it. But, they offer no definitive passage of Scripture that clearly supports what they teach. Without such a passage, they actually have no case for their doctrine.

No essential truth of Scripture is hidden away to be found only in incidental remarks or passages that, even after being thoroughly studied, remain unclear or cryptic in nature. And, as *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (I Tim. 1:15), we should expect the why, who and how of salvation, and the fate of the saved and unsaved to be clearly stated in Scripture. We believe that this is what we find in the Bible.

It is clearly stated in Scripture that the whole world, all human beings, are sinners who are only worthy of the judgment of death (Rom. 1:28-32; 3:19-20,23); that Jesus Christ came to be a propitiation to satisfy our sin debt through His death (Rom. 3:24-25; I Cor. 15:3-4); and that God has promised to save all of those who believe the message of the Cross (Rom. 3:26; I Cor. 1:18-21; Eph. 1:13-14).

We also find it said that all of the unsaved, whose names are *"not found written in the Book of Life"* will be finally *"cast into the Lake of Fire"* (Rev. 20:15), which is a place where those who inhabit it *"shall be tormented day and night forever and ever"* (Rev. 20:10). But, there is no verse that says that anyone who is cast into the Lake of Fire will ever be removed or that offers them any hope of a second chance or opportunity to escape. When Universalists teach otherwise, they are teaching heresy, dangerous heresy.

Universalism encompasses a wide range of adherents. Those holding to a relativist view generally believe that all paths eventually lead to some form or other of eternal bliss or oneness with God, regardless of what a person believes. This is a common belief among New Age and other pantheistic and polytheistic religions as well as by some who claim to be Christian. Those holding

this view most often understand God to be a divine force of some kind rather than the Personal God that the Bible reveals Him to be.

In contrast, most "professing" Christians who are proponents of Universalism usually say that since Jesus Christ's death on the Cross was for the sins of the world, its effect must be universal, resulting in the salvation from the penalty of sin unto eternal life of every person. It is mostly found among the liberal denominations where the love of God is stressed and His holiness played down, but it is found among Evangelicals also.

The co-mingling of the ideas of Universalism with the teachings of the Bible can be traced back to an early church leader named Origen who lived about A.D. 185-254. A strong proponent, Hosea Ballou (1771-1852), can be credited with the advancement of Universalism in the United States. His writings indicate that he was influenced by Rationalism. He taught that God created sin, that humanity is basically good, that the Lord Jesus' death was not substitutionary, and denied Christ's full deity. In recent years, there has been a surge of Universalist teachings among Evangelicals in America.

In looking at the beliefs of Universalism, it should be asked; what is the Gospel Message and how should it be presented to the lost? How would a true Universalist answer the question that the Philippian jailer asked the Apostle Paul: *"what must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30). Paul simply said *"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"* (Acts 16:31). But, to hold true to the doctrine of Universalism, this answer is incomplete.

If asked this important question, to give a comprehensive answer the Universalist would have to say something like this; "You can believe on Jesus Christ now and be saved by His sin cleansing blood or you can continue in your unbelief and after you die you will be purified from your sins in the fires of Hell before entering into eternal life. You have no choice; you will be saved whatever you do. The only choice you have is to be saved through Christ's blood in this life or to die in your sins and suffer for them yourself in the Lake of Fire."

Now, I am sure that the Universalists would argue that I am misrepresenting their position and

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insist that they believe that the blood of Jesus Christ will save all of mankind. But, their belief in a temporal Hell where those who die in their sins go to undergo remedial suffering that prepares them for eternal life denies that. Either Christ's suffering for the sins of mankind on the Cross was necessary for anyone to be saved or it wasn't really necessary at all. If people who die in their sins can suffer any punishment in Hell at all for those sins to make them ready for salvation, then the shedding of Christ's blood was insufficient to save anyone. The whole point of the Gospel is that through faith alone in Christ's blood alone sinful men and women can be saved, or delivered, from the judgment of a righteous God. The idea of Hell only being a correctional facility where nothing but a remedial punishment is administered is an affront to Jesus Christ and what He did on the Cross. If anyone can in any way make themselves righteous before God through good works or by paying for their own sins through suffering, the Cross is a mockery of justice and an insult to all of those who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Gospel.

