

# The Error Of The Doctrine Of Universal Restoration

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The doctrine of Universal Restoration is the teaching that all human beings will ultimately be saved and that there is no such thing as unending punishment for rejecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The proponents of Universal Restoration often quote 1 Timothy 2:3, 4:

*3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;*

*4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

The doctrine of universal restoration is built on two main piers, both of which are corrupt and not Biblically sound. The piers are 1) the unscholarly interpretation of the Greek word translated “eternal” or “everlasting” and 2) the unbalanced and unscriptural perception of the character of God’s love. Once the unsoundness of these two piers are exposed the whole doctrine of universal restoration, that everyone will ultimately be saved and inherit eternal life, comes crashing down.

Those who believe all will ultimately be saved hold to the following belief:

*“Eternal is mistranslated from the word aion. Aion does not mean eternal or everlasting it means age lasting.”*

The English word “forever” is often translated from the word Greek word “aion” which does mean age lasting, though it can have the implication of an age that is perpetual.

### **g0165. αἰών αἰῶν;**

from the same as 104; properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):— age, course, eternal, (for) ever (- more), (n-) ever, (beginning of the, while the) world (began, without end). Compare 5550.

AV (128)- ever 71, world 38, never +g3364 +g1519 +g3588 6, evermore 4, age 2, eternal 2, misc 5;

forever, an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity the worlds, universe period of time, age (STRONG)

The English word “everlasting” and “eternal” are most often translated from the word “aionios.” Aionios uses the same root word, but has the clear and definite meaning of time without end, forever, eternal. No trustworthy Greek scholar ever translates “aionios” with any other meaning than to describe a time without end.

αἰώνιος, -ον, and (in 2 Th. 2:16; Heb. 9:12; Num. 25:13; Plat. Tim. p. 38 b. [see below]; Diod. i. 1; [cf. WH. App. p. 157; W. 69 (67); B. 26 (23)]) -ος, -α, -ον, (αἰών);

1. **without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be:** θεός, Ro. 16:26, (ὁ ὁ μόνος αἰώνιος, 2 Macc. 1:25); πνεῦμα, Heb. 9:14.

2. **without beginning:** χρόνοις αἰωνίοις, Ro. 16:25; πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων, 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2; εὐαγγέλιον a gospel whose subject-matter is eternal, i. e. the saving purpose of God adopted from eternity, Rev. 14:6.

3. **without end, never to cease, everlasting:**

Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (20). New York: Harper & Brothers.

173 αἰώνιος (aiōnios), ov (on): adj.; ≡ DBLHebr 6409; Str 166; TDNT 1.208—1. LN 67.96 **eternal, an unlimited duration** (Ro 16:26; Mk 16: Shorter v.r.); 2. LN 67.133 **since all time, time** (long ago), (Ro 16:25)

Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

166. αἰώνιος αἰῶνιός, ahee-o'-nee-os; from 165; **perpetual (also used of past time, or past and future as well):—eternal, for ever, everlasting, world (began)**

Strong, J. (2009). Vol. 1: A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible (9). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

αἰώνιος, ον

**eternal:** 67.96

αἰώνιος: units

χρόνοις αἰωνίοις

since all time 67.133

πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων

since all time 67.

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 2: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (7). New York: United Bible Societies.

Below is a list of N.T. passages that contain the Greek word “aionios.” Sometimes the word is used to describe the life given to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ and sometimes it is used to describe the everlasting destruction and condemnation of the unbeliever.

