

The Blasphemies Of Universal Atonement

By Don Fortner

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Hebrews 10:28, 29 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

In these two verses God the Holy Spirit declares that those who despise the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ shall, in the day of judgment, be worthy of much sorer and more severe punishment than those who despised the law of God given by the hand of Moses to the children of Israel.

There are many, many proper and very sober applications of this warning. Here God himself speaks of men who have 'trodden under foot the Son of God', have counted the blood of the Son of God, 'the blood of the covenant', an unholy thing, and have 'done despite unto the Spirit of grace'. I want you to see, from the Word of God, that those words very accurately describe the religion and the preachers of our day.

I have chosen my words deliberately and purposefully. I have chosen them, either by the Spirit of Christ or by the spirit of antichrist. I will leave that for others to decide; but there is no half-way-house between the two. This is the charge I make against the religion and the religious leaders of this apostate generation: All preachers of Arminian, free will, works religion; all preachers of the damning, blasphemous doctrine of universal atonement or universal redemption, that is to say, all who believe, teach, and preach that the Son of God died to redeem and save all human beings, even those who perish at last in hell under the wrath of God are guilty of this crime. They tread under their feet the blood of the Son of God, count the everlasting blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace! There is not today, never has been, and never can be any doctrine in all the world more dishonouring to God, more blasphemous to the Lord Jesus Christ, more contrary to the Spirit of grace and to the Word

of God, or more damning to the souls of men than the doctrine of universal atonement.

Be sure you understand me. I will not argue with anyone about terminology. When I use the terms universal atonement and universal redemption, this is what I mean. Universal atonement is the damning delusion of men, which teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ died to make atonement for the sins of all human beings without exception. It is the teaching that, by his blood, Christ merely made atonement possible for all, though he actually procured it for none. Universal redemption is that doctrine which says Christ shed his blood to redeem and save all people, that he made salvation possible for all and provided a way for all to be saved, though he did not actually secure and guarantee anyone's actual redemption and salvation by the shedding of his blood.

It is clearly the teaching of scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ actually and effectually redeemed and made atonement for every sinner for whom he died at Calvary. The death of Christ was not a gamble. Nothing was left to chance. He, by his sin-atonement blood, effectually and infallibly secured the everlasting salvation of God's elect.

Here is a list of indictments against every preacher and teacher of this blasphemous doctrine. I lay these fourteen charges against all who teach that the Lord Jesus Christ died for those who perish in hell under the wrath of God. These are serious, stern indictments. I do not make them lightly; I must make them. I am aware that many consider that the man who writes these lines and all those who believe them, are a bit hard-nosed about the doctrine of the gospel, a little too strict, a little too straight-laced, a little too dogmatic. However, if you will weigh the things here stated, and consider them in the light of holy scripture, I am confident that you will be convinced otherwise.

1. The teaching that Christ died to save all men makes man his own Saviour. If the Lord Jesus only made redemption possible, if he only rendered men saveable and put them in a saveable condition, if he only made it possible for man's sins to be put away, then any who are saved are saved, not because of what he did, but because of what they do. If they are justified, they must justify themselves by their own works. If they are made righteous, they must make themselves righteous by their own obedience. If they are to be born again, they must give themselves spiritual life by the exercise of their own will. If they are sanctified, they must sanctify themselves by their personal holiness. If they are preserved in life and grace, they must preserve and keep themselves.

The Word of God declares, in the plainest term possible, that the Lord Jesus Christ actually did put away the sins of his people and actually obtained eternal redemption for us by his blood (Hebrews 1:3; 9:12; 10:14).

2. The doctrine of universal atonement reduces the love of God to nothing. At first glance some would say, 'That cannot be right. The universal redemptionist says God loves everyone. You say God only loves the elect'. That is my point exactly. The Word of God highly commends the love of God displayed in the death of his Son and in our redemption by his blood.

We rejoice to sing ...

Could we with ink the oceans fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade –
To write the love of God above,
Would drain the oceans dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

We delight in the love of God! But what kind of love is that which does not secure the salvation of its objects when it has the power to do so? If God loves all men alike, what does the love of God have to do with anyone's salvation? Absolutely nothing! But that is not the teaching of scripture. The Word of God declares that those who are the objects of God's everlasting love and predestinating grace are also the objects of his effectual call and the possessors of his eternal inheritance (Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 1:4-11).

