



# INVESTIGATION: What is Salvation?

## 18 – Is Universalism Wrong?

(These notes include a summary of part of chapter 8 in Mike Parson's book 'The Restoration of All Things'<sup>1</sup>)

### Definition

"Christian Universalism is the belief that Christ's life, death and resurrection applied to every man, woman and child that ever lived and guaranteed the redemption and restoration of the entire created order."<sup>2</sup>

"Christian universalism is the belief that in the end, all people will participate in the salvation achieved for them by Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

Notice the underlined section in the first definition. That's a more inclusive definition than the second one which is just looking at salvation of humanity.

Broadly speaking, Christian Universalism (CU) is a component of The Restoration of All Things (RoAT), although those who subscribe to universalism may not acknowledge it. That's because they've come to accept CU through a philosophical, biblical or theological doorway. Accepting CU through teaching straight from the Trinity (from The Throne) means it's housed where it should be, under Restoration, not somewhere else.

### Background

"Christian universalism is a school of Christian theology focused around the doctrine of universal reconciliation – the view that all human beings will ultimately be saved and restored to a right relationship with God. *Christian universalism* and *the belief or hope in the universal reconciliation through Christ* can even be understood as synonyms.

The term *Christian universalism* was used in the 1820s by Russell Streeter in the *Christian Intelligencer* of Portland – a descendant of Adams Streeter who had founded one of the first Universalist Churches on September 14, 1785. Christian universalists believe this was the most common interpretation of Christianity in Early Christianity, prior to the 6th century<sup>4</sup>. Christians from a diversity of denominations and traditions believe in the tenets of Christian universalism, such as the reality of an afterlife without the possibility of eternal punishment in hell.

As a formal Christian denomination, Christian universalism originated in the late 18th century with the Universalist Church of America<sup>5</sup>. There is currently no single denomination uniting Christian universalists, but a few denominations teach some of the principles of Christian universalism or are open to them. In 2007, the Christian Universalist Association was founded to serve as an ecumenical umbrella organization for churches, ministries, and individuals who believe in Christian universalism.

Unitarian Universalism<sup>6</sup> historically grew out of Christian universalism but is not an exclusively Christian denomination. It formed from a 1961 merger of two historically Christian denominations, the Universalist Church of America and the American Unitarian Association, both based in the United States. In the academic world, theologians such as Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann are typically held to have supported a theology of universal reconciliation."<sup>7</sup>

1 – Mike Parsons (2021) "The Restoration of all Things: My continuing journey beyond beyond"  
[www.amazon.com.au/Restoration-all-Things-continuing-journey/dp/1789632005](http://www.amazon.com.au/Restoration-all-Things-continuing-journey/dp/1789632005)

2 – [www.christianuniversalism.com/what-is-christian-universalism](http://www.christianuniversalism.com/what-is-christian-universalism)

3 – Robin Parry (2019) [taken from YouTube videos on Christian Universalism: playlist of 3 talks] [www.freedomarc.org/robin-parry](http://www.freedomarc.org/robin-parry)

4 – "Christianity in the 6th century" [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity\\_in\\_the\\_6th\\_century](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_the_6th_century)

5 – "Universalist Church of America" [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universalist\\_Church\\_of\\_America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universalist_Church_of_America)

6 – "Unitarian Universalism" [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarian\\_Universalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarian_Universalism)

7 – "Christian universalism" [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_universalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_universalism) [Text is free to use under the [Creative Commons License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)]

## **The Foundation**

The essence of the Trinity is love, and out of that love they produced creation and through that love they interact with what they've created. However, everything in creation is centred on The Son (Jesus Christ), meaning that it's Christ-centred, to use biblical terminology. He's the one Father put in charge of the cosmos, and it's him who has been interacting with it, often as a theophany<sup>8</sup>. He walked in Eden's Garden with his first created humans. He was in the burning bush talking to Moses. He was in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He's the Lord of Hosts, the commander of the army of the Lord and was often confused with a messenger from Heaven (AKA 'angel').

As The Son's work has been to bring reconciliation and restoration, that task won't be fully complete until everything is restored to where creation was before The Fall. That means The Restoration of All Things is Father's central aim. The restoration of all people back to him is therefore part of his plan.

