

EXTENDED MERCY

“men who fear Him”

Key question

How have some Christians defended a view of salvation that includes some who have not confessed faith in Christ?

Key text

Acts 10:34-35

“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.”

Introduction.

1. There is increasing pressure on evangelical Christians to revise the exclusiveness of the Christian gospel. This pressure comes from the following changes in our experience.
 - a. **Immigration and world travel** - living in intimate contact with other religions that offer impressive examples of faith, ethical conduct, logical basis, and heroic self-sacrifice.
 - b. **Theological education** – Non-judgmental attitudes toward other religions has become an emphasis.
 - c. **Radical relativity** - Our culture has moved away from absolutes.
 - d. **Common sense** - Does it seem reasonable that a loving God who desires all to be saved would seemingly exclude “God fearers” who were not confessing Christians? In many cases these non-Christians follow and teach an ethic that is more Kingdom like than do professing Christians. In an age where ethics are emphasized and doctrine is not, it is tempting to question the traditional Christian view of salvation through faith in Christ alone.
 - e. We need to cultivate a measure of **theological humility**. Whereas God is infinite and beyond comprehension, we humans are finite and sinful, often far too quick, theologically speaking to speak of things we don’t understand. Job.42:3, Isa.55:9, Rom.11:33, I Cor.13:12
2. Lesslie Newbigin in his book, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, refers to Karl Rahner’s notion of “**anonymous Christianity**”
 - a. Christianity is the absolute religion because of the incarnation.
 - b. Non-Christian religions are lawful and salvific up to the time at which the gospel is brought to the attention of their adherents.
 - c. Faithful adherents of a non-Christian religion are regarded as “anonymous Christians.”

- d. When Jesus whispered from the cross, “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.” He was revealing a grace that extended to every person, no matter how limited their revelation or response.
- e. The core question is not, “Who will go to heaven when they die?” but “What brings glory to God?”
- f. The core purpose of God is world peace through loving reconciliation between alienated people. To the extent that this purpose is honored, God is glorified.
- g. The gospel story is the story of God’s purpose in Christ to reconcile people to each other and thus to God.
- h. We spread the gospel when we tell the story of God’s reconciling love on the cross.

A. How broad is God’s mercy and revelation? Does God speak to those who have never heard the gospel so as to inspire saving faith?

1. All evangelicals agree that:
 - a. Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.
 1. Jesus claimed that He is the only way of salvation.
 2. Jesus’ followers claimed the same.
 3. Jesus claimed other ways of salvation are false.
 4. Jesus’ followers claimed the same.
 - b. Christ’s work on the cross is imputed to any and all sinners who will be saved.
2. All evangelicals do not agree that to receive salvation one must place faith directly in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior in this life, or face eternal damnation in the next.
 - a. The question is asked, how much content must one know to be saved, and by whom, must it be known? Inclusivists maintain that salvific knowledge resides in God, but not necessarily in the redeemed.
 - b. Three arguments are used to support this thesis.
 1. The **eschatological** argument —
 - a. The “later light” view — I Pet.3:18-22 Those who have not heard in this life will be given an opportunity postmortem.
 - b. Annihilationism — Those who do not believe are destroyed. They do not suffer forever in hell.
 2. The **election** argument — God elects the individual to salvation according to His knowledge of how a person would respond had they been given a chance.
 3. The **exception** argument —
 - a. The redeemed of the OT — Enock, Job, Melchizedek, Jethro, etc.
 - b. The infants and mentally disabled of our day.
3. Positions on salvation in the face of religious pluralism

| Exclusivism | Universal opportunity before death | Inclusivism | Postmortem evangelism | Universalism |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Definition: God does not provide salvation to those who | Definition: All people are given opportunity to be | Definition: The unevangelized may be saved if they | Definition: The unevangelized receive an opportunity | Definition: All people will in fact be saved by Jesus. |