According to Universalism, the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus Christ is not exclusively applied to those who believe on Christ for salvation but will be universally applied to all of mankind resulting in a universal salvation of all men and women. They say this in spite of the fact that the Bible says that only those who believe will be saved (see Rom. 3:23-26). To get around that truth, Universalism says that, after suffering in Hell, those who died in their sins will finally believe and be saved. They use isolated Scripture verses to support this. Offering no passage of Scripture that can be expounded in its context that specifically addresses this idea leaves their doctrine with nothing to support it but conjecture.

Universalists often bring up the question, "why would God create man in the first place if He knew that most of mankind would end up in Hell forever?" They seem to think that this question, which is based on philosophy rather than Scripture, cannot be adequately answered and therefore proves their point. We disagree, but before addressing that question, we would ask the Universalists a question of our own. Since God knew about all of the evil and suffering that would take place in a fallen world,

why did He allow sin to come into His good creation in the first place? If God is going to save all of the human race anyway, what is the purpose of Him tolerating thousands of years of evil being perpetrated by the human race; wickedness that has resulted in gross physical suffering and mental anguish for vast multitudes? Rampant crime and mayhem, the destruction of war, the helpless continually being exploited, the powerful forcing their evil will on the masses, and the list could go on and on, has been the usual throughout the centuries.

Since, as Universalists claim, God's plan is to save all of mankind anyway, why didn't He just create man in perfect righteousness to start with and never allow sin to enter in and corrupt the whole creation. After all, since He loves man and hates sin, what difference would it make in the long run? Wouldn't that really have been a better plan then to allow the blight of sin and the suffering it has caused to affect the human race the way it has since shortly after the time of Creation? Human wisdom would say so, but obviously God in His infinite wisdom didn't think so, did He?

But, going back to the original question, I would like to offer the opinion that the answer is that if man was to have a personal relationship with God, it had to be based on the freedom to choose. Yes, God can and does alter circumstances and situations and intervene in the affairs of men, but He does not force any individual into a loving personal relationship with Himself. There has to be a personal freewill response to the love offered to enter into that kind of relationship. He has done what He has done for our sake, that we might have the opportunity to accept, or reject, His love. Universalism minimizes the relational aspect of what it means to be "in Christ." One enters into this relationship with God through faith, and faith comes from hearing the Word of God, not through the fires of Hell as Universalism says. Doctrine must not be determined through this kind of philosophical speculation but only by trusting in what the Bible actually says.

If the Universalist version of the Gospel were presented to the non-Christian, why would they trust in Christ? What incentive would there be for a Hindu or Muslim living in an area that is openly hostile towards Christianity, and even has laws against converting from their religion to Christianity, become

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a Christian? Let's say it is a man with a wife and three children and he knows that if he professes to be a Christian he will be persecuted and possibly even killed. In addition, his wife and children will almost certainly suffer as well. His sons will be expelled from school and have a hard time finding employment and his young daughter might be kidnapped and sold into slavery or forced into prostitution. Or the whole family could be killed.

Such a man may have seen Christian love demonstrated by those witnessing to him and feel remorse for his sinful ways and even be touched by the Gospel. But, he believes that there is no real danger of losing his soul because he has been convinced that the Bible teaches that he and all of his family will end up in heaven with Jesus Christ eventually anyway. So, as he sees it, his choice is to either become a Christian now and bring suffering on himself and his whole family or reject Christ so he and his family can continue in their traditional religion and their sinful lifestyle and then suffer for a season after they die and still be saved. All he would be trading would be a better life now for the possibility of a reward for faithfulness for having believed and served God in this life. Besides, he would probably conclude that if his religion is right, he will be better off not becoming a Christian and if not he will still be saved. Almost certainly he will choose to simply remain as he is. There are no examples from Scripture or from history to suggest otherwise. On the other hand, great in number are the testimonies of those who, through *"the preaching of the Cross"*, have become convicted of their sin and turned to Jesus Christ as their Savior from the horrors of an everlasting Hell that they knew they deserved. And many of these came to faith in Christ while facing almost certain persecution and/or death. The historical record also shows that the preachers, evangelists, and missionaries that God has used in the past are those who boldly preached Christ crucified, offering eternal life to those who believed unto salvation and everlasting death in the Lake of Fire to those who rejected Christ as Savior.

Does it really make sense to think that punishment in the afterlife will bring those who have rejected God's love in the here and now to repentance? Our modern system of incarcerating people in "correctional institutions" certainly

hasn't proven very successful at changing the hearts and attitudes of those locked up in them. And the Biblical example of God's chastening hand upon Israel never resulted in a universal turning back to God by His chosen people either.