## **What It's Not**

The restoration of all people is not a view that is compatible with Evangelical Christianity, and therefore, there are many false concepts of what CU involves. Many raise objections to CU because of what they've heard, read or inferred, with the main 'sticking point' being that it hasn't been formalised in the same way as church dogma has been.

To eliminate any misconceptions, here's a list of what CU does **not** state, mean or even imply, for those adherents who are in love with the Trinity:

1. Jesus isn't the only way to reconnect to Father – Jesus is a personal being, not a force or energy, and he's not the universe itself. Those who have met him personally through visitation know that he leads them to Father.
2. Sin is taken lightly – Sin destroys our lives and brings chaos and destruction. This is avoided by living righteously so Heaven's blessings and Father's oversight are all available.
3. What we do in life is irrelevant – The law of reaping and sowing impacts our lives, so living in alignment with Heaven produces the best outcomes.
4. God's justice and love are not respected – There is no contradiction in love, holiness and justice – they're all part of Father's character. Loving him means agreeing with his character and actions.
5. The Bible is not believed – The Bible contains important spiritual information, so it's not 'written off'. Instead, those who love Father desire to hear from him about life today, rather than just read what was recorded in the past.
6. There's no need to evangelise – Coming into the Kingdom right now brings purpose to life and allows Kingdom benefits to flow. Importantly, we can't enter into the destiny Father intended for us if we're alienated from him and don't hear from him.
7. Rejection of Jesus has no consequences after death – *(Covered in the next topic in the series)*

More information HERE: [LINK](#)

## **It's Biblical**

Yes, it's entirely biblical.

There are many books on that aspect. (See Reference section at the end)

Some say RoAT (and therefore CU) is based on only one verse in scripture. Viz. –

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<sup>8</sup> – DEFINITION: 'Manifestation of God that is tangible to the human senses' [www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/theophany](http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/theophany)

**Acts 3:20-21** (TPT) *And he will send you Jesus, the Messiah, the appointed one.<sup>9</sup> For he must remain in heaven until the restoration of all things<sup>10</sup> has taken place,<sup>11</sup> fulfilling everything that God said long ago through his holy prophets.*

However, they do miss what Jesus said:

**Matthew 17:11** (NIV) – *Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things.*

As CU is a component of The Restoration of All Things it’s important for students of the Bible to know that there’s a firm biblical foundation for it. For a comprehensive biblical coverage of RoAT, read this:

- “100 Logical Supports for the Restoration of All Things”  
[canberraforerunners.org/100-Logical-Supports-for-the-Restoration-of-All-Things.pdf](http://canberraforerunners.org/100-Logical-Supports-for-the-Restoration-of-All-Things.pdf)

## Notes

The term ‘Universalist’ is usually considered a derogatory one among Christians because it’s seen as a monumental heresy. Because we subscribe to RoAT, of which ‘Universalism’ is a component, we use the term ‘universal’ in its broadest sense. In this way, many words are linked to ‘universal’, such as these: ‘inclusion’, ‘reconciliation’, ‘redemption’, ‘salvation’ and ‘restoration’.

In NT Greek, *apokatastasis* (ἀποκατάστασις) means ‘restoration’, ‘reconstitution’ or ‘restitution’.<sup>12</sup> It’s only used once in the NT, in Acts, as quoted above. This is the verse where the term ‘The Restoration Of All Things’ originates.

According to the Passion Translation, *apokatastasis* “infers the restoration of creation to the state of existence before the fall, but also Davidic covenant being restored. Luke’s choice of the Greek word found only here in the New Testament is noteworthy. It is a medical term that means ‘restoration of perfect health’.”<sup>13</sup>

CU was the doctrine of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century believers and of many of the early ‘church fathers’<sup>14</sup>. It doesn’t belong to any specific denomination as there Universalists in them all, to varying levels of understanding.

People become Universalists and believe in The Restoration Of All Things through various avenues. Some have come through being taken to Heaven, while others have come through visitations and visions. Still others see it as the main theme of the Bible, and some come to it through the undeniable fact that the character of the Trinity is love, not anger and retribution.

