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OPEN

Do you ever experience an existential crisis where you question the deep meaning of life? In the cartoon Calvin and Hobbes, the character Calvin asks, “Do you think there’s a God?” After a blank stare from Hobbes, Calvin continues, “Well, *somebody’s* out to get me!” Is God “out to get us”!?

This series highlights **Gospel saturation** - [Gary Thomas](#) suggests, “The ‘Gospel’ isn’t just a belief; it’s *a way of life*. It’s living in the awareness of our debt to God so that having received grace, we can offer that grace to others.”

This series warns of **Gospel corruption** - We have also noted how the Gospel is corrupted. Like the [raccoon that was given cotton candy](#), a false gospel will not serve us well in the long run.

Today we look at **Universalism** is the belief that all people, eventually, will be saved from eternal punishment in hell. The accompanying idea that all religions are equally valid. Universalism was proposed by Origen of Alexandria in the 2nd Century. The issue of universalism heated up when Rob Bell published his book [Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, And The Fate Of Every Person Who Ever Lived](#) (HarperOne, 2011).

Universalism corrupts the Gospel by offering a weak alternative to the Biblical facts of heaven and hell. In our society today we see universalism...

...expressed in popular culture - In her song “Every Rhythm Is the Beat” Canadian singer Sarah Slean declares, “no there is no saviour out there / the saviour is within / we’re gonna break apart our own hearts / so that everyone can see / our blood it is the same blood / every rhythm is the beat / one body blown to pieces / one light the light of us / one god in all religion / one love, one love.”

...embedded in false religion - The [Unitarian Universalist](#) tradition in Canada claims to synthesize “Wisdom from the world’s religions....Jewish and Christian teachings....Humanist teachings....Spiritual teachings of Earth-centred traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.”

...evident in evangelical churches - In a report on religious beliefs of Canadian millennials called “[Renegotiating Faith](#)” (Faith Today Publications, 2018) we read, “Many young adults talked about discovering a shared religious ethic behind all religions. They describe this ethic as leading one to become a good human and promoting social harmony. This discovery has led them to conclude that religious differences are only apparent and that those who insist on religious differences are sowing division. We call this belief the Universal Gnostic Religious Ethic (UGRE). This ethic posits that religion fulfills a set of psychosocial functions and any religion that fills these functions is a good one.”

Whereas the Gospel is **not universalism** it addresses the **universal problem**.

Hebrews 9:9 tells us about “sacrifices offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper.” (ESV) No matter what we do as humans, no effort on our part can solve our sin-soaked conscience. Only in Jesus Christ is this accomplished see **Hebrews 9:11-14**.

[1] The new way of life - vv. 19-25

Blood - vv. 19-20 - Our salvation is purchased by the blood of Jesus. Nothing we do can ever earn heaven. When we **agree** with God that we are by nature a sinner – then **accept** what the blood of Jesus can do, we are saved. We receive eternal life in the now...and in eternity. Consider carefully the cost of our salvation! Hebrews 9:22b, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”.

Boldness - v. 21 - Sin and guilt destroy confidence. God’s grace restores us to live a life of boldness. We can be certain of salvation and our security in Christ. This is true in spite of persecution and trial. The first readers of Hebrews were facing great trial and were told “do not throw away your confidence.” (10:35)

Behavior - vv. 22-25 - The cleansing of our conscience leads to a new lifestyle. Because our conscience is cleansed we hold new values which leads to new activities. What is more, there is a day of accountability coming, according to Hebrews 27-28 but in Christ we do not fear this.

[2] The old way of death - vv. 26-31

What happens to the one who continues to sin – that is, they continue to reject the true Gospel. John 3:18 states, “whoever does not believe stands condemned already” even though in Christ we are invited to new birth.

Resisting grace - vv. 26-27 - When we read that there “no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” If we reject’s Christ’s work then it is, for such a person, just as if the sacrifice had not been made in the first place. The rescue chopper may be hovering over a drowning man, but if he refuses to take hold of the rescue line, the whole team and their helicopter might as well not even be there!

Receiving punishment - vv. 26-27 - If rejection of the old covenant leads to physical death, how much more will rejection of the new covenant result in death? Some people are flippant about hell. They make it a joke like Calvin in the cartoon: “If heaven is good and if I like to be bad, how am I supposed to be happy there.” Some people object to hell, and turn to ideas like universalism.

- Consider the fact of hell and God’s desire for none to go there – see **Revelation 20:14-15** and **II Peter 3:9**
- Consider that He provided a significant and singular solution in Jesus Christ – see **Acts 4:12** and **I Timothy 2:5**.

REFLECT

What is the distortion of universalism? Universalism...

...tries to apply a human solution to something that only God can solve
...distorts the true nature of God and the sacrifice of Jesus
...excuses Christians from the sacred responsibility to share the Gospel