### **g0166:αἰώνιος αἰῶνιος-**

Mat 18:8- Everlasting

Mat 19:16- Eternal

Mat 19:29- Everlasting

Mat 25:41- Everlasting

Mat 25:46- Eternal

Mat 25:46- Everlasting  
Mar 3:29- Eternal  
Mar 10:17- Eternal  
Mar 10:30- Eternal  
Luk 10:25- Eternal  
Luk 16:9- Everlasting  
Luk 18:18- Eternal  
Luk 18:30- Everlasting  
Jn 3:15- Eternal  
Jn 3:16- Everlasting  
Jn 3:36- Everlasting  
Jn 4:14- Everlasting  
Jn 4:36- Eternal  
Jn 5:24- Everlasting  
Jn 5:39- Eternal  
Jn 6:27- Everlasting  
Jn 6:40- Everlasting  
Jn 6:47- Everlasting  
Jn 6:54- Eternal  
Jn 6:68- Eternal  
Jn 10:28- Eternal  
Jn 12:25- Eternal  
Jn 12:50- Everlasting  
Jn 17:2- Eternal  
Jn 17:3- Eternal  
Act 13:46- Everlasting  
Act 13:48- Eternal  
Rom 2:7- Eternal  
Rom 5:21- Eternal  
Rom 6:22- Everlasting  
Rom 6:23- Eternal  
Rom 16:25- Began  
Rom 16:26- Everlasting  
2Co 4:17- Eternal  
2Co 4:18- Eternal  
2Co 5:1- Eternal  
Gal 6:8- Everlasting

2Th 1:9- Everlasting  
2Th 2:16- Everlasting  
1Ti 1:16- Everlasting  
1Ti 6:12- Eternal  
1Ti 6:16- Everlasting  
1Ti 6:19- Eternal  
2Ti 1:9- Began  
2Ti 2:10- Eternal  
Tit 1:2- Eternal  
Tit 1:2- World  
Tit 3:7- Eternal  
Phm 1:15- Ever  
Heb 5:9- Eternal  
Heb 6:2- Eternal  
Heb 9:12- Eternal  
Heb 9:14- Eternal  
Heb 9:15- Eternal  
Heb 13:20- Everlasting  
1Pe 5:10- Eternal  
2Pe 1:11- Everlasting  
1Jo 1:2- Eternal  
1Jo 2:25- Eternal  
1Jo 3:15- Eternal  
1Jo 5:11- Eternal  
1Jo 5:13- Eternal  
1Jo 5:20- Eternal  
Jud 1:7- Eternal  
Jud 1:21- Eternal  
Rev 14:6- Everlasting  
( KJVConcordance)

My life in Christ is eternal, without end. My life in Christ will not end at some point in the future or at the end of some set period of time. My life in Christ is as eternal as Christ Himself.

Since the same word used to describe my eternal life is used in the Greek to describe the condemnation of the rejecter of Christ, I have to conclude that their punishment is also without end. To deny this is to ignore sound Greek scholarship and the whole bent of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Those who teach universal restoration believe that the unbeliever in Christ will spend time, an age, suffering punishment for their unbelief, but ultimately will be saved after they have done their time. That would mean that salvation would be based on time served rather than the shed blood of Jesus Christ. In the light of the whole of the New Testament that notion is blasphemy against God and His plan of redemption.

If the apostle Paul taught universal restoration, he would have responded to the Philippian jailer's question, "what must I do to be saved," with "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved or don't and you will be saved eventually after you have paid the price for your sins by suffering for a proper amount of time." Do you see how that renders the sacrifice of Jesus Christ pointless? Do you see how blasphemous this doctrine is? In trying to justify God's love you have made Him to be a liar for Jesus declared that He is the way, the truth and the life and that no man comes to the Father, but through faith in Him.

That brings us to the second faulty pier on which the doctrine of universal restoration is fabricated. Proponents of universal restoration cannot justify God being love and sending anyone to suffer eternally in the lake of fire. They exalt the virtue of God's love above and in contradiction to all of His other divine virtues. Their understanding is that God is only love. That is a gross injustice to the infinite God.

God's will, desire and provision is for all men to be saved as declared in 1 Timothy 2:3, 4. It is His love and grace that compelled Him to make such a provision for all of mankind.