## Paradoxes

There is a dilemma with universalism: Because we were created with autonomy (free will) and as the Trinity is sovereign of all things, how can they ensure that everything will be restored?

Tackling it from the Calvinist/Arminian angles enlarges the question to:

- Did Jesus die for everyone or just some of us?
- Did Father only select those who he knew beforehand would respond to the Gospel?

9 – The Aramaic can be translated “He will send you all that has been already prepared for you through Jesus, the Anointed One.”  
[www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8365](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8365)

10 – Or “until the time for the universal restoration.”

[www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8366](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8366)

11 – Or “This one the heavens must receive until the times of universal restoration.”

[www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8366](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8366)

12 – Strong’s G605 [www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g605/kjv/tr/0-1/](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g605/kjv/tr/0-1/)

13 – Brian Simmons [www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8366](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+3%3A20-21&version=TPT#en-TPT-8366)

14 – [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_Fathers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Fathers)

- Who decides a person's fate, Father or the person?

The Arminian solution is: If people choose salvation for themselves and they reject it in the future, Father respects their choice.

The Calvinist solution is: If Father chooses some people for salvation, then it's guaranteed and secured for them.

Theologians can find scriptures that agree with these, but also those which disagree. That's why the question hasn't been perfectly answered in the past. We know, of course, that the solution lies with Father. That's why it's so important to ask him what we should believe and allow him to train us.

All we can say at the present time is that Father chose everyone and saved everyone because Jesus died for everyone. Jesus also reconciled everyone with father, but many have not yet taken up his offer.

The important thing to realise is that when we try to use the Bible to answer all these questions (or any other) we interpret the passages according to what we already believe. That's known as 'confirmation bias' and it results in us twisting passages to mean what we want them to mean. Again, this is why we need to have Father teach us – he's not biased or confused.

The best place to start is to commence from the fact that Father's character is love – not has love but **IS** love. Everything must align with that because he's also consistent – he doesn't waver or change in his character.

From that perspective, creation was "good" (fitting & pleasant)<sup>15</sup> in his eyes, but it's no in bondage to 'corruption'. That means his good creation has been corrupted and his aim for restoration is to take it back to where it was. As part of that restoration we are restored spiritually when we are spiritually reborn, and, we're restored back into Father's family as sons where we originally were. Adam and Ezer<sup>16</sup> were in intimate relationship with the Trinity before The Fall, so that's why we're back in relationship today. Creation is longing for all Father's sons to be revealed as they operate like Adam as planet managers and kings.

## **The True Nature of Sin**

I have taught on what sin is from the NT Greek perspective and the teachings of the Apostles.<sup>17</sup> However, there's a bigger picture that we need comprehend, and it's part of understanding this topic. What really happened in The Fall was that Adam turned away from living off the Tree of Life and moved into independence, feeding on the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That led him and his descendants away from Father to life with Heaven's abundance and physical death. Sin therefore affects everyone.

The sin and corruption of the created order means we lost our sonship, including our identity as sons. We therefore 'saw' ourselves as orphans &/or slaves.

*"What is sin? The Greek word is hamartia: the root of this word is ha: a negation or loss, and meros: form, hence lost form or image. Sin is actually our lost image and identity as God's children. We have lost our way, and our memory, so we do not know who we are nor what our purpose is. The behaviours associated with sin are just symptoms of mankind's lost identity and man's futile attempts to get back what was lost, through dead works of all kinds.*

*Sin is a noun and not a verb, therefore a specific thing. Sin is actually the specific definitive sin of Adam that has affected us all. Surely sin is not bigger and more powerful than our Father, who created us in His image for relationship with Him? Sin and eternal 'hell' are linked, as the doctrine of 'hell' is built on*

<sup>15</sup> – Genesis 1:18 (AMPC)

<sup>16</sup> – "5-Revealing Ezer" [canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/05-Revealing-Ezer.pdf](http://canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/05-Revealing-Ezer.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> – "What Really is Sin?" [canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/What-Really-is-Sin.pdf](http://canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/What-Really-is-Sin.pdf)

*the premise that human sin is more powerful than God's solution: Jesus and the cross.*"<sup>18</sup>

**If Father doesn't restore everything back to where it was, then sin wins.** Therefore Satan wins.

That can't happen because he's omnipotent and sovereign. Satan, the source of sin, can never be victorious because Jesus defeated him on the cross and defeated death with his resurrection.