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| fail to hear of Jesus and come to faith in him before they die. | saved by God's sending the gospel (even by angels or dreams) or at the moment of death or by middle knowledge. | respond in faith to God based on the revelation they have. | to believe in Jesus after death. | No one is damned forever. |
| Key Texts: Jn.14:6, Acts 4:12, I Jn.5:11-12 | Key Texts: Dan.2, Acts 8 | Key Texts: Jn.12:32, Acts 10:43, I Tim.4:10 | Key Texts: Jn.3:18, I Pet.3:18-4:6 | Key Texts: Rom.5:18, I Cor.15:22-28, I Jn.2:2 |
| Adherents: Augustine John Calvin Jonathan Edwards Carl Henry R.C. Sproul Ronald Nash | Adherents: Thomas Aquinas James Arminius John Henry Newman J. Oliver Buswell Jr. Noman Geisler Robert Lighner | Adherents: Justin Martyr John Wesley C.S.Lewis Clark Pinnock Wofhard Pannenberg John Sanders | Adherents: Clement of Alexandria George MacDonald Donald Bloesch Geroge Lindbeck Stephen Davis Gabriel Fackre | Adherents: Origen F.E. Schleiermacher G.C. Berkouwer William Barclay Jacques Ellul |

NOTE: The above chart is taken from What About Those Who Have Never Heard, pp.20 by Fackre, Nash, & Sanders, IVP

- a. **EXCLUSIVISM** - a small remnant (the elect) will be saved through calling on the name of Christ Jesus in faith. All others will be damned, no mater what their circumstances or faith traditions. This has become the traditional evangelical position following Augustine, Luther, Calvin.
- b. **UNIVERSALISM** - all people will be saved because God is love and mercy. This is the classic liberal position. In recent years it has become popular within some Emergent churches.
- c. **PLURALISM** – there is saving faith in all religions. John Hick who advocates *Pluralism* defines saving religions as those involving a “transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to God or Reality-centeredness.”
- d. **INCLUSIVISM or EXTENDED MERCY** - all who have faith in God will be saved through the atonement provided by Christ. Some may not know the name of Christ but none-the-less trust in the God who saves by faith. This is the view of the Second Vatican Council.

NOTE: Among Evangelicals the principle debate is between **INCLUSIVISM** (extended mercy) and **EXCLUSIVISM**.

B. The case that some Christians make for EXTENDED MERCY.

- 1. The problem with EXCLUSIVISM: It does not give proper respect to the breadth of God’s love and the fairness of God.
- 2. The problem with UNIVERSALISM: It does not give proper respect to the Biblical material that centers salvation on Christ and faith.
- 3. The doctrine of “**Implicit faith**” (salvation through the knowledge of God from general revelation). Some make a distinction between the broad category of “believers” and the narrower sub category of “Christians.”

| The Saved | | | The Lost |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Believers in God the Redeemer | | Special dispensations | |
| Confessional Christians | Non Christians who believe in "God" | Those who would believe if they knew | Infants, Mentally challenged |

- a. There is considerable biblical testimony regarding the efficacy of **general revelation**.
 1. **Acts 14:17** "He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."
 2. **Ps.19:1** "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse in declaring the work of His hands."
 3. **Rom.10:18** "But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; 'Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.'"
- b. The love of God for the **whole world**.
 1. The psalmists speak repeatedly of His rule over all the nations, just as the prophets do - Ps.8:1; 22:27-28; 46:10; 47:1; 49:1; 50:1; 66:1,8; 67:3; 82:8; 96:3,7,10; 97:9; 100:1.
 2. **Isaiah 49:6** "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."
 3. **II Peter 3:9** "God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."
 4. **I Timothy 2:4** "God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
 5. **Romans 11:32** "For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all."
 6. **Genesis 12:3** "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
 7. **I Corinthians 15:22** "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."
 8. **Genesis 9:8-17** The covenant with Noah
- c. **Reconciliation is completed by Christ's sacrifice not by man's faith.** Some texts suggest that Jesus' work on the cross, reconciled (past tense) the world to God. This would suggest that the reconciliation is already a completed work. It is now simply a matter of proclaiming this message of universal salvation to the world. It is believed (by some) that either Jesus reconciled the world to God or he did not. If he did, then there is no need for man to do anything to make it complete or to activate it.
 - **Rom.5:10-11** "For if when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."
 - **II Cor.5:18-19** "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them"
 - **Col.1:21-22** "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical

body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.”