3. The notion of universal atonement is as blasphemous as it is unscriptural because it reduces the wisdom of God to foolishness

We worship and serve the all-wise, omniscient Lord God, wonderful in counsel and infinite in knowledge. But where is the wisdom of forming a plan for the salvation of a people whom he knew would never be saved? Where is the wisdom of God in sacrificing his darling Son for people who were already in hell when he made the sacrifice? That is not the wisdom of God Paul describes and glories in as he declares the everlasting purpose of God toward his elect in the Epistle to the Romans (Romans 8:28-39; 11:33-36).

4. Universal redemption is a denial of the justice of God

According to the Word of God redemption is primarily an act of divine justice. Read the scriptures for yourself, and you cannot fail to see this fact of divine revelation (Psalm 85:8-13; Proverbs 16:6; Isaiah 45:20-21; Romans 3:24-26). If Christ was punished for my sins and I must also bear the punishment for them, the justice of God is gone. In fact, the justice of God gives us as much hope as the grace of God. As hymnwriter Augustus Toplady puts it ...

From whence this fear and unbelief?
Has not the Father put to grief,
His darling Son for me?
And can the righteous Judge of men,
Condemn me for that debt of sin,
Charged to my great Surety?

Complete atonement Christ has made,
And to God's utmost justice paid,

All that His people owed.
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine!

5. Those who preach universal redemption blaspheme God in their preaching by reducing the omnipotence of almighty God to impotence weaker than the will of man

Isaiah declares that the Lord's arm is not short that it cannot save. But the Arminian tells us plainly that God cannot save multitudes for whom Christ died, though it is his will to do so, because they will not let him save them!

6. Those who preach universal atonement blaspheme God by asserting that the immutable God is, after all, fickle, mutable, and changeable
We are told that God loves all men now, while they live on the earth, but that he will cease to love them when they die and he will cast them into hell! Does that sound like God to you? Oh no! Our God changes not (Malachi 3:6; Job 23:13; James 1:17).

7. I lay the charge of blasphemy against all who teach that Christ died for all, even for those who perish in hell, because it robs God of his glory in salvation

The primary aim of the Triune God in saving sinners is his own great glory (Ephesians 1:3-14). But the Arminian, the free-willer, tells us that man has every reason to boast because it is he, not God, who makes him to differ from others. It is not God's will and God's work that makes the difference between men, but man's will and man's work.

8. Universal atonement is a blasphemous doctrine because it denies the satisfaction of Christ

Universal redemption denies that Christ, by his precious blood shed at Calvary, has satisfied anything. If those for whom he died yet perish themselves, then his death did not satisfy the Old Testament types, the words of the prophets (Isaiah 53:8-12; Daniel 9:24), or the requirements of God's holy law and justice.

9. Universal redemption is a blasphemous, damning heresy, for it affirms that there are multitudes in hell for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died in vain!

Did not the prophet declare, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied'? Did he not assert, 'He shall not fail'? The Son of God did not die in vain!

10. Universal redemption is a doctrine most clearly unscriptural and blasphemous inasmuch as it attempts to separate the priestly office and work of Christ, declaring that Christ sacrificed himself for and died in the place of a people for whom he refused to pray (John 17:9, 20)
What absurdity!

11. Universal atonement is a blasphemous doctrine in that it makes the cross of Christ a failure and asserts that he shall never see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied (Isaiah 53:10-11)

12. Universal redemption is as useless as it is blasphemous because it gives sinners no reason to look to, trust, and hope in Christ
The basis of our hope is redemption accomplished. 'Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption' (Psalm 130:7) The Lord God sends his servants out to declare redemption accomplished, not redemption possible (Isaiah 40:1-2).

13. Universal atonement is as useless as it is blasphemous because it offers believers no reason to love, obey, and glorify Christ
If the Lord Jesus has done no more for his people than he has for the damned, if he loved the lost, prayed for the reprobate, tried to save the multitudes who perish in hell, and loved those who are forever cursed, why should anyone seek to live for him, serve him, and honour him. If it is the believer's will that has turned him to Christ, it seems to me that Christ should serve, honour, and glorify his people, that he is in debt to them, not them to him. Blasphemy! The Word of God makes the fact of our distinct redemption by Christ to be the motive and inspiration for our devotion to him (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 20).

14. Above all else, I lay this charge against every preacher of universal redemption. He blasphemes God in that he declares that Lord Jesus Christ is a failure; a weak, frustrated, defeated failure, rather than the sovereign, effectual Saviour of his people
It is written, 'He shall (not might, may, or wants to, – but shall), save his people from their sins', and, blessed be his name, He shall.

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