Jesus of Nazareth demonstrated what Father is like – which he actually stated. When he healed the sick, lame blind and deaf, and when he released the demon-possessed, he demonstrated love and restoration. His work on Earth was about bringing restoration by reintroducing the Kingdom of Heaven, the New Covenant and healing. This is Father's plan and it's still going on until total completion.

When Jesus died, he represented all humanity, not just a few. His act was universal in its effects. When Jesus rose from the dead he represented every person – it was universal.

*"I believe that Jesus represented the brokenness of all humanity and took on everyone's lost identity so that all can be healed and restored. Jesus died for our sin, bearing the consequence of sin, taking our death into the grave; and went beyond, through the victory of the resurrection over death. Jesus was raised from the dead, taking back the keys of death and sheol (or hades), defeating the wages of sin by overcoming death for all of humanity. I believe we can be confident that God will save all people because all are made alive in Christ in the resurrection."*<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup>

## **Conclusion**

- The 'jury is still out'. Until Father tells me personally, I cannot fully accept Christian Universalism as a fact, just as I would with any church doctrine or belief.

**NOTE:** You can choose not to believe any of this. There's no pressure to accept any of what I've written.

## **The Final Word**

*"There are many voices and many points of view, but there is only one truth. Listen for My still small voice to lead you through this maze of opinion and speculation. Truth is what you seek. Quiet your soul and come to Me and I will show you the way."*<sup>21</sup>

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Free graphics are from [www.clker.com](http://www.clker.com) & free photos are from [commons.wikimedia.org](http://commons.wikimedia.org) unless otherwise credited.

***[List of resources over the page]***

18 – Mike Parsons (2021) "The Restoration of all Things: My continuing journey beyond beyond" [Kindle p:217]

19 – 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

20 – Mike Parsons (2021) "The Restoration of all Things: My continuing journey beyond beyond" [Kindle p:219]

21 – Marsha Burns "Small Straws in the Soft Wind" (August 27, 2021) [www.ft111.com/straws2021.htm](http://www.ft111.com/straws2021.htm)