- d. God has a special concern for **Gentiles** (who are not a part of the covenant with Israel).
 1. **Deut.2:5** “. . . I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.” (also vs.21-22)
 2. **Deut.2:9** “. . . I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession.” (also vs.19)
 3. **Amos 9:7** “‘Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to Me, O sons of Israel?’ declares the Lord. ‘Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?’”
 4. **Jonah 4:11** “And should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”
 - e. In the **Old Testament** there are examples of God’s grace extending beyond the Abrahamic covenant.
 1. **Holy Pagans** - Job, Abimelech (king of Gerar - Gen.20:1-18), Jethro (a priest of Midian - Ex.18:1-12),
 2. Jews who lived before Jesus was born - **Abraham**.
 3. The people of Nineveh (Jonah) were not required to visit the temple in Jerusalem or to become Israelites yet God received their repentance.
 4. **Abel, Enoch, Noah, Daniel** being neither Jews nor Christians, pleased God because they sought Him with the faith response which pleases Him (Heb.11:6)
 5. **Malachi 1:11** “From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.”
 6. **Isaiah 19:25** “Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.”
 - f. In the **New Testament** there are examples of Gentiles who were included within the scope of God’s salvation.
 1. **Melchizedek** (a Canaanite priest - Gen.14:17-24) Heb.6:20-7:18.
 2. The **Magi** (Matt.2:1-12)
 3. **Luke 18:9-14** God forgives the publican who simply asks for mercy.
 4. **Matthew 10:15; 11:22; 12:41-42** Some of the unexpected inhabitants of heaven - the Ninevites, the queen of Sheba, the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah.
 5. **Acts 10:34-35** “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.”
 6. **Acts 14:16-17** “In the past, He let all nations go their own way. Yet He has not left Himself without testimony.”
 - g. The surprise expressed by “the righteous” in **Matthew 25:31-46** suggests that in receiving “the least of these my brethren” some will have received Christ himself.
 1. Not knowing or consciously responding to Jesus, these individuals received him in the lives of those they loved and served.
 2. This might suggest that it is our response to the image of God in Christ or in his people that is the sign of saving faith.
4. Special examples.

- a. It is assumed that a loving God will graciously receive children when they **die in infancy**.
- b. Postmortem encounters - **I Peter 3:19-20; 4:6**
5. We interpret the biblical material according to some basic **“control beliefs”** that determine what we will emphasize. At the core of these beliefs is our concept of God. Is God a gracious loving being or a harsh, judge?
6. It is not unreasonable to assume that God (who looks on the heart) sees who has **“an ear to hear”** and who does not. Those who have a heart to believe but for whatever reason have not heard the name of Jesus might be accepted on the basis of the posture of their heart.
7. “I have never been able to conjure up (as some great evangelical missionaries have) the appalling vision of the millions who are not only perishing but who will inevitably perish. On the other hand, as I have said, I cannot be a universalist. Between these extremes I cherish the hope that the majority of the human race will be saved.” John Stott in *Essentials: a Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* p327

C. **The case against EXTENDED MERCY.**

1. **There is no hope outside faith in Christ. Eph.2:12** “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”
2. **Jesus is the only means of salvation. Jn.14:6** “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’”
Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”
3. **Confession of faith in Jesus is essential. Jn.3:17-18** “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”
Rom. 10:9-10 “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”
4. **Many will not be saved. Lk.13:22-30** “²² Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. ²³ Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” He said to them, ²⁴ “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. . . . ³⁰ Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”
5. **There is no postmortem repentance. Heb.9:27-28** “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment; so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, to those who eagerly await Him, for salvation.”
6. **The argument of the book of Romans**, which makes the following points clear.
 - a. All people have enough “light” to be responsible before God with respect to their sin.
 - b. It is by faith in Christ that sins are forgiven.
 - c. Faith comes by hearing the gospel preached.
 - d. Many people have zeal for God but are not saved.

