

A row of lit candles in a dark, textured setting. The candles are lit, casting a warm, orange glow. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a surface. The candles are arranged in a row, and their flames are visible. The overall mood is warm and contemplative.

HELL YES...OR HELL NO

WEEK 4

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HELL OF A DISCLAIMER:

We are all Christian brothers and sisters and our conversations will be centered on biblical texts. No one should claim to “know” all of the answers. Our discussion presupposes that Hell is real. We may not always agree but we strive to respect each others points of view

GIVE 'EM HELL:

- Eternal Torment

- Largely held “Traditional” view of eternal suffering
- **Matthew 25:46 (NRSV)**⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- Terminal Punishment

- Some passages discuss Hell in terms of death and destruction, suggesting a finality
- **Matthew 10:28 (NRSV)**²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.^[a]

- a: Gehenna

GIVE 'EM HELL:

- Universalist View

- Still other passages suggest that everyone will be reconciled with God in the end
- **Romans 5:18 (NRSV)** ¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass (Adam) led to condemnation for all, so one man's (Jesus') act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all

- Hell and Purgatory

- A view largely rejected by Protestants. Yet, the bible does speak of a postmortem cleansing of the soul
- **1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (NRSV)** ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. ¹⁴ If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

WHAT THE HELL:

- ~~Week 1~~

- ~~— Introduction~~

- ~~— Eternal Damnation~~

- ~~Week 2~~

- ~~— Eternal Damnation~~

- ~~— Terminal Punishment~~

- Week 3

- ~~— Terminal Punishment~~

- ~~— A Universalist View~~

- Week 4

- A Universalist View

- Hell and Purgatory

- Summary



UNIVERSALISM

- In the end, God will reconcile himself with ALL people
- Must understand that the Bible is contradictory
- Sin is taken seriously
 - Rots creation
 - Only God can rescue us from it
 - Absolutely there is eschatological punishment
- God manifest in Christ: through his incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension and return. At the heart of everything is – Christ: Christ is the norm for interpreting Scripture

HELL OF A STORY: SCRIPTURE

- **Scripture**
 - **Romans 5:18**
 - **Romans 11:32**
 - **1 Corinthians 15:22**
 - **Philippians 2:11**
 - **Colossians 1:20**

Colossians 1:16-20 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹⁶ for in^[a] him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in^[b] him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

HELL OF A PICTURE: UNIVERSALISM

Creation

- All things are from Him and for Him
- **All** humans are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:24-26)
- Humanity has a destiny, to be like Christ (Rom. 8:11, 1 Cor. 15:12-57, 1 John 3:2)

The Fall

- **All** humans have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)
- Deserve Punishment: Yes
- Deserve Rescue: No
- But hating creatures created in his image would be a form of self hatred. God loves us

HELL OF A PICTURE: UNIVERSALISM

Redemption

- Incarnation: Jesus become flesh, fully human
- Death: Jesus died for **all** people in order to save **all** people (1 John 2:2, 2 Cor. 5:14, 1 Tim. 2:3-6, Heb. 2:9)
- Resurrection/Ascension: Not just for Jesus but for humanity (part or **all**)
- Church: We live between Jesus resurrection and resurrection of the dead (us). Forecasting a time to come
- Consummation: Then at Jesus' name, every knee will bow- in heaven and on earth, and under the earth (Phil. 2:9-11)

HELLUVA GOD

- God is good. God is love
- God loves all of his creatures, not just some
- God desires to bring all people into union with him
- God continues to love those in Hell (if God is love)
- God is just. Must not set divine love in opposition to divine justice

HELL: ABANDON HOPE?

- Divine Judgement:
 - Some punished because they deserve it (retribution)
 - Retribution doesn't undo harms
 - God's justice, with respect to creation, is about putting wrongs right.
- Punishment
 - As deterrent (Deut. 13:11)
 - Warning (Rev. 14:7)
 - Deliverance (2 Thess. 1:6-7)
 - Corrective (1 Cor. 5:1; 11:29, Titus 2:11-12, Heb 12:5-11, Rev. 3:19)

HELL: ABANDON HOPE?

- Propose that Hell works the same way:
- Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail...For no one is cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone. Lam. 3:22, 31-33)

HELL OF A STORY: SCRIPTURE

- **Scripture**
 - **Romans 5:18**
 - **Romans 11:32**
 - **1 Corinthians 15:22**
 - **Philippians 2:11**
 - **Colossians 1:20**

Romans 5:18-21 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification^[a] leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 11:32-36 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

³³ O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

³⁴ “For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?”

³⁵ “Or who has given a gift to him,
to receive a gift in return?”

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 15:22-26 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²² for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end,^[a] when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Philippians 2:9-11 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

- ⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

ETERNAL HELL REBUTTAL

- Not sound Hermeneutic argument
- Sin doesn't have to be eliminated but judged
- Where is the Wrath of God?
- Postmortem judgement is speculative: God's Judgement is final

TERMINAL REBUTTAL

- The Old Testament clearly paints a picture of destruction of God's enemies
- Jesus and Paul were Old Testament Scholars and so nothing they would say or write would contradict this
- Misleading rhetorical questions like, "does Christ undo all sin or just some of it?"