## RESOURCES

- **VIDEO:** “Universal Salvation: A Whistle-Stop Introduction” (Robin Parry)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=TofvLLm\\_LqI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TofvLLm_LqI)
- **VIDEO:** “Hermeneutics & Hell: Biblical Interpretation & Universal Salvation” (Robin Parry)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ranNX-iR18c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ranNX-iR18c)
- **VIDEO:** “The Story of Salvation: A Narrative Theology of Hell” (Robin Parry)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAhXgBzIvFg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAhXgBzIvFg)
- **VIDEO:** “My Journey to Christian Universalism” (Mel Denyce)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpccMiOcluk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpccMiOcluk)
- **VIDEO:** “Why I’m a Universalist | Christian Universalism Simplified 008 | Logic of Universalism: God Is Good” (Mel Denyce)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVq72h8EhWg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVq72h8EhWg)
- **VIDEO:** “Why I Left Christianity to Follow Jesus Christ” [part 1] (Mel Denyce)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PitEjt2BZqg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PitEjt2BZqg)
- **VIDEO:** “Why I Left Christianity to Follow Jesus Christ” [part 2] (Mel Denyce)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxoOBfZqkXQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxoOBfZqkXQ)
- **VIDEO:** “Christian Universalism Objections Answered” (Mel Denyce)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP8IGxpcMHA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP8IGxpcMHA)
- **FACEBOOK:** “Love Covered Life” Official Facebook Discussion Group  
[www.facebook.com/groups/1362898643777677](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1362898643777677)
- **WEBSITE:** “Christian Universalism” [www.christianuniversalism.com](http://www.christianuniversalism.com)
- **BOOK:** “That All Shall Be Saved” (David Bentley Hart)  
[www.amazon.com.au/That-All-Shall-Saved-Universal-ebook/dp/B07X8BRSM2](http://www.amazon.com.au/That-All-Shall-Saved-Universal-ebook/dp/B07X8BRSM2)
- **BOOK:** “The Inescapable Love of God” (Thomas Talbott)  
[www.amazon.com.au/Inescapable-Love-God-Thomas-Talbott-ebook/dp/B00QJJFQA0](http://www.amazon.com.au/Inescapable-Love-God-Thomas-Talbott-ebook/dp/B00QJJFQA0)
- **BOOK:** “Hope Beyond Hell” (Gerry Beauchemin)  
[www.amazon.com.au/Hope-Beyond-Righteous-Purpose-Judgment-ebook/dp/B001T4Z81C](http://www.amazon.com.au/Hope-Beyond-Righteous-Purpose-Judgment-ebook/dp/B001T4Z81C)
- **BOOK:** “Hope for All: Ten Reasons God's Love Prevails” (Gerry Beauchemin)  
[www.amazon.com.au/Hope-All-Reasons-Gods-Prevails-ebook/dp/B07B4HMMH3](http://www.amazon.com.au/Hope-All-Reasons-Gods-Prevails-ebook/dp/B07B4HMMH3)
- **AUDIO:** “Hope for All” (Gerry Beauchemin) [sample – click link under book cover graphic]  
[www.amazon.com.au/Hope-All-Reasons-Gods-Prevails-ebook/dp/B07B4HMMH3](http://www.amazon.com.au/Hope-All-Reasons-Gods-Prevails-ebook/dp/B07B4HMMH3)
- **BOOK:** “Her Gates Will Never Be Shut” (Bradley Jersak)  
[www.amazon.com.au/Her-Gates-Will-Never-Shut-ebook/dp/B00IGGZRJY](http://www.amazon.com.au/Her-Gates-Will-Never-Shut-ebook/dp/B00IGGZRJY)
- **BOOK:** “A More Christlike God” (Brad Jersak)  
[www.amazon.com.au/More-Christlike-God-Beautiful-Gospel-ebook/dp/B00WJG0NGE](http://www.amazon.com.au/More-Christlike-God-Beautiful-Gospel-ebook/dp/B00WJG0NGE)
- **BOOK:** “Love Wins” (Rob Bell)  
[www.amazon.com.au/Love-Wins-Heart-Lifes-Questions-ebook/dp/B004TAAKKC](http://www.amazon.com.au/Love-Wins-Heart-Lifes-Questions-ebook/dp/B004TAAKKC)
- **BOOK:** “Sinners in the Hands of a Loving God” (Brian Zhand)  
[www.amazon.com.au/Sinners-Hands-Loving-God-Scandalous-ebook/dp/B01MXNSXE7](http://www.amazon.com.au/Sinners-Hands-Loving-God-Scandalous-ebook/dp/B01MXNSXE7)
- **BOOK:** “Patristic Universalism” (David Burnfield)  
[www.amazon.com.au/Patristic-Universalism-David-Burnfield-ebook/dp/B07FBLNPWH](http://www.amazon.com.au/Patristic-Universalism-David-Burnfield-ebook/dp/B07FBLNPWH)



- **ARTICLE:** “The Salvation of All” (Extract from the boob by Andrew Murray)
- **BOOK:** “The One Purpose of God” (J. Bonda)  
[rewireadventures.com/gets/read.php?id=glnVftANWQAC&item=The%20One%20Purpose%20Of%20God&author=J.%20Bonda&page=278](http://rewireadventures.com/gets/read.php?id=glnVftANWQAC&item=The%20One%20Purpose%20Of%20God&author=J.%20Bonda&page=278)
- **WEBSITE:** “Hope Beyond Hell” (Gerry Beauchemin) [www.hopebeyondhell.net](http://www.hopebeyondhell.net)
- **BOOK:** “All Shall Be Well”: Explorations in Universal Salvation and Christian Theology, from Origen to Moltmann” (Gregory McDonald)  
[www.amazon.com.au/All-Shall-Well-Explorations-Universal-ebook/dp/B0052MSZO4](http://www.amazon.com.au/All-Shall-Well-Explorations-Universal-ebook/dp/B0052MSZO4)