7. The cases cited as biblical examples of people saved through general revelation are, at best, ambiguous. We know little about Melchizedek's life experience for example. Cornelius (a "god-fearer") was not saved until he believed, Acts.11:14.
8. It seems difficult to avoid equating God's understanding love with "universalism" in that one can argue that all who do not believe have some external circumstance that drives them to that position. All unbelievers are victims of some form of mental emotional injustice.
9. The Jews of the first century certainly seemed to fit the criteria for believing individuals who were not confessing faith in Christ yet they are condemned. Rom.10:1-2; Phil.3:1-11. The same can be said of the religious audience in Athens. Acts 17:30-31.
10. If we acknowledge as "saving faith" acts of love and grace on the part of those who do not confess Christ, does this not look like salvation by works? Pinnock states, "One can make a faith response to God in the form of actions of love and justice."

D. The nature of religious toleration and pluralism in light of the exclusiveness of the Christian gospel.

1. **Legal toleration** commits us always to protect people's political rights to follow any religion or no religion at all.
2. **Social toleration** advocates charity toward people who think and believe differently from the way we do.
3. **Intellectual toleration** is the relativistic notion that one system of belief is as true as any other.

NOTE: Intellectual toleration is not necessarily demanded by legal and social toleration.

- a. Pluralism does not demand that we all believe and behave the same way nor does it demand that we believe that any belief system is as good or true as another.
- b. Pluralism does demand that we practice legal and social toleration.
- c. Evangelicals must embrace legal and social toleration without intellectual toleration.
- d. They must also resist the tendency of their critics to tie intellectual intolerance to legal and social intolerance.

E. "Christian" Universalism.

1. Universalism

- a. Universalism is a term that can capture many orthodox concepts.
 1. Christianity is a universal religion (not limited to a tribe, ethnic group, or social class).
 2. Christ's death was an atoning sacrifice for the sins of whole world (not just for a select group). The Gospel is offered to all humanity but applied only to those who believe.
 3. All people have a chance to respond in some meaningful way to God in faith.
- b. **Christian theological universalism** – "Universalism," in its simple and proper theological sense, is the doctrine of universal salvation; or in other words, of the final holiness and happiness of all humans, to be effected by the grace of God, through the ministry of his Son, Jesus Christ. *Thomas Sawyer*
 1. Universalism has been a minority part of the Christian tradition from the second century.