PURGATORY REBUTTAL

- Although agree on the post mortem reconciliation to God, eternal torment exists due to the fact that some will just not accept Christ, by choice
- God's love is immense, but reciprocating this love can not be coerced, programmed or determined. It has to be by choice, given to us by having free will
- The biblical story is clear that we may choose to love or not to love God and/or each other

HELL AND PURGATORY

DETAILS IN THE HELL

- **Not a place of Probation:**

- All souls that enter Purgatory are bound for heaven and beyond the reach of sin

- **NOT a second chance**

- The soul's choice between God and self at the moment of death is final
- Free Will. It is a choice

- ***In Articulo Mortis:***

- Repentance in the moment of death is ALWAYS accepted

- **You didn't "get away with it"**

- The soul is now required, with prolonged labors and pains, without the body, to achieve satisfaction and purification

WHAT THE HELL?

- The Question: How is it that persons who die in a state of grace, but are less than fully perfect, are made fit for heaven
- Hebrews 12:12-14
 - ¹²Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.¹⁴ Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
- Revelations 21:22-27
 - ²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God give it light, and the Lamb is it lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

PURGATORY'S HELLISH HISTORY

- Sanctification
 - Purgatory: base word “Purge”
 - Purification
 - Cleansing
- A forward-looking process of perfecting that which is imperfect, so that we can achieve the holiness required to be in the presence of the Lord
- Satisfaction
 - Punishment
 - Meant to “satisfy” the Justice of God
- Roman Catholic focus
 - Penance
 - Contrition: Being truly sorry
 - Confession: to a priest
 - Satisfaction: punishment imposed by the priest
 - Failure to achieve satisfaction leads to Purgatory

HELL IF I KNOW...

- Is it in the Bible?
 - No explicit support
 - Theological inference
 - Purgatory
 - Jesus descended into Hell
 - The Trinity
 - Satan as a fallen angel

ETERNAL REBUTTAL

- Very little scripture to support Purgatory
- Nothing in the Bible to support postmortem repentance
- Misinterpretation of 1 Cor. 3:11-15
 - Escaping through flame

TERMINAL REBUTTAL

- Repulsed by the thought that Jesus' death on a cross for our sins was not enough (Satisfaction)
- Not found in the Bible
- But, the process of sanctification is a long, difficult path, and because this doesn't replace Hell (as Universalism might), not fully opposed

UNIVERSAL REBUTTAL

- A plausible question, how do imperfect beings become perfect to be in the presence of God? But Scripture teaches that it is done by Christ in an instant
- No explicit denial other than the arguments put forward by the Eternal and Terminal

SUMMARY

- Eternal Torment

- Most commonly held view
- Isa. 66:22-24, Mat. 18:6-9, Mark 9:42-48, Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10, 14-15
- If you have not accepted Christ at the time of death, headed here
- Forever suffering with resurrected bodies fit for suffering from the eternal fire and worm

- Terminal Punishment

- Strong scriptural Support
- Rom. 6, Heb.6:1-2, Psalm 1, Psalm 37, 2 Pet. 2:1-10, Rev. 20:7-15, John 3:16, 1 Cor. 15:50-54
- A destination, choice of rejecting God with real consequences
- Purifies and destroys, eliminating evil
- The destruction and suffering is usually implying a period of time, not eternal. Only the saved are given the gift of eternal life

- Universalism

- Not a new concept, dating back to 300's
- Rom. 5:18, Rom 11:32, 1 Cor. 15:22, Phil. 2:11, Col. 1:20, Lam. 3:22; 31-33
- Take the Bible, the grace of God and Christ's teachings as a whole, focusing on love
- If people end up in Hell, then did God/Christ fail?
- "For no one is cast off by the Lord forever"

- Hell and Purgatory

- Answer to key question: how do imperfect humans at the time of death stand before the Lord?
- Heb. 12:12-14, Rev. 21:22-27, 1 Cor. 3:11-15
- Humans make the choice to accept Christ, even at the moment of death
- Destination is eternal suffering or heaven.
- Those who make it to Purgatory are heaven bound

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Eternal Punishment

- Skips texts that might contradict it
- Questionable inference as to eternal
 - Worm
 - Fire
 - Sodom/Gomorrah
 - “Eternal” (aionios) does refer to act of punishing but the result (separation from God)

- Universal

- If terminal is right, then Universal is wrong and the case for terminal is strong
- Irreversibility of God's judgment is found through the New Testament

- Terminal Punishment

- Difficult time dealing with strong texts showing eternal suffering
- If Terminal is right, then all three others are wrong
- Inference that only those who believe in Christ will live forever. Not biblically clear that the wicked will not

- Purgatory

- The New Testament talks a lot about sanctification and resurrection, so the idea that purgatory is inferred is weak
- New Testament teaches instant transformation (1 Cor 15, 1 John 3, 1 Thess. 4:13-17)

THANK YOU

Now stay the hell out of Hell