If, as Universalism teaches, all people are the elect and predestined to salvation, then positionally all people are already "in Christ" and already have eternal life and are in no danger of being separated from God forever in Hell. They really have no need to be saved because they are safe and secure regardless of what they choose to believe about Christ. Having been guaranteed eternal life from before the foundation of the world, logically they have never really been lost, and the idea of separation from God forever is only an illusion. If this were actually so, the Gospel of Jesus Christ as presented in the Bible would make no sense and would have no power to save anyone through faith because no one really has to trust in Christ to be saved.

A MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

Something that must be seriously considered when looking at the doctrine of Universalism is its ramifications. Universalists have no Scriptural proof whatsoever that anyone, let alone all, who die in their sins, will ever have an opportunity to believe the Gospel and be saved after they have suffered corrective punishment in Hell. The Bible is clear that at the Great White Throne Judgment all those who are not found written in the Book of Life will be *"cast into the Lake of Fire"* (Rev. 20:15). But, where does it say that finally they will be drawn out of the fire and awarded eternal life? Universalism says that they must be saved out of Hell, even though they have no Scriptural evidence. Ignoring that He is also a God of perfect justice, all they can do is insist that a loving God would send anyone to Hell forever because they do not think He would.

Our question here is what if they are wrong? What will be the result of their teaching? If those who believe in an everlasting Hell are wrong, their error will not result in any lasting damage being done, as every human being will end up being saved anyway. But, on the other hand, if the Universalists are wrong, their error will result in many having a false hope that they will be saved regardless of what they believe. And since it does away with an absolute need for believers to take

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Missionary Focus



Cambodia

In this issue, **BBI** would like to focus your thoughts and prayers on these Grace missionaries:

ARIEL, FAITH, & PAULINE MAHILUM

Ariel & Faith Mahilum graduated from International Grace Bible Institute in the Philippines. Among other responsibilities, they have planted two Grace churches in the city of Cebu in the Philippines. While working with Vernon & Darlene Anderson in Cebu, the Mahilums felt the call of God to missionary work. They entered a missionary training course while Ariel was still working as a pastor. That course took them to Palawan in the Philippines and now to Cambodia.

Ariel and Faith and their daughter Pauline, are now serving in Cambodia. They report that "After almost 6 months of prayer and visits, the Lord opened the door for us to minister to the 200+ families in a village. We presented a plan to the chief of the village to start an English center and teach the Bible to those who come. The chief was so happy about the English center and told us 'I will give you all the village!' Regarding the church, he said 'the Cambodians are free to choose their own religion.' Praise God! Our target date is the last week of November. Please pray with us."

Recently the Mahilums have had a robbery at their ministry. Please keep them in your prayers as they are serving the Lord in reaching the lost for Christ.

For more information on the Mahilums and their ministry please contact them at: *Things to Come Mission*, PO Box 127, Beech Grove, IN 46107.

Phone: (317) 783-0300

Web: www.tcmusa.org

E-mail: admahilum@yahoo.com

(Things to Come Mission is planning a mission trip to Cambodia this May 28th-June 10th, 2009. If you are interested joining this trip please contact TCM.)

the Gospel Message to the regions beyond where people have not yet heard of Jesus Christ so they can be saved, it hinders mission work. Why go if you are not really needed? Rather than sacrificing to reach the lost, why not let them suffer for a time for their unbelief since they will finally be saved anyway? Especially since so many of them are hateful towards Christians and it can be dangerous to minister the Gospel Message in many places.

This teaching has the potential of influencing multitudes away from faith in Christ and hindering even more from ever hearing the Good News of salvation. This is a grave responsibility to take on based on anything other than a clear and undisputed passage of Scripture. The questionable hermeneutics of Universalism certainly do not offer anything that is substantial enough to risk the eternal destiny of lost souls on, but that is exactly what they are doing when they propagate this doctrine. *To be continued...*



Spring Semester 2009

January 19th –May 14th

- 102 - Apologetics (2 hrs)
- 104 - Bible Exposition II..... (4 hrs)
- 106 - Basic Bible Doctrines II..... (2 hrs)
- 108 - Romans..... (2 hrs)
- 110 - Acts (2 hrs)
- 112 - Cults (2 hrs)
- 116 - Biblical WorldView..... (1 hr)