- Among the early followers of Christ, in the writings that still exist, we find it being proclaimed. Clemens of Alexandria, Origin, Athanasius, Chrysostum, Gregory of Nyssa, Clement of Alexander, Eusibius, Jerome.
 - Many influential modern Christian leaders are associated with some form of universalism – Isaac Watts, George MacDonald, Jacques Ellul, William Barclay, Richard John Neuhaus, Harold Lovelace, Brian McLaren
2. In 1899 the “Winchester Profession” outlined five principles of Christian Universalism.
 - The universal Fatherhood of God.
 - The spiritual authority and leadership of His Son Jesus Christ.
 - The trustworthiness of the bible as containing a revelation from God.
 - The certainty of just retribution for sin.
 - **The final harmony of all souls with God.**
 3. Forms of “Christian” universalism.
 - a. All will come to repentance and faith - *Lorraine Boettner, Postmillennialism.*
 - b. Universal atonement - Christ died for all humans even though not all will receive that salvation.
 - c. Universal opportunity – Everyone will have an opportunity to respond with faith to General Revelation concerning God.
 - d. Universal opportunity to hear the Gospel – The world will one day be fully reached and will respond with faith.
 - e. Universal reconciliation or **Trinitarian universalism** – People need to be told that they have been saved so that they can enjoy the blessings that are already theirs. *Athanasius, Karl Barth and T. F. Torrance.*
 - f. Universal pardon – God will impute not only righteousness but also faith. *C.H.Dodd*
 - g. Universal restoration – After a time of punishment all will be restored to and by the love of God. *Origin*
2. **Texts used to Support Universal salvation.**
 - a. **Isaiah 45:23** “I have sworn by Myself, the world has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.”
 - b. **II Cor.5:19** “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”
 - c. **John 12:32** “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” (This may mean not just Jews but people from every race and culture?)
 - d. **I Tim.4:10** “is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe” (Does this speak of universal atonement or of universal application of atonement?)
 - e. **Phil.2:10-11** “every knee should bow, and . . . every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Does this speak of redemption or of final recognition even by those who rejected Jesus?)
 - f. **Rom.5:18** “Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men” (Does “all” refer to “every individual” or “all ethnic groups?”)

- g. **Rom.11:32** “God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all” (Does “all” refer to “every individual” or “all ethnic groups?”)
- h. **I Cor.15:22** “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (All in Adam die so all who are in Christ will live.)
- i. **Col.1:19-20** “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heave, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross”
- j. **Heb.2:9** Jesus “was made a little lower than the angels. . . so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” (Does this speak of universal atonement or of universal application of atonement?)

3. Logic used to Support Universal salvation.

- a. If God is a **God of love** then it is inconceivable that His plan would include a concept of an eternal hell suggesting that His love had failed. **But God is not just a God of love. He is also a God of justice and holiness. All of His attributes must be respected.**
- b. The idea of an eternal hell as punishment for a relatively short life span on earth is unjust. **But God must be the final standard of what is just.**
- c. **But God has dignified humans with freedom to chose and respects their choice.**
- d. Christ’s death has atoned for the sins of all mankind (Rom.5:18, I Cor.15:22) therefore all are acquitted. **But the context of these texts shows that the benefits of the cross are for those “in Christ” only.**
- e. If the Jesus who was a **friend of sinners** represents the fullest expression of God’s nature then we cannot conclude that man is still alienated from God. **But the fact that Jesus reached out to sinners does not mean that all sinners are reconciled to God. Jesus laid aside some of his divine attributes at the incarnation.**
- f. The **atonement** is the result of man’s faith if the sins of the world were not fully paid for at the cross. This detracts from the grace of the Gospel. **But the payment and the effecting of the benefits are not the same. The justification of faith requires faith.**
- g. Salvation of the world was **objectively** accomplished at the Cross and it is **subjectively** experienced as one knows and believes. **But the effect of believing is more than just a subjective experience. It is also the effecting of the atonement.**
- h. The real death of Christ that reconciled the world to God is not the physical death on the cross but rather the incarnation. **But the Scripture speaks of the cross and blood with respect to atonement.**

4. Problem passages for Universalism.

- a. **Matt.25:46** “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life”
- b. **Jn.3:16** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”
- c. **Jn.5:28-29** “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned”
- d. **Rom.9:22** “What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath – prepared for destruction”
- e. Matt.8:12; 25:41; Mk.3:29; Rom.2:5; II Thess.1:9; Rev.21:8