Below are my sermon notes on just one of the many other divine attributes of God that is ignored and rejected by those who attempt to understand God's ways through the distorted lens of "God is only love."

## **God Is Righteous, Just**

### **Psalm 145:17**

*17 The Lord is righteous in all His ways,*

*Gracious in all His works.*

*NKJV*

– The righteousness of God is closely related to His holiness, His purity from all that is vile and corrupt.

However, the righteousness of God stresses the judicial side to God's character. Righteousness has to do with a standard of right and wrong, honesty and lawfulness. God's righteousness first of all speaks of His standard of right and wrong. It is His universe; it is His standard that measures the rightness of everything contained in it. To say that there are no absolutes of right or wrong or of truth is to deny that there is a God and that He is righteous.

As the Righteous God, by nature He can do nothing else but act according to His own standard of right and wrong. Though He is Sovereign He always conducts Himself righteously, lawfully, justly. Furthermore, as the Righteous God, the source of Righteousness, He is also the Judge that must uphold justice and execute judgment on unrighteousness.

As is the case with the other attributes of God, the truth that God is Righteous is basic and fundamental, but if we are not

grounded in this truth, it will lead to gross error and personal fear and unbelief.

**Genesis 18:25**

*25 Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"*

*NKJV*

– This must be our understanding of all of God’s ways. Abraham was interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah. He it would not be right for God to judge the righteous with the wicked. Abraham assumed there were righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah. 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10. Judge of all the earth did do right, always has and always will.

We must learn to always understand that God always does the right thing in our life and in the lives of those around us. If God allows a tragedy or difficult time in our life or in the life of someone around us, we must rest assured God is right in allowing it. Whether He deals in blessing, mercy, discipline, judgment or silence, we must never question that what He does is right, just, honest and lawful.

**Romans 3:4**

*4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written:*

*"That You may be justified in Your words,  
And may overcome when You are judged." NKJV*

– If we will be grounded in this principle, this truth, this doctrine, it will save us a lot of anguish. God is always true, right, just. Any other opinion or thought that even hints at the possibility that God is wrong or a liar is to be quickly abandoned as false. When we accuse God of being wrong or of not doing the right thing, we will end up on the wrong side



of justice when all the evidence is in and all the facts are known. We form our opinions so quickly. We react and respond with so little of the facts. Wait on the Lord. Rest and rejoice in His righteousness.

He will always do the right thing. Always justify God in every situation, on every subject and you will know the blessing of always being found on the side of justice.

**Judge** – let's consider His righteousness in His role as Judge, the upholder and enforcer of righteousness.

Let's briefly consider what the Bible reveals about man's unrighteousness, God's judgment of unrighteous man and how His righteousness has provided for us protection from His just wrath.

God created the first man in innocence with the ability to chose between right and wrong. He gave them His standard. It was right to eat of every tree of the garden except one. It was wrong to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam chose to do the wrong thing. That made him unrighteous before a righteous God. Sin entered into the human race and from that time on it has been inherent in our nature to do that which is contrary to the revealed will of God. We stand guilty before the court of Heaven.

**Romans 3:23**

*23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
NKJV*

– We all fall short of the standard. We are not right before God.

**Example –**

**Isaiah 64:6**

*6 But we are all like an unclean thing,*

*And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;  
We all fade as a leaf,  
And our iniquities, like the wind,  
Have taken us away.  
NKJV*

– Filthy rags. Some men try to stand before God and declare that they are right because they have done more right than wrong. It is as foolish a defense as a murderer who stands before a judge in clothes stained with the blood of his victim and declares he deserves to go free because he donated money to the United Way.

The stain of every sin, every breaking of the standard cries out for the righteous judgment of God. The clothes of our right doing, our righteousness, is thoroughly stained with the vileness of our every wrong-doing, our every sin. We stand guilty.

**Salvation, Pardon** – Since all are sinners, all are guilty all must be condemned to eternal separation from God. The Bible however, reveals God’s plan of pardon from sin. It is a plan that does not side step His righteousness, but satisfies it.