Total.....15 hrs

- 302 - Christian Education II (2 hrs)
- 304 - Bible Exposition VI (4 hrs)
- 306 - Practical Disp. Theology IV (2 hrs)
- 308 - Daniel & Revelation..... (2 hrs)
- 312 - Eph./Phil./Col. (2 hrs)
- 318 - Inductive Bible Study (2 hrs)
- 320 - The Tabernacle (2 hrs)

Total.....15 hrs

- 1002 - Biblical Principles of Marriage... (2 hrs)

(THE INSTITUTE UPDATE *continued from page 1*)

sight of the fact that there are essential doctrines of the faith that form the bedrock that supports all the other doctrines of the Bible. For instance, let's take the Bible itself and what we believe about it. If we compromise at any point on the doctrine of the **verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible**, all Bible truth must be called into question. Either the very words of Scripture, in their entirety, have been given to us by inspiration of God and are therefore without error, or we have a Bible that we cannot completely trust as the infallible Word of God.

And what about the virgin birth? The full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ, His sinless life and the efficiency of His death for the sins of the world? The Resurrection and Ascension of the Savior and the promise of His Second Coming? The righteous character and the personal nature of God? The doctrine of the Trinity? The depraved and lost condition of the natural man? The omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of God? That God is the Creator of all that exists? The resurrection of the saved to everlasting glory and of the unsaved to everlasting punishment? And the list could go on.

The denial, or even just the watering down of any of these truths, will result in false doctrine being taught. False doctrine that will affect other truths because they are all in some way interrelated. The tragedy of false doctrines is that when they are taught, they have a negative impact on those ensnared by them.

We are not referring to peripheral doctrines of which there is room for disagreement and discussion. We are speaking of bedrock truths that in some way have a direct bearing on how the Gospel is presented and understood. How some of the doctrines listed above can undermine the preaching of the Cross may not be readily apparent to everyone. Nonetheless, any one of them can lead to further Scriptural error if embraced. Some, there is no doubt, have greater potential for spiritual disaster than others do. But we must keep in mind that a small leak in an earthen dam can eventually cause the whole structure to fail if it is not attended to.

I am addressing this issue because the numerous points of attack against God's Word and sound doctrine that are simultaneously being mounted today are unprecedented in modern

history. From every quarter, the truth of God's Word and its authority are being challenged, rejected, and subverted. Some think that it is because the Internet has made it so easy for these false teachings to be spread far and wide with little cost and minimal effort. There is some truth to this, but I do not think that it is the main cause.

I believe that the biggest problem in the Church today is a lack of doctrinal preaching from the pulpits and an indifference to truth in the pews. The result is that the Church as a whole is drifting away from the authority of Scripture and consequently is vulnerable to doctrines that are built on "logical concepts" rather than the exposition of Scripture.

Because of this trend, which, sadly, even some grace believers have been caught up in, we will be featuring a series of articles in the *BBI Bulletin* over the next few months on some of the more prominent errors that are being widely propagated today. The first is the critique of Universalism that is the feature article in this edition of the *Bulletin*. Our purpose is not to attack anyone, but to reveal error by exposing it to the truth of Scripture. Our desire is that these articles will be helpful to those who are struggling with these issues or have questions about them. And also, we hope that they will serve as a warning to those who are not yet aware of the spiritual dangers that these false doctrines carry with them.

We covet your prayers for the ministry of the **Berean Bible Institute**. The need for more trained ministers of the Grace Gospel will only increase as time goes on. Pray that the Lord will raise up a fearless band of faithful men who are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to prepare for the work of the ministry. The answer to the greatest need of the human heart is the message of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ. There is no lack of needy sinners to hear the Gospel. The only thing lacking are willing messengers to take the message to them.

Grace and peace to you in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because Christ Lives!!

Dr. W. Edward Bedore, Executive Director

The BBI Bulletin is the official newsletter of the **Berean Bible Institute Inc.**, and is sent free of charge to any who request it.

Berean Bible Institute exists as a non-degree granting school of adult education, which endeavors to provide advanced Biblical and doctrinal studies in accordance with the Biblical principle of right division and the revelation of the mystery along with practical training in ministry and leadership skills, in order to help individuals become prepared to do the work of the ministry in local churches, the mission field, at home or abroad, with the overall goal of making the Gospel of Jesus Christ known to the lost throughout the world, the edification of believers, and the promotion of personal Bible study.

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Berean Bible Institute, Inc. admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.



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