- f. A number of orthodox doctrines are incompatible with universalism.
1. Jesus' death on the cross was a **VICARIOUS** (substitutionary) provision whereby Christ died in the place of the sinner (**I Pet.3:18** "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God," Look also at Lev.16:21; Isa.53:6; Matt.20:28; Lk.22:37; Jn.10:11; Rom.5:6-8).
 - a. **ΑΝΤΙ** (ANTI) is a Greek preposition meaning "in the place of" (**Matt.20:28** "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.>").
 - b. **ὑπὲρ** (HUPER) is a Greek preposition meaning "for the benefit of; in the place of" (**II Cor.5:21** "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.>").
 - c. Jesus' death is not to be understood as the heroic act of a martyr but rather as the just punishment of a guilty sinner for He actually became sin (guilty) for us. It is in this context that Jesus cried from the cross "Why have you forsaken me." Matt.27:46.
 2. It was a **PROPIITIATION** or satisfaction of all God's righteous demands upon the sinner (**Rom. 3:25** "whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed" Look also at **I Jn.2:2; Heb.2:17**). Note that the RSV uses the word "expiation" emphasizing the effect of Christ's death on man (taking away his guilt) as opposed to its effect upon God (appeasing His wrath).

NOTE: The concept of "expiation" with its emphasis not on the demands of God's character but on the guilt of man has often been offered as the preferred emphasis noting that atonement is made more "for sin" as opposed to "to God." This emphasis is popular among those who are offended by the notion that God is a God of wrath (C.H. Dodd). Expiatory acts sought to remove "guilt feelings" through conciliatory actions offered to God, initiated by penitents is common in the history of religion. Propitiation stands in contrast to this concept.
 3. The death of Christ was a **RANSOM SACRIFICE** paid to the holy demands of God for the sinners' freedom from just condemnation.
 - a. There are a number of colorful Greek words used to make this point.
 1. (AGORAZO) - "to buy in the marketplace" (**I Cor.6:20** "For you have been bought with a price" Look also at I Cor.7:23; II Pet 2:1; Rev. 5:9, 14:3-4).
 2. (EXAGORAZO) - "to buy out of the marketplace" (**Gal.4:5** "in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law," Look also at Gal.3:13; Eph.5:16; Col.4:5).
 3. (LUTROO) - "to let loose; to set free; remove from sale" (**Mk.10:45** "to give His life a ransom for many").
 4. (LUTROSIS) - noun form of **λυτροω** (**Heb.9:12** "and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.>").
 5. (APOLUTROSIS) - "to free from enslavement" (**Eph.1:7** "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses", Look also at Lk.21:28; Rom.3:24, 9:23; I Cor.1:30; Eph.14; 4:30; Col.1:14; Heb.9:15; 11:35).

- b. This purchase is a once and forever transaction (**Heb.10:14** “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” Look also at Isa.53:7-12; Jn.1:29; I Cor.5:7; Eph.5:2; Heb.9:22,26).

4. See also apptoteach.org (theology files #511, #911, #912)

5. **Responses to Universal arguments.**

- a. Some passages (Phil.2:10-11; Col.1:19-20) do not say that all will be saved and restored to fellowship with God but just that all will be made subject to God.
- b. Other passages (I Tim.4:10; Heb.2:9) simply say that Christ died for all or offers salvation to all.
- c. Rom.5:18; I Cor.15:22 come in contexts that seem to qualify the universal dimension of Christ’s work. Rom.5:17 “those who receive”, vs.15,19 “many”(not all), I Cor.15:17-18 “all who are in Christ”
- d. In Rom.11:32 Paul is talking about Israel’s rejection of God and the subsequent offer of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul points out in vs.7-10, 21-22 that some have rejected God’s mercy and have not received His salvation.
- e. The popularity of universalism is no doubt related to the pressure of post-modern ideals together with the shift in emphasis within the church to a love centered, relational, pragmatic theology (in reaction to a cold, doctrinaire, intellectual theology). Emergent congregations under the influence of popular authors like Brian McLaren tend to embrace a theology of universalism.
- f. Christian Universalism is deeply appealing and attractive to our senses. One can’t but wish that it be true but the testimony of Scripture (taken as a whole) makes it hard to embrace.