**Romans 3:25-28**

*25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,*

*26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

*27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*

*28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.*

*NKJV*

It is His very righteousness that provides the solution to the guilt of our sin. From the beginning God has revealed His standard. Sin must be judged. Blood must be shed in order to surrender the life. But God has also pointed to the fact that a substitute that is innocent of any infractions of His own may pay the price. The innocent for the guilty is sufficient to satisfy the just wrath of God.

**Examples:** the animals that gave their life to cover the shame of Adam and Eve. The ram provided to die in Isaac's place. All the O.T. sacrifices. All the prophecies of the Servant of God that would die for the sins of the world.

### **Isaiah 53:4-6**

*4 Surely He has borne our griefs*

*And carried our sorrows;*

*Yet we esteemed Him stricken,*

*Smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,*

*He was bruised for our iniquities;*

*The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,*

*And by His stripes we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray;*

*We have turned, every one, to his own way;*

*And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

*NKJV*

### **Isaiah 53:10-11**

*10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;*

*He has put Him to grief.*

*When You make His soul an offering for sin,*

*He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,*

*And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.*

*11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.*

*By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many.*

*For He shall bear their iniquities. NKJV*

– It was acceptable, it was right that One pay the price for all.

### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

*21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

*NKJV*

– The believer in Jesus Christ has been declared eternally just, right before the court. We stand before the Righteous Judge dressed in the righteousness of Christ. Jesus fully paid once for all, all that God's righteousness demanded.

We are born with a nature that is stained with sin and as we live we only add to the stains by the practice of sin. There is nothing we can do to hide or remove the stains from our filthy rags of unrighteousness.

Being right with God is not a question of trying to do a lot of good things and avoiding doing bad things. It is no longer the sin question, but the Son question. It is a matter of one right decision.

### **Romans 4:19-25**

*19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.*

*20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*

*21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

*23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,*

*24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,*

*25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

*NKJV*

– The righteousness of God is put to our account when we believe that Jesus is the Son of God that He died to pay the price of the guilt of our sin and that He was raised the third day as proof of God's acceptance of sacrifice as being sufficient. We are not declared right with God by our works, but by faith in His work.

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31**

*30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."*

*NKJV*

– Became for us, righteousness. Righteousness is our provisional standing in Christ.

**Judgement Executed** – Because God is Righteous, He must judge all who refuse to receive His righteousness freely offered to whosoever will. If they reject the substitute on whom the wrath of God was poured, the wrath of God must fall on them.

**John 3:36**

*36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

*NKJV*

– It comes down to a decision about the person and work of Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ is the right choice and makes you right with God.

The alternative is to remain in your unrighteousness.

**2 Thessalonians 1:6-10**

*6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,*

*7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,*

*8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

*10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. NKJV*

– Do not obey the Gospel.

**Revelation 16:4-7**

*4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.*

*5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying:*

*"You are righteous, O Lord,*

*The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things.*

*6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink.*

*For it is their just due."*

*7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."*

*NKJV*

**Revelation 19:11**

*11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

*NKJV*

### **Revelation 20:11-15**

*11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.*

*12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*

*13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

*14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

*15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

*NKJV*

– Righteous judgment. God has faithfully and clearly revealed His will and His standard. He has freely offered man the opportunity to be clothed with His own righteousness through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

How can a loving God send men to the lake of fire? Some may ask. I ask, How can a righteous God not execute justice? The terrors of the lake of fire do not tarnish the image of God, it only magnifies the guilt of sinful man.

But thank God, I've been made right with God on the merit of the righteousness of Christ –

### **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**

*9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,*

*10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. NKJV*

**1 Thessalonians 5:9-10**

*9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*

*NKJV*

– Because God is a righteous God, my destiny is not wrath, but life. I rejoice in His